

Nathan Mercieca
Royal Holloway, University of London


Music, Writing, and Subjectivity:
The Ethics of Musicology

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for the degree of
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Declaration of Authorship

I, Nathan Mercieca, hereby declare that this thesis and the work presented in it is my own. Where I have relied on the work of others, this is clearly acknowledged.

SIGNED: 

DATE: 01/09/2017

Abstract

This thesis examines the ethical implications of writing about music, focussing on the analysis of tonal art music. While some recent publications have studied various ethical situations involving music, none has taken the theoretical engagement with Western Art Music as its starting point. I argue that the role of such theoretical engagement within contemporary philosophical and political debates should be re-evaluated.

The thesis is divided into three parts: Part I comprises Chapters One and Two, Part II comprises Chapters Three and Four, and Part III comprises Chapter Five. Part One is concerned with the philosophical underpinnings of the postmodern current of contemporary musicology. Chapter One examines recent literature on the intersection of music and ethics, including the directly political work of the New Musicology, and proposes an alternative methodology. Chapter Two grounds this methodology in modernist metaphysics, and thus proceeds to a philosophical and political critique of postmodern musicology.

Part II is a case study of the 'Andantino' from Schubert's Piano Sonata in A major, D. 959. Chapter Three counters the claim that traditional analytical engagement fails in Schubert's music with two complementary analyses, which contribute to an understanding of the construction of subjectivity in Schubert's *oeuvre*. In so doing I advance the concept of 'materialist dialectics', a method of engaging both with the idealist elements that characterize traditional music theory, and with the material elements of both politics and performance. Chapter Four generalizes this approach, grounding it in early twentieth-century Marxist thinking, and applying it to a wider discussion of gender in music.

Part III expands the materialist consideration of music to encompass musical performances. I demonstrate several inconsistencies in the discourse of 'Music as Performance'. In order to resolve them, an analysis of the second movement of Mahler's Fifth Symphony—applying the materialist dialectics of Part II—shows how a theoretical approach can take account of performance. As a result, a Marxist reading of the work-concept, generated by a materialist dialectic understanding of subjectivity, is proposed.

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Introduction: an Aphorism, an Anecdote, and a Quotation

Aphorism

Of Mahler's Third Symphony, Bruno Walter wrote 'in the final movement [...] the word is hushed again—what language is there that could tell with greater force and stronger reason of Divine Love than that of pure music?'.¹ Like an earlier—and less flippant—formulation of that apocryphal quip, 'writing about music is like dancing about architecture', this touches on a common anxiety in music studies: what, in fact, is the point of writing about music at all? One can write histories of composers, and histories of pieces of music, one can write about the sociological situation of pieces, performances and receptions, and one can write anthropological studies of music as a human phenomenon, in the Western tradition and abroad. But can one write about 'music as music'? Traditionally, of course, this was the realm of analysis, which rigidly circumscribed the limits of what constituted 'music as music'. But here, one encounters two problems. First, the rhetorical intent of both ironic questions is to highlight that it is precisely this quality of music that is so inaccessible to language—that what is most valuable about music is, to use its proper term, ineffable. Second, at least since the dawn of the New Musicology around 1985, it has been extremely problematic to talk about 'music as music' so simplistically. As will be explored in much greater length below, to attempt such a thing—to demarcate something as 'purely musical', and examine it as such—is to make a statement tangled up in a range of political and ethical concerns.²

¹ Bruno Walter, *Gustav Mahler*, trans. James Galston (Tiptree: Severn House Publishers, 1975), 118.

² The significance of 1985 here is the publication date of Joseph Kerman's seminal article, in many ways the firing gun for the New Musicology: 'How We Got into Analysis, and How to Get out', *Critical Inquiry* Vol. 7 No. 2 (Winter, 1980): 311–331.

And yet Walter's aphorism serves as a reminder that there is something in the musical experience that is commonly separated from historical, sociological, or anthropological articulation, something that strains towards autonomy—in Walter's own words, something of 'pure music'. Thus, the two tensions in Walter's question cut across one another. On the one hand, words must be abandoned, because the purely aesthetic experience of, for example, the finale of Mahler's Third Symphony can only be cheapened by them. On the other hand, words must flow freely—but only because such a purely aesthetic moment does not exist: one must write about anything else, in order to circumscribe the absent centre that drives the desire to write at all. As Slavoj Žižek points out, this is explicable in Derridean terms, by understanding that the condition of writing's impossibility becomes its condition of possibility: as he puts it, 'the ultimate failure of communication is what compels us to talk all the time (if we could say what we want to say directly, we would very soon stop talking and shut up forever)'.³ The fact that there is something (to use another unpopular term) 'transcendent' about music—in the sense that it escapes the confines of language, history, and the social—is at the same time the reason it is such an important thing to write about.

Indeed, the squeamishness with which it is now necessary to approach the concept of transcendence, or abstraction, or universality in music is symptomatic of this tension. A drive towards a wholly materialist approach to studying music was just one of the outcomes of the New Musicology; the reasons and consequences of this disciplinary shift will be examined at length throughout this thesis. Nevertheless, the concept of transcendence remains lurking in the thought of some of the scholars most closely associated with New Musicology: it seems impossible to dispense with it entirely. For example, Suzanne Cusick draws a distinction between music used for

³ Slavoj Žižek, 'Class Struggle or Postmodernism? Yes, Please!', in Judith Butler, Ernesto Laclau, and Slavoj Žižek, *Contingency, Hegemony, and Universality: Contemporary Dialogues on the Left* (London and New York: Verso, 2000), 94.

torture, which she terms ‘sheer sound’, and music ‘as music’.⁴ In a different article, she invokes ‘that part of [her] sensibility that remains residually invested in the notion that music is beautiful, even transcendent’.⁵ Leo Treitler explains his resistance to the full linguistic turn of postmodern musicology by noting that music is ‘as strong evidence as there can be for a reality before and after its description’—that is to say, it exists independently of human interaction with it—adding that (as a consequence?) ‘it is music, after all, that has been declared at least since Medieval European writing about it, to be indescribable’.⁶ He has drawn approvingly on Karl Popper’s description of the musical work’s ontology as ‘a real ideal object which exists, but exists nowhere’.⁷ And he has analysed the key schemes of Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony to demonstrate its invocation of transcendence, simultaneously making a claim about music—that transcendence is intentionally written into it—and about the ‘motives for analysis’—namely that they are, or can be, ‘to worship that celestial sound’.⁸ This sense that music might intimate the transcendent, regardless of whether it *is* transcendent, and that it therefore behoves scholars to come to terms with the possibility of that transcendence, has been echoed by Rose Rosengard Subotnik: ‘even if this music [of the Enlightenment] did not succeed in defining a truly abstract, universal structure, accessible to all people of reason, there can be no doubt that this music draws on and projects the *ideal* of such a structure’.⁹

⁴ Suzanne Cusick, ‘Musicology, Torture, Repair’, *Radical Musicology* Vol. 3 (2008), <<http://www.radical-musicology.org.uk/2008/Cusick.htm>> (accessed 09 May 2017), paragraph 3.

⁵ Suzanne Cusick, ‘Music as Torture/Music as Weapon’, *TRANS–Revista Transcultural de Música* Vol. 10 (2006). <<http://www.sibetrans.com/trans/articulo/152/music-as-torture-music-as-weapon>> (accessed 09 May 2017), unpaginated.

⁶ Leo Treitler, ‘Postmodern Signs in Musical Studies’, *The Journal of Musicology* Vol. 13 No. 1 (Winter 1995), 12.

⁷ Quoted in Leo Treitler, ‘History and the Ontology of the Musical Work’, *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* Vol. 51 No. 3 (Summer, 1993), 483. Originally from Karl R. Popper and John C. Eccles, *The Self and Its Brain* (Boston: Routledge and Keegan Paul, 1983), 450.

⁸ Leo Treitler, ‘“To Worship that Celestial Sound”: Motives for Analysis’, *The Journal of Musicology* Vol. 1 No. 2 (April 1982): 153–170.

⁹ Rose Rosengard Subotnik, *Deconstructive Variations* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 200.

Like a return of the repressed, the 'purely musical' aspect of music haunts musicology. No matter that it is small, fragile, potentially fictitious; despite the fact that, by definition, it has nothing to do with ordinary life (and therefore ordinary language), it seems to be the reason people want to write about music, even music in ordinary life, at all. Thus far, these ironies—that those advocating for a distinctly embedded approach to music are drawn to it precisely due to its partially disembedded nature; that something supposedly ineffable is the source of so many words—have been left undisturbed. It is the task of this thesis to look them in the eye.

Anecdote

At an early stage in writing this thesis, I witnessed a heated debate arise during the final 'roundtable' discussion of a graduate students' conference. The topic under discussion was 'the future of music analysis', and one of the things under consideration was whether that future included a greater awareness of ethical responsibility.¹⁰ Those few students who were working on musical ethics spoke enthusiastically in support of this proposal, contending that ethical considerations should form the core of any academic procedure, but they were met with strong opposition. There were two main disagreements with the idea that ethical considerations should form part of musicological consciousness. First, it could be argued that music analysis and social or political issues should be separable: analysts might bemoan a perceived restriction of their opportunities to examine 'purely musical' phenomena.¹¹ Such an opposition partially rejects one of the foundational

¹⁰ The conference was the Society for Music Analysis's 'Theory and Analysis Graduate Students' conference'. A write-up of the roundtable, by Shay Loya, can be accessed electronically at: <<http://www.sma.ac.uk/2014/05/tags-2014-roundtable/>> (accessed 21 May 2015).

¹¹ This was the main objection that Kofi Agawu raised in his (belated) response to Joseph Kerman's original article, claiming that music analysts like himself and critics like Kerman were asking different kinds of questions. See Agawu, 'How We Got out of Analysis, and How to Get Back in Again', *Music Analysis* Vol. 23 No. 2/3 (July–October, 2004): 267–86.

premises of the New Musicology, that music is always inseparable from its social and political contexts (the inconsistency of that claim, noted above, notwithstanding).

The second opposition, of greater interest in the context of this thesis, is founded on the broadly liberal-relativist philosophy dominant in the twenty-first century. Concretely, it was argued that since there are no ethical absolutes (with some exceptions, however unexplained—for example, supposedly inalienable Human Rights), a single ethical code should not be imposed upon everybody. That is to say, while one might agree that music is always caught up in broader extra-musical contexts, one might nevertheless be anxious in case the call to an ethical practice in music studies should harden, dogmatically, into a call to *a certain type* of ethical practice. Might everyone be forced into feminist, Marxist or queer interpretations of their objects of study—a ‘New Musicology Plus’? The ethical question therefore doubles back on itself: what are the ethics of considering ethics in musicology?

This, too, is a question of writing about music: if the previous section and its aphorism related to writing about music ‘as music’, this argument relates to writing about music in its social context. Considering music in its social context will rub up against political, historical, and philosophical issues, something that might invite ethical judgment. Can such judgments be given in universal or totalizing fashion? Is it more ethical to reserve judgment? Or in fact, given the sorts of political situations encountered (this thesis will consider the marginalization of certain gender and sexual identities in particular) is it not *more unethical not* to give a moral judgment? Both the ordinary conceptualization of music’s relation to its social context and the dominant liberal-capitalist idea of ethics are insufficient to resolve this thorny problem. This thesis will attempt to give a solution.

Quotation

Helen said to her aunt: 'Now comes the wonderful movement: first of all the goblins, and then a trio of elephants dancing'; and Tibby implored the company generally to look out for the transitional passage on the drum.

'On the what, dear?'

'On the drum, Aunt Juley.'

'No; look out for the part where you think you have done with the goblins and they come back,' breathed Helen, as the music started with a goblin walking quietly over the universe, from end to end. Others followed him. They were not aggressive creatures; it was that that made them so terrible to Helen. They merely observed in passing that there was no such thing as splendour or heroism in the world. After the interlude of elephants dancing, they returned and made the observation for the second time. Helen could not contradict them, for, once at all events, she had felt the same, and had seen the reliable walls of youth collapse. Panic and emptiness! Panic and emptiness! The goblins were right. Her brother raised his finger; it was the transitional passage on the drum.

For, as if things were going too far, Beethoven took hold of the goblins and made them do what he wanted. He appeared in person. He gave them a little push, and they began to walk in a major key instead of in a minor, and then—he blew with his mouth and they were scattered! Gusts of splendour, gods and demigods contending with vast swords, colour and fragrance broadcast on the field of battle, magnificent victory, magnificent death! Oh, it all burst before the girl, and she even stretched out her gloved hands as if it was tangible. Any fate was titanic; any contest desirable; conqueror and conquered would alike be applauded by the angels of the utmost stars.

And the goblins—they had not really been there at all? They were only the phantoms of cowardice and unbelief? One healthy human impulse would dispel them? Men like the Wilcoxes, or ex-President Roosevelt, would say yes. Beethoven knew better. The goblins really had been there. They might return—and they did. It was as if the splendour of life might boil over and waste to steam and froth. In its dissolution one heard the terrible, ominous note, and a goblin, with increased malignity, walked quietly over the universe from end to end. Panic and emptiness! Panic and emptiness! Even the flaming ramparts of the world might fall. Beethoven chose to make all right in the end. He built the ramparts up. He blew with his mouth for the second time, and again the goblins were scattered. He brought back the gusts of splendour, the heroism, the youth, the magnificence of life and of death, and, amid vast roarings of a superhuman joy, he led his Fifth Symphony to its

*conclusion. But the goblins were there. They could return. He had said so bravely, and that is why one can trust Beethoven when he says other things.*¹²

Despite being ostensibly irreconcilable, the positions that give rise to the preceding aphorism and anecdote—a Romantic metaphysics of transcendence on the one hand and a postmodern fallibilist epistemology on the other—share an important concern: a concern for the breadth of meaning that music can accommodate. Writing about music, in fixing an interpretative position, immediately has ethical implications. Not merely in the type of interpretation that it puts forth—which might be more or less ‘moral’, depending on the moral code in force at the time—but in the very act of writing. E. M. Forster stages this problem beautifully in his famous description of Helen Schlegel’s fantastical ‘analysis’ of Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony.

For one thing, Forster’s vivid description is a testament to the long history of personalized musical interpretation by listeners: Helen is not alone in constructing a private narrative for the music to which she listens, but is partaking in a listening tradition that has encompassed in its time audiences of ‘ordinary people’—Victorian and contemporary—as well as a specialist musical-literary tradition including Robert Schumann, E. T. A. Hoffmann, and D. F. Tovey. What is immediately noticeable about Helen’s imagery is its distance from the norms of contemporary specialist musicology, which is normally detached, impersonal, and pretending to wider relevance than the highly contingent impressions of one person. Indeed, it is Tibby—Helen’s stuffy, anxious, tiresome brother—who best represents the approach of professionalized musicology, an attitude (and a character) Forster invites his readers to mock. The gendered implications of this scene should not be underrated. The patriarchal figure of Tibby as the man of the house (despite being wholly unsuited for it) is highly educated, articulate, rational, and unfeeling, as opposed to the charming, naïve, dippy Helen: Forster provides a metaphor for the circulation of knowledge that would be widely taken up by feminist theorists in the twentieth century and beyond.

¹² E. M. Forster, *Howard’s End* (Penguin: London, 1975), 46–7.

It seems Forster is warning his readers about the pitfalls of (masculinist, self-important) authority: who can argue that Helen's response is a great deal more 'musical' than Tibby's anodyne observations on 'the transitional passage on the drum'? And yet, the characteristics that give rise to Helen's particular musicality—her naïvite, her romantic imagination, and her intellectual solipsism (even selfishness)—go on to create the major conflict around which Forster's novel is constructed. 'No (wo)man is an island, entire of itself', or, to use the epigraph Forster gave his novel, 'Only connect...'. There is an ethical dilemma here, too: on the one hand, the imposition of authority, under the guise of a universalist position, is a potentially oppressive (as well as classically masculinist) act. On the other hand, to give oneself wholly to solipsism, to cut off oneself from the society in which one exists—to deny the inherent sociality of human existence—is injurious. It is, in fact, a pretence to autonomy; the musicological resonances of that word should be warning enough as to the dangers I will find in such a position. Writing about music is to take up one or other of those positions: to write for oneself, or to write for the world. Music can express a wide variety of meanings at different times and places, and even simultaneously. To write is to fix that meaning to a certain extent, and is therefore ethically implicated. This thesis will have to consider that, too.

This thesis will examine the ethical implications of writing about music. It will focus on the analysis of tonal Western Art Music, which provides a discrete repertoire with an extensive surrounding literature for consideration. While the findings of the examination will therefore in practice be limited to this repertoire, it is anticipated that the methodology used can prove useful, with the necessary extensions and alterations, to the study of other musical repertoire.

The thesis is divided into three parts: Part I comprises Chapters One and Two, Part II comprises Chapters Three and Four, and Part III comprises Chapter Five. Part

I is an exploration and critique of the philosophical underpinnings of the postmodern moment in which musicology currently finds itself. Chapter One examines recent literature on the intersection of music and ethics, including the directly political work of the New Musicology, and scholarship inspired by it. I divide the studies of music and ethics into three groups: the (un)ethical use of music, the ethics of musical situations, and the ethics of writing about music. Having shown that the first two categories rely on the results of the third—namely, the exclusion of music as a purely conceptual art ('music as music', 'the music itself') in favour of a socialized, embedded, or materialist view of music—I demonstrate that such an exclusion, most clearly noticeable from the fragile position of music analysis with the academy at present, emerges from a faulty reading of the poststructuralist philosophy that ostensibly motivates it, especially a confusion over the construction of subjectivity. Thus, while the work of the other two categories remains undiminished, there is a critical lacuna in the literature, insofar as the ethics of the musicological scene remains fundamentally under-theorized. Chapter One ends with an analysis that offers an alternative methodology. Chapter Two grounds this methodology in modernist metaphysics, principally emerging from Heideggerian ontology, and thus proceeds to a philosophical and political critique of postmodern musicology. As part of this, the criticisms levelled against music theory and analysis in recent years are turned back on themselves; I suggest that a purely *materialist* understanding of music supports, knowingly or not, the political status quo of late capitalism, and is therefore tacitly complicit in its oppressions. By contrast, conceptual engagement with the 'ideal' qualities of music, including through music analysis, emerge as a site of potential resistance to the hegemonic norm.

Part II is an extended analytical case study of the 'Andantino' from Schubert's Piano Sonata in A, D. 959. Chapter Three begins by assessing the legacy of Schubert scholarship on the analysis of his music, especially the commonplace that traditional analytical engagement fails in this repertoire. There is a particular focus on the gendered aspects of Schubert's reception, historic and contemporary, especially as it

links Schubert and Beethoven in an antagonistic power dynamic, in which Schubert's music is read exclusively against a Beethovenian norm (standing as the hegemon, or Master Signifier, for tonal norms more generally). I overcome that binary opposition by means of two complementary analyses, using Schenkerian and neo-Riemannian techniques respectively, that demonstrate the dialectical construction of a tonal subject in the Andantino. In so doing I advance the concept of 'materialist dialectics', a method of engaging with both the ideal elements that characterize traditional music theory, and the material elements that govern music's physical sounding. Chapter Four generalizes this approach, grounding it in early twentieth-century Marxist thinking, and applying it to a wider discussion of gender in music. The political importance of acknowledging music's ideal qualities is discussed through a musical reading of Georg Lukács and Karl Korsch; I suggest that until those ideal elements are given full play in musicology, the important work of critical musicologists working on misogyny in music will remain incomplete. As part of that injunction, however, the limits of musical ethics are reached, and a distinction is drawn between musical ethics, and musical politics.

Part III takes the concern with the material reality of music to the next level: the performance of music. Beginning with a conspectus of the literature on this topic, especially the work of Nicholas Cook and the recent 'Music as Performance' school, I demonstrates several inconsistencies in the way the debate has been framed. As an alternative approach to understanding musical performance, I take the Deleuzian construction of 'repetition' as a starting point in an analysis of the second movement of Mahler's Fifth Symphony. By applying the materialist dialectical approach developed in Part II, I show how a theoretical approach can take account of the phenomenon of performance, by demonstrating how the process of music-as-concept being brought into the real world as music-as-performance is inscribed in the very structure of this movement. Indeed, I propose that the Mahler movement merely exemplifies what is ontologically distinctive about Western Art Music, namely the phenomenon of an ideal concept becoming material. This in turn leads to a

consideration of the musical ‘work’, and a Marxist reading of the work-concept, one that suggests that writing about music, at this conceptual level, is a central humanistic concern because of the identity between the ontology of the Art work and the ontology of human subjectivity.

This project therefore shares a fundamental kinship with a number of other texts of musical philosophy. Michael Spitzer has persuasively defended the humanistic core of music theory, conceding that while ‘music theory is admittedly poor at describing how music is composed or heard, and even more suspect when it attempts to prescribe these practices’, it is possible to ‘look at music theory as a picture of an imaginative act that is, in some ways, just as creative as a work of composition’.¹³ In *Metaphor and Musical Thought* Spitzer virtuosically demonstrates the way in which musical experiences are caught up in cognitive processes, and thus in which music, to some extent, is entirely tempered by human consciousness. At the heart of his endeavour is the conviction, which he amply justifies, that ‘metaphor’ — that is, *creative intellectual engagement* with music — structures every aspect of the musical experience, from its composition to its reception, if for no other reason than the fact that language itself (and thus human interaction with the world) is fundamentally ‘metaphorical’.

While the project here shares the same spirit as Spitzer’s, taking as a starting point the now well-established idea that human consciousness is creatively entangled with language, this thesis has very different goals. As he points out, ‘we may have no choice but to hear music as human’, which is to say both as a product of, and representative (in a very broad sense) of human culture; I investigate *why* this might be so, by conducting an examination of music’s ontology.¹⁴ I therefore approach his central task—to investigate the choices that determine ‘*how* to hear its human aspects’—from a different angle, one that is explicitly caught up in contemporary

¹³ Michael Spitzer, *Metaphor and Musical Thought* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 2.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 12.

ethical and political debates.¹⁵ Nevertheless, this is something that flows naturally from his own work; he points out that ‘the “meaning” of the music, to a large extent, inheres not within the notes themselves [...] but within a concept we apply to them’.¹⁶ There is, therefore, a choice of what concepts to apply to musical understanding, and this thesis considers the ethics of a theoretical application.

This thesis has a very different relationship with the recent work of Gary Tomlinson, especially his book *A Million Years of Music*.¹⁷ Tomlinson, and his contributions to the debates of the New Musicology, will be considered in detail in Chapter One. At this stage, however, it is enough to say that Tomlinson’s enduring concern throughout his distinguished career has been to place music in as rich a historical context as possible, and to draw out the ways in which musical meaning is generated and altered not simply through the notes on the page, but in the way they interact with the culture in which they were formed. *A Million Years of Music* is in many ways the crowning achievement of this approach: it traces the development of human music-making through nothing less than the entire evolutionary development of the human race itself. In this way, it is the last word in historicizing and contextualizing music. Nevertheless, even at the very earliest stages of his book, Tomlinson introduces a crucial cultural phenomenon that, although it in no way undermines his project, provides an important mitigating factor within it. He introduces, as a vital component of the biocultural evolution of hominins, the concept of ‘epicycles’ (among which he counts musical culture), defined as ‘self-organized systematics [...] that achieve some independence of operation from evolutionary feedback cycles’.¹⁸

If musical culture is an epicycle, this means that it is possible to examine it independently of the biocultural context that gave rise to it. This recalls the

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid., 10.

¹⁷ Gary Tomlinson, *A Million Years of Music: The Emergence of Human Modernity* (New York: Zone Books, 2015).

¹⁸ Ibid., 16.

invocations to transcendence noted above: Tomlinson takes great care not to imply that music is ‘transcendent’ in the way the term is most commonly understood—wholly outside of human culture—nor that evolution towards contemporary humanity and the musical culture that obtains within it was some kind of teleological process *towards* autonomy from material need. Nevertheless, by examining so thoughtfully the way in which certain aspects of human culture are defined by their independence from their biological emergence and the economies of need that define animal and early hominid behaviour—especially those, like music, contingent on the high-level faculties of human consciousness (such as thinking-at-a-distance and language)—it is undeniable that a large part of music’s ontology within human culture is dependent on being understood as autonomous from it. Tomlinson writes,

There could be no cultural system that was, so to speak, dropped into biocultural coevolution from the outside, a feed-forward ingredient of utter independence from the coevolutionary network; all such systems could only arise from the network itself. But once they began to arise, and once their systematic formations took shape, they had a special power to alter coevolution *as if* dropped into it from outside.¹⁹

Tomlinson, of course, does not claim that music stands apart from *all* aspects of human culture: whether or not musical meaning, for him, is contingent on social, political, and religious contexts—whether, that is, he considers those social contexts to be *within* music’s epicycle—is not explicitly addressed. Given his other work there is good reason to suspect that he considers those narrower contexts essential, and indeed his claim that ‘these systems, then, came to stand *within culture but detached from the coevolutionary feedback* from which they arose’ could be read as confining that semi-autonomy to precisely only those biocultural evolutionary contexts.²⁰ Nevertheless, that such a concept of semi-autonomy—or to return to Subotnik’s thoughts, above, a projected ideal of abstraction—inheres so fundamentally in music’s ontology provides

¹⁹ Ibid., 45.

²⁰ Ibid., 44 (emphasis original).

an intriguing starting point. A large part of this thesis will be dedicated to exploring exactly how separable the conceptual element of music is from those narrower social contexts; paradoxically, the question of whether it might be is implicitly posed by Tomlinson's own efforts.

The subtitle of Tomlinson's book, 'the Emergence of Human Modernity', invokes a final important consideration for the outlook of this thesis: music(ologic)al modernism. As we have seen, this thesis is particularly concerned with music's relationship with human consciousness, and thus shares a common motivation with Julian Johnson's recent book, *Out of Time*.²¹ Following Johnson, it is clear that a worldview that prioritizes human epistemology, an outlook that makes 'Man the measure of all things', is a characteristically modernist trope.²² If Tomlinson's book describes (at bottom) how humans came to be self-conscious, Johnson shows how the obsession with self-consciousness played out in the modern(ist) era. That music is a useful medium in which to explore this interaction between consciousness and the external world is due to what Johnson sees (in common with many of the authors already cited) as a defining feature of music as an art form: Music is 'an art form intimately bound up with the material conditions of social history yet radically counterfactual at the same time'.²³ That is, while it maintains an indelible link to the societies in which it arose, it retains an important distance from them, and thus holds the possibility of radically altering, rather than simply conforming to, our perceptions of those very societies.

²¹ Julian Johnson, *Out of Time: Music and the Making of Modernity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

²² In actual fact, Johnson starts his account of modernism with the growing realisation over 400 years that humans are *not* the centre of the universe, astrologically or metaphorically. There is, then, a paradox in modernist epistemology: while, as moderns, we are conscious of the fact that humans are contingent beings in an indifferent universe, we are equally conscious that consciousness itself is a prison, and that the universe is only accessible (to us at least) through human thought. Again, there are parallels between Johnson, Tomlinson, Subotnik, and myself: it is characteristically *modernist* to *know* that nothing is autonomous, yet to *understand* that under certain circumstances it is necessary to treat them as such. The exact relationship this thesis has with modernism and postmodernism will be clarified in Chapter Two.

²³ Johnson, *Out of Time*, 3.

It is for this reason, perhaps, that Johnson is insistent on the contribution a thorough understanding of musical modernism can make to an understanding of human culture more generally; he is adamant ‘not only that music is better understood in relation to the long view of modernity, but that modernity itself is better understood if heard in relation to its music’.²⁴ It is a conviction that is replicated in this thesis: the necessary critical distance music has from its own appearing in society, its ‘counterfactual’ nature, is what allows it to interpret the world with greater clarity, perhaps even to change it.

Johnson’s own theorization of modernity, however, raises important questions for the general framework of this thesis; he resists a simple periodizing approach to the concept, one based solely on chronology or compositional features. As such, the accepted historical limits of musical modernity can be pushed back further and further, since Johnson sees modernism not only as an intentional compositional style, but rather an epistemological stance towards music itself: ‘if Modernism is not defined through specific technical attributes [...] if, instead, self-critical reflection upon musical language becomes the defining feature of a Modernist attitude, what of the ironic self-consciousness that defines so much of the later eighteenth century, from Haydn’s quartets to Mozart’s *Così fan tutte*?’²⁵ Under Johnson’s reading, musical modernism can be seen to begin much earlier, in the first Viennese school, or even the Venetian circle of Monteverdi and Caccini, since what all those approaches have in common is a self-consciousness with regard to the musical language they use. This is certainly in sympathy with my reading of tonality, and is the reason I have chosen tonal music as my analytical focus. Tonality provides a readily intelligible musical metastructure against which pieces can be read, since it is undeniable that—following Johnson—those pieces in the tonal repertoire would have been understood (self-consciously) against the tonal framework when they were written as well as when

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid., 8.

they were, and continue to be, interpreted. Tonality is a sturdy technical framework for my investigation into how music responds to its own history, and its own historical situation.

Given this technical focus, the question of how the details of this self-conscious interaction might change outside the bounds of tonality is necessarily raised. It is not a question I take lightly, although it undoubtedly lies outside the narrow bounds of this thesis. As I have already said, the suggestions I pose here will of course be peculiar to the repertoire and philosophy from which they spring. Nevertheless, I think that the lessons learned from this investigation could be applied, *mutatis mutandis*, to other repertoires outside the historical and geographical bounds of the present work.

Furthermore, given the shift in modernism's definition from a technological one (for example, atonality) to an epistemological one (for example, a *relationship* to atonality, or following Johnson, tonality) there is a sense in which the use of tonality in this thesis is heuristically useful, but ultimately arbitrary. I am interested in the relationship between musical art and human consciousness, something which is easier to examine when there is a conceptual framework such as tonality structuring music, but it is not dependent on it. This, however, only defers the bigger question of whether my thesis is entirely bounded by modernity and modernism. While I am not explicitly concerned with questions of modernism in this thesis, it is undeniable that its perspective on humanity, society, and its relationship to the arts bears hallmarks of modernist thinking. This is a more difficult question to answer. One approach would be to concede while the music examined in this thesis might be considered 'modernist' thanks to the generous bounds set by Johnson in his own study, even more generous bounds exist that might render the question of how far modernism extends moot. Johnson himself lists opinions on this matter that give an answer as early as 1456, with Gutenberg's invention of movable type.²⁶ Adorno and Horkheimer famously begin their examination of the Enlightenment with—and thus locate the root of modernity

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 3.

in—Homer’s epic poetry.²⁷ And as has already been seen, Gary Tomlinson sees human modernity as coextensive with the development of the higher critical functions of *homo sapiens*. Perhaps the answer, then, is to do away with an approach that relegates modernity and modernism to a particular historical period, and instead venture that humanity, whenever it is concerned with its own thought, is always ‘modernist’. The second possible defence is to state unequivocally that the world as it stands is modernist, and any attempt to escape modernism is therefore futile; even if there are generalizable universalities, they must nevertheless find expression in historical materiality, and in this case, that means the contemporary history of modernism. The only ethical recourse is to confront that problem head on, and be transparent both about one’s proposed ideology and how it is expressed in historical terms. But precisely that contention is the subject of this thesis, and therefore must wait for a fuller explanation.

According to Johnson, ‘music renders an account of modernity from the inside, presenting not a history of events so much as an archaeology of experience—ways of being in the world, grammars of feeling, tools for habituating ourselves in the changing world of modernity’.²⁸ Thus, while my focus is not explicitly on the *historical period* of ‘modernity’, Johnson’s quote is an appropriate starting point for this thesis: all humans are modern in their own time, and this thesis seeks to explore precisely *how* music can offer an account of life ‘from the inside’, in a way that eventually transcends narrow historical periodization. But it is also a much braver claim, about the possible significance of music within contemporary artistic, philosophical, and political discourses. It seems uncontroversial to state that musicology has lagged behind its sister disciplines, both in its absorption of expertise and critical models from outside, and as a consequence, in its contribution to those areas: the extraordinarily late flowering of feminist theory within the disciplinary mainstream, a full thirty years

²⁷ Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, trans. John Cumming (London and New York: Verso, 1997).

²⁸ Johnson, *Out of Time*, 11.

after the birth of second-wave feminism that impacted literary and cinema studies so profoundly, is an obvious example. I would argue that music's uncertain relation to the world around it is to blame: it is hard to take inspiration from the outside world—and even harder to give something back to it—if it is at least some of the time held to be radically separate. Equally, even when music's relationship to the world has been set out, the terms in which it is done are limiting: as the examination of New Musicology in Part I will show, it has become a commonplace to show the ways in which musical compositions reflect the world in which they were composed. However, a lack of consideration of music's ontology makes it impossible to explore the ways in which musical compositions go on to impact the world. There is no clear sense, that is, of what music *is* beyond the inscriptions of historically conditioned individuals, and therefore no sense of what musicology can do, beyond recording as faithfully as possible those historical inscriptions; this is a problem as much within music analysis as it is within music history.

This thesis will demonstrate a profound identity between the ontology of music, and the ontology of human subjectivity, something that will place music in a unique position within human endeavour, introducing the possibility that future studies of music might actively contribute to philosophical, political, and ethical debate, rather than merely respond to them, or passively absorb them.²⁹ The desire to move towards an understanding of music that is both radically self-sufficient—providing a plausible ontology of music on its own terms—and radically embedded in the world leaves its mark on the structure of the thesis. While each chapter takes on a discrete problem, and contains standalone research and important individual conclusions, the project as a whole is cumulative. This is reflected in the nature of the music chosen for analysis, and the thrust of the chapters in which they are embedded.

²⁹ During the early chapters, it may seem that the distinction between ethics and politics, especially within the consideration of music and musicology, is not clear-cut. Indeed, for the purposes of the early chapters, a firm distinction is not necessary. However, the difference between these two categories is treated in depth in Chapter Four, and revisited in the Epilogue, by which stage it will have become crucial.

First, there is a general tendency from simplicity towards complexity: the analysis in Part I focuses on a single chord; Part II, a single movement in a four-movement Piano Sonata; Part III tackles a movement of a symphony in relation to its surrounding movements. In the same vein, the tonal language of the music increases in complexity and self-awareness, from the High Baroque to Late Romanticism: Part I focuses on a Bach; Part II, Schubert; Part III, Mahler. Several other tripartitions might usefully be borne in mind as heuristic aids in the overall trajectory of the project: generally speaking, Part I deals with musical subjects, Part II with musical objects, and Part III concludes with an exploration of the musical 'world'. Thus, with only a slight change of emphasis, one might think of Part I in terms of 'Self', Part II in terms of 'Otherness', and Part III as a dialectical cancellation of that binary: Part I is largely concerned with the private subjectivity of a musical interpreter, Part II with the relationship between individual subjects (musical and political) with wider society, while Part III attempts to draw conclusions vis-à-vis music's relationship with humanity at the most fundamental level. These tripartitions must *only* be taken as heuristic, however, for two reasons. First, simply because there is engagement in every chapter that exceeds these narrow confines, despite the overall direction of the argument. And second, most importantly, because it is the central argument of this thesis that all these binaries and triples must be overcome, cancelled out dialectically; indeed, that music can provide the medium within which to achieve this is the main contribution to the wider philosophical world that I hope to make.

PART I: The Problematic of
Postmodern Subjectivity

Chapter One:

Spiralling Subjectivity

1.1: Music and Ethics So Far

There have been many influential philosophical studies of music, especially since the New Musicology of the late 1980s/early 1990s; despite this, as Nanette Nielsen puts it, ‘studies bringing music and ethics together have, however, been few and far between’.¹ Certainly, the explicit theorization of ethics and music is a recent phenomenon, with only a small amount of dedicated work to date. Nielsen cites two chapters (out of twelve) of Garry Hagberg’s edited collection, *Art and Ethical Criticism*, and one chapter of Peter Kivy’s *Antithetical Arts: On the Ancient Quarrel between Literature and Music*.² To this can be added a special issue of the *Tijdschrift voor muziektheorie* in 2002 devoted to the subject, Jeff R. Warren’s 2013 book-length study *Music and Ethical Responsibility*, and of course Cobussen and Nielsen’s volume itself.³ However, the question of music’s interaction with ethics is the *implicit* focus of a great deal of the New Musicology; although eschewing fully worked-out ethical theorization, much of the work sought to situate musicological practices politically, offering critiques and alternatives, and undeniably engaging ethical questions.

Thus, although the volume of work is relatively small, some trends can already be identified. Different types of interaction between music and ethics

¹ In Marcel Cobussen and Nanette Nielsen, *Music and Ethics* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), 39.

² Garry Hagberg (ed.), *Art and Ethical Criticism* (New York: Blackwell, 2008); Peter Kivy, *Antithetical Arts: On the Ancient Quarrel between Literature and Criticism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2009), 215–34. Cited in Cobussen and Nielsen, *Music and Ethics*, 39.

³ *Tijdschrift voor muziektheorie* Vol. 7 No. 3 (November 2002); Jeff R. Warren, *Music and Ethical Responsibility* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

give rise to three broad categories in contemporary musicology: first, the (un)ethical application of music; second, ethics deriving from a phenomenological understanding of music; and third, the ethical character of the musicological scene. There is additionally a suppressed category, given short shrift at present: the idea that pieces or styles of music themselves can be ethical or unethical. Each of these operates at a different level of abstraction: the first deals with fairly concretized sonic object; the second, a potential intersubjective medium; and the last, a discursive practice. The suppressed category treats music as an ethical actor itself. It will be best to deal with each of these in turn.

The first confrontation between music and ethics considers the use of music for extra-musical ends. Warren gives a clear example of this: ‘prolonged exposure to music at sustained high volumes was used for torture in Guantánamo Bay detention centres’.⁴ The use of music as torture is also examined by Michael Cobussen, and has been explored particularly thoroughly in recent years by Suzanne Cusick.⁵ This is a use that many people would consider ‘unethical’, although it is noteworthy that Cusick refuses to be drawn on this: ‘it is not my intention here to engage the moral, ethical and political debates around torture, interesting as they are. Rather, I offer today a rough taxonomy of the complex subject’.⁶ In a similar vein, the use of music in less nakedly violent, but certainly oppositional ways has been analysed by Nicholas Cook: for example, the use of music through headphones on public

⁴ Warren, *Music and Ethical Responsibility*, 9.

⁵ Cobussen and Nielsen, *Music and Ethics*, 106–8. Cusick has written several articles and chapters, including: ‘Towards an acoustemology of detention in the “global war on terror”’, in *Music, Sound and Space: Transformations of Public and Private Experience*, ed. Georgina Born (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 275–91; ‘Music as Torture/Music as Weapon’, *TRANS–Revista Transcultural de Música* Vol. 10 (2006). <<http://www.sibetrans.com/trans/articulo/152/music-as-torture-music-as-weapon>> (accessed 09 May 2017); ‘Musicology, Torture, Repair’, *Radical Musicology* Vol. 3 (2008), 24 paragraphs <<http://www.radical-musicology.org.uk/2008/Cusick.htm>> (accessed 09 May 2017).

⁶ Cusick, ‘Music as Torture/Music as Weapon’ (unpaginated).

transport as a barrier to carve out personal space, and the piping of classical music at railway stations and shop entrances as a weapon, to disperse unwanted youths.⁷ In all of these cases, however, the fundamental ethical situation is musically abnormal: in all of these cases, to different degrees, music is being used only as sound. This is something that Cusick is alive to:

First, it is not at all clear that the music aimed at prisoners in detention camps has functioned *as music*. Rather, it has more often functioned as *sheer sound* with which to assault a prisoner's sense of hearing; to 'mask' or disrupt a prisoner's capacity to sustain an independent thought; to disrupt a prisoner's sense of temporality (both in terms of how much time had passed and in terms of the predictability of temporal units); to undermine a prisoner's ability to sustain somatic practices of prayer (both through behaviour at the hours of prayer and through abstinence from musical experiences considered sinful); and to bombard the prisoner's body (skin, nerves and bones) with acoustical energy.⁸

At least some of Cusick's moral outrage is prompted by the fact that she senses that music, in cases like this, is being degraded, stating that this 'phenomenon of the current "global war on terror" [...] particularly wounds me as a musician—wounds me in that part of my sensibility that remains residually invested in the notion that music is beautiful, even transcendent—is a practice whose contemplation would always lead me to contemplation of bodies and pleasures. Not bodies in pain'.⁹ Indeed, it is the very fact that here, the sonic occurrence is music only in the weakest sense that enables her to recuse herself from an ethical stance: the ethics of the situation are not germane to her *musicological* investigation.

⁷ Nicholas Cook, 'Classical music and the politics of space', in *Music, Sound and Space: Transformations of Public and Private Experience*, ed. Georgina Born (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 224–38. See especially 224–5, 230.

⁸ Cusick, 'Musicology, Torture, Repair', paragraph 3.

⁹ Cusick, 'Music as Torture/Music as Weapon' (unpaginated).

It is therefore no coincidence that, in similar sociological objectifications of music, the properly 'musical' element recedes from view as the ethical framework comes into focus. For instance, the use of music as 'muzak', in order to define a brand or a commercial space, shares certain properties with the use of music as a weapon: it is an attempt to surround human beings with a particular type of sound in order to manipulate the subjects within it—variously enticing them to identify with their surroundings, or even buy items and exit at a faster rate.¹⁰ Here, the content of that sound is important: the music might have cultural significance in a way that structures the subjects' relationships to it, and by extension, the commercial environment; alternatively, and more abstractly, the specific tempo and timbre of the music, its general mood, might prompt the hearing subjects to unconsciously change their behaviour. There are also key differences, however, with weaponry. Most importantly, not least because of those sympathetic cultural contexts, the acoustic experience will not necessarily be unpleasant for those subjected to it, and they are almost certainly entering into those commercial (or musical) spaces voluntarily. The ethical parameters are very different: rather than necessitating a debate about music or musicology, it engages a debate about the ethics of branding, of the manipulation of cultural artefacts for commercial gain. There is a radical disconnect, in other words, between the musical content and the ethical context; both of these things, in turn, through their deep embeddedness, are themselves radically disconnected from—to use Cusick's own terminology—the 'transcendent' quality sometimes ascribed to musical experience. This is not to criticize the careful and vital work done by Cobussen, Cook, Cusick, or

¹⁰ This has been discussed by, among others, Adam Krims, 'Marxism, Urban Geography and Classical Recording: An Alternative to Cultural Studies', *Music Analysis* Vol. 2 No. 3 (October, 2001): 347–63 (see especially 357–9); Tia DeNora, *Music in Everyday Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), especially Chapter 5, 'Music as a Device of Social Ordering', pp. 109–150; and Marcel Cobussen in Cobussen and Nieslen, *Music and Ethics*, 108–10.

DeNora, but rather to suggest that if one is to examine the ethical content of writing about music 'as music' then it will be necessary to find a different model altogether within which to consider it.

The second category for the consideration of ethics within musicology is a phenomenological conception of music, one which imagines music as an event by which individuals relate to one another. Warren demonstrates that the objectifying uses of music described in the first category exist on a spectrum of ways music brings people together: at one extreme lies the weaponization of music for torture, while 'at the other extreme, music from others can be used to bond [*sic*] people together. The singing of mother to child, for example, creates or strengthens a bond between them'.¹¹ Warren is less immediately concerned with the specific objectifications of music, and more with what he sees as music's necessarily intersubjective quality: for him, it is on account of this inherent intersubjectivity that the question of ethics arises. As he puts it, 'musical experience involves encounters with others, and ethical responsibilities arise from these encounters'.¹² Here, the *phenomenon* of music is primary: in contradistinction to the importance of the musical (or sonic) object above, his approach foregrounds the fact of musical happening, which he sees primarily as something that brings people into contact with one another. From this perspective, music has a relationship with ethics (only) insofar as it is a means towards or representation of encounters between people. Consequently, this too presupposes an already-existent ethics: the ethics of encounters between people. Music does not so much create a particular ethics as serve as a site of ethical practice. As Warren says, 'in a nutshell, I inquire into how musical experience can *respond* to ethical responsibilities'.¹³

¹¹ Warren, *Music and Ethical Responsibility*, 9.

¹² *Ibid.*, 1.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 2 (emphasis added).

It is impossible to deny that the musical content fundamentally affects the situations in which the ethical actors find themselves; as Warren points out, ‘musical experience *alters* human relationships and *creates* ethical responsibilities’.¹⁴ But what is particular to this phenomenological approach is that both the ethics and the musical happenings are ‘prefabricated’—the music is, in fact, just as objectified as in the first category, where music was broadly aligned with mere sound. This can be seen especially in the work of DeNora: she carefully examines the ways in which music can structure experiences as diverse as shopping, parties, and sexual encounters.¹⁵ However, the ways in which music affects these situations is taken at face value; this is not to say that DeNora is unaware that different people may react differently to the same music, or that the same people may react differently to the same music at a different time—on the contrary, this is central to DeNora’s thesis that music can be a badge of individual agency and identity, and can delimit and define social function. Nevertheless, within all that variety, the actual process of moving from musical event to social signification is treated unproblematically: young people like a certain type of music, older people like another; a certain type of music is suitable for an edgy clothes store, a different type for a romantic meal. This puts DeNora’s work at a distance from the question of ‘writing about music’: if ‘writing’ is taken in its broadest (Derridean?) sense—to inscribe meaning, even if not in a physical text—then in DeNora’s research the music has already been ‘written about’. The people she interviews have already ‘written about’ music by attaching particular emotional, cultural, and social interpretations to it: DeNora is ‘writing about writing about’ music. I am more interested in the

¹⁴ Ibid., 3 (emphasis added).

¹⁵ See Chapter 5, ‘Music as a Device of Social Ordering’, 109–150, in DeNora, *Music in Everyday Life*.

primary scene of writing, something that is inaccessible to this phenomenological approach.

There are very good reasons why directly examining the ethical situation of musical objects is treated with some suspicion. As Warren says: ‘theorization about the role of human relationships in musical meaning has a profound impact upon perceived relations of music and ethics. The idea that music intrinsically holds meaning, for example, leads to the view that listening to certain types of music can have an irresistible impact upon the action or morality of listeners’.¹⁶ This is the suppressed category of musicological ethics: an approach that treats musical works as independent ethical agents. While Warren is especially keen to avoid such an approach, there is certainly precedent for it in the musicological and philosophical literature. The tradition stretches back at least to Plato, who claimed that certain modes promoted violent or lascivious behaviour, and therefore should be avoided to ensure the smooth functioning of his proposed utopian city state.¹⁷ Aside from the suppression of works by Jewish composers, the Nazi’s porous category of *entartete Musik* included modernist music, especially music in an atonal style, which it rejected as ‘degenerate’ — a morally fraught term — on quasi theoretical grounds.¹⁸ More recently, Roger Scruton has opined that the evolution of popular music, especially what he views as its limited compositional content, foments an unacceptable culture of narcissism and sexual indecency: unlike in the days of the courtly dance, he laments that ‘there are now few occasions when a young man can dance with his aunt, or a young girl with her boyfriend’s father. Dancing has become a sexual exhibition, since the music available for dancing has no other meaning

¹⁶ Warren, *Music and Ethical Responsibility*, 4.

¹⁷ Plato, *Republic*, trans. Christopher Rowe (London: Penguin Classics, 2012), 96–103.

¹⁸ See, for example, Erik Levi, *Music in the Third Reich* (New York: Macmillan, 1994), 82–123.

besides release'.¹⁹ He concludes that 'no one really dances with anyone else; instead, each dancer exudes a kind of narcissistic excitement which requires no acknowledgement from a partner besides similar gestures of display'.²⁰ Thus, Scruton has doubled his criticism: not only is this music unacceptable in and of itself, but it is unacceptable insofar as it prevents the sort of intersubjectivity outlined as the second category, above—the (presumably 'ethical') interaction of people through music.

The idea that certain types of music are innately (un)ethical has additionally been attributed to Susan McClary, most recently by Nick Zangwill, who senses in McClary's writing an attempt to launch 'a moral or political critique of instrumental musical experience itself', something he brands 'a mistake'.²¹ Indeed, Zangwill expressly links this approach with that of Scruton: 'I would reject not only the approach of many "New" musicologists, like McClary, but also those like Roger Scruton who would moralize our aesthetic experience'.²² The focus of Zangwill's examination is McClary's famous meditation on (male) sexual violence in Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, in an overarching argument about phallogocentrism in traditional analytical discourse surrounding tonality.²³ Zangwill initially rhetorically dismisses her theories as 'seem[ing] like a ludicrous delusion, like finding expressions of patriarchal values in clouds or rock formations', before

¹⁹ Roger Scruton, *The Aesthetics of Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 499.

²⁰ *Ibid.* Naturally, aside from his aesthetic judgment on the music, this opinion is clearly informed by his conservative view of what constitutes acceptable public behaviour, including the idea—presumably—that any type of sexual self-awareness is unacceptable in a context where family members interact.

²¹ Nick Zangwill, 'Friends reunited: Susan McClary and musical formalism', *The Musical Times* Vol. 155 No. 1929 (Winter, 2014), 67.

²² *Ibid.*, 67.

²³ Susan McClary, 'Getting Down Off the Beanstalk: The Presence of a Woman's Voice in Janika Vandervelde's *Genesis II*', *Minnesota Composers Forum Newsletter* February 1987. A revised version of this paper was printed in McClary *Feminine Endings: Music, Gender, and Sexuality* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), 112–31, with the explicit rape analogy replaced by a more general one of violence. Nevertheless, in context, the sexual undertones are unmistakable. Either way, the general point—in McClary's article and here—remains.

conceding that ‘there is a residual remainder that is somewhat compelling in her descriptions’,²⁴ and that ‘she writes well’ (faint praise indeed!).²⁵ While it might thus be argued that Zangwill misses some of the subtlety of McClary’s argument, considering the full implications of McClary’s proposals in a rigorously formalist way does hold some merit.

It is undeniable that McClary’s analysis of Beethoven has an ethical core to it: she sets out to make her readers feel uncomfortable with the violence in the symphony, a violence she claims parallels male (sexual) violence against women. Rather than dismiss or limit McClary’s claims, it is worth considering the logical conclusions of her claims; by measuring these against McClary’s actual conclusions, it is possible to learn a little about the nuance of her arguments—something that will eventually point the way to the third category of ethical thought in musicology, and the rest of this thesis.

In demonstrating that sonata form is situated within and contributes to misogynistic discourses, McClary shows how music can function as a sexist object, as Page 3 of *The Sun* or an offensive joke might do. Formal musical details are central to McClary’s reading of sonata form: the key areas (which are coded ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’), the harmonic architecture of conflict and resolution (which implies narratives of ‘problematic’ femininity and necessary domination), and the tonal plan’s manipulations of desire and satiety (which resonate with our embodied experiences of sexuality) are all essential for any properly ‘musical’ understanding of a piece.²⁶ It cannot, in other words, be rightly claimed that the misogyny is expressed extramusically: the ethics of the situation are central to the musical argument. And thus, thinking of McClary’s concrete example, the recapitulation in the

²⁴ Zangwill, ‘Friends reunited’, 64.

²⁵ Ibid., 68. I do not think it is necessary to spend any length of time on the obvious rebuttal to Zangwill’s opening criticism: that unlike clouds or (what I am assuming are natural) rock formations, symphonic music is human-made, and therefore perfectly able to absorb and project patriarchal values.

²⁶ McClary, *Feminine Endings*, 12–17.

first movement of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, what ethical procedure do these findings necessitate? Perhaps, just as one might shun Page 3 or refuse to watch a sexist comedian perform, one should have nothing more to do with that symphony.²⁷ And what about music that is nothing like Beethoven's Ninth Symphony: are Bach fugues, for example, ethically void spaces? Do they, ethically speaking, *mean nothing*?

This would be to make a very strong claim indeed. For one thing, to accept the modernist assumption that Bach fugues represent 'absolute music', and therefore signify nothing at all, ignores the fact that fugal writing, like sonata form, has long been interpreted as having certain ethical qualities justified along precisely the same Platonic lines, as Matthew Pritchard points out: '[August] Halm reactivated the age-old Platonic connection of music aesthetics with sociology and statecraft, comparing the sonata to the political regime of force exerted by the centralized state, while the fugue represented a "free form of society"'.²⁸ More generally, to continue to unreflectively engage the concept of 'absolute music' *at all* would be to ignore the thoroughgoing critique applied to the concept.²⁹ As Pritchard has also pointed out, there are compelling reasons to think that, historically, a range of music that would eventually come to be considered 'absolute', particularly the symphonic repertoire of the first Viennese school, was originally interpreted with reference to a widespread discourse of musical 'character', which had a fundamental ethical component to it.³⁰ In case there was a danger of thinking

²⁷ I am assuming — temporarily, for the purposes of this example — that this is the correct response to artefacts which contribute to misogynistic discourses.

²⁸ Matthew Pritchard, "'A Heap of Broken Images'"? Reviving Austro-German Debates over Musical Meaning, 1900–36', *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* Vol. 138 No. 1 (2013), 147.

²⁹ The most significant interventions on the subject have been Mark Evan Bonds, *Absolute Music: The History of an Idea* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014); Daniel Chua, *Absolute Music and the Construction of Meaning* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); and Sanna Pedersen, 'Defining the Term "Absolute Music" Historically', *Music & Letters* Vol. 90 No. 2 (2009): 240–262.

³⁰ Matthew Pritchard, "'The Moral Background of the Work of Art": "Character" in German Musical Aesthetics, 1780–1850', *Eighteenth-Century Music* Vol. 8 No. 1 (2012): 63–80.

that this, too, falls back into a 'Platonic' way of viewing the ethics of the musical work, Pritchard notes that, crucially, there was an intersubjective element to this construction of musical 'character': 'character was not immanent in the "music itself", but had to be constructed by a separate agent—the listening subject. In other words, the creation of character was not the sole responsibility of the composer, but invited, and indeed required, the participation of the listener and his or her imagination'.³¹

It is frustrating that this telling detail is not developed in Pritchard's account, since with it we have fallen unexpectedly into the third category of musical ethics: the ethics of musicological discourse. This is a metatheoretical consideration, one that analyses the way musicologists write about music. It is ironic, in fact, that Pritchard does not devote more time to the bilateral creation of musical character by listeners/critics as well as composers, since the question is so clearly presented in ethical terms: 'it was this *freedom* in the imaginative creation of character, both on the part of the composer [...] and on the part of the listener [...], that for Körner, as for Kant and Schiller, was of the greatest aesthetic worth'.³² The activity in this third category of musical ethics has largely been to protest formalist analysis's alleged circumscription of these freedoms, by imposing oppressive and exclusionary narratives—such as organicism, or autonomy—upon the music it studies, limiting (if not preventing entirely) the sort of creative imagination that Pritchard notes was a cornerstone of historical musical engagement.³³ Thus, the assumption that a Bach fugue would have no ethical content *is itself an ethically freighted statement*: the critiques of absolute music noted above are, partially, ethical

³¹ Pritchard, 'The Moral Background of the Work of Art', 71.

³² Ibid.

³³ Indeed, Pritchard himself is a fierce critic of music analysis, especially Schenkerian analysis: criticizing what he perceives as the oppressive tendency of Schenker's metaphysics as exemplified in his method of graphic analysis, he states that 'our choice of images is not just a pragmatic but also a political question; one which [...] might well begin to put in doubt the present legitimacy of music analysis as an institution'. Pritchard, 'A Heap of Broken Images', 173.

critiques. Indeed, this is the core of McClary's reading of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony: her point is not that the symphony, or Sonata Form in general, 'is' misogynistic, but rather that the linguistic apparatus that listeners have used to interpret it, and that musicologists have used to analyse it, are. The error that Zangwill makes is in separating out McClary's argument into two strands: 'the first concerns gendered descriptions of music; the second concerns gender in music itself'.³⁴ By incorrectly stating that McClary, aside from the claims she makes about the gendered language used to talk about music, 'also wants to make a more radical claim [...] that music *itself* is gendered', Zangwill misses the entire lesson of the New Musicology (and the sort of careful historical work undertaken by Pritchard): that, by and large, music 'is' (and has been) precisely what we make of it.³⁵

In light of the fundamentally discursive nature of (Western Art) music, the question migrates from the ethical signification of, for example, Bach fugues and Beethoven symphonies, to the ability to attach cultural signification to any music at all. The question is no longer, 'does this Bach fugue have an ethics?', but rather 'what is the ethics of the situation in which I am interacting with this Bach fugue?'. The autonomous, absolutist ways in which Bach fugues have traditionally been approached—that is to say, formally and analytically—has, of late, been fiercely 'ethicized', negatively. Thus the very ethical category I have so far been keeping provisionally open—interacting with music 'as music', rather than as sound, weapon, branding, or intersubjective medium—has by and large been closed down. The point of this thesis is to open it back up, to spend time with Bruno Walter's appeal to ineffability, and Cusick's invocation of 'transcendence': what can listening to music in this way tell us about ourselves? Warren criticizes an approach to musicology that 'does not take into account

³⁴ Zangwill, 'Friends Reunited', 63.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 64.

relationships with others and is limited to the listener/music relationship', suggesting instead that 'a more satisfactory account of music and ethics needs to consider the influence of music [...] in the ways people experience and respond to other people'.³⁶ There is certainly a great deal to understand about how music works in the way Warren suggests—that is, as a medium for the negotiation of human relationships. Nevertheless, his statement seems to exclude the possibility that precisely this listener/music relationship might itself be of historical, cultural, philosophical, and ultimately ethical importance. If music is what we make of it, then what does music become when we make it something precisely like this—something, that is, to think about primarily as 'music', whatever that is? This, of course, is no longer simply a case of musical ethics, and instead is first and foremost a question of musical ontology. This, then, must be the new starting point.

1.2: Subjectivity, Ontology, and Postmodern Musicology

1.2.1: Adam Krims and the Disciplining of Musical Deconstruction

An article by Adam Krims provides a useful starting point for a re-evaluation of musical ontology and the way it is constructed by music analysts and critics.³⁷ The poststructuralist commonplace that 'everything is a text' was a prime motivator for the decentring of musicological study away from 'the music itself' and onto a host of other concerns. In a practice which was widely aligned with deconstruction, traditional analytical methods were critiqued

³⁶ Warren, *Music and Ethical Responsibility*, 4.

³⁷ Adam Krims, 'Disciplining Deconstruction (For Music Analysis)', *19th-Century Music* Vol. 21 No. 3 (Spring, 1998): 297–324.

and alternatives put forward. In his article Krims provides a critique of those very critiques, showing how they fall short of their goals, and in some cases directly contradict the original aims of poststructuralist and deconstructionist thought. In what follows, Krims's arguments will be summarized, before being extended to show how a consideration of one specific area of postmodern musicology selected for criticism by Krims—the re-inscription of the self-present subject—provides an entryway for a consideration of musicological ethics.

Krims asserts that the original vitality of the deconstructive project has been 'disciplined' as part of its assimilation into music-analytical discourse. His fundamental arguments can be grouped into three distinct criticisms: first, that the centrality of the musical work to the analytical enterprise is not challenged; second, that music-analytical approaches to deconstruction do not adequately deconstruct the assumptions of music analysis itself; and third, that the continued inability to decentre the music-analytical linguistic field results, by extension, in the implicit re-inscription of a stable subject. It is necessary to look at each of these individually in greater detail.

First, Krims tackles the issue of polysemy, pointing out that recognizing the multiple possibilities of music's meaning is not the same as deconstructing music. He argues that 'there is a well-established tradition in music theory of debating which theories best describe certain bodies of music, and a well-established tradition of positing that (at least some) music is polysemous (or polystructural) enough to allow for many (if not an infinite) numbers of descriptions'.³⁸ It is a trope, in work of the kind he refers to, to advance analytical readings which may be challenging, controversial, tenuous, or unpopular (perhaps by measuring themselves against some philosophical yardstick other than the accepted standards of impersonality

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 304.

and autonomy) and then to defend those readings against charges of partiality, irrelevance or far-fetchedness by claiming them as only one possible interpretation among many. Krims takes issue with this limited version of deconstruction, arguing that it reorients Derrida's destabilizing example towards the creation of 'simply another possible analytical bottom line'.³⁹ Elaborating the problem of this noncommittal style, he says:

That it is 'one possible answer' and not the *only* answer does not bring it much closer to the realm of deconstruction. The latter denies the possibility of stable, self-present answers categorically; it emphatically does *not* assert the existence of multiple answers, or even multiple 'possible answer[s]'. This last phrase is more consistent with a generalized relativism than it is with the radical critique of metaphysics and representation associated with Derrida.⁴⁰

In other words, one of the significant lessons from the deconstructive heyday of the 1960s and 70s was emphatically *not* that art was capacious enough to contain multiple or infinite stable meanings, but rather that the nature of art (indeed, any 'text') was such that it made the stability of *any* meaning impossible. The type of approach highlighted by Krims and attributed to, among others, Susan McClary and Martin Scherzinger, relies on the notion of a pre-existent work from which partial but self-sufficient meaning can be extracted, and therefore in which contrasting but equally plausible meanings can happily coexist. 'Relativism' is the apt word: it critiques neither the possibility of analysis as the representation of prior meaning, nor indeed the 'accepted analytical standards of impersonality and autonomy' alluded to above, to which it provides an alternative, but not a refutation.⁴¹

³⁹ Ibid., 310.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 311 n. 64.

⁴¹ The political significance of what Krims terms 'relativism' will be teased out in Chapter Two.

Krims's first critique thus centres on New Musicology's ontology of music: the stability of the musical object at the centre of interpretation, and whether it is formed of discrete quanta of meaning that can be selected and discarded at will. His second critique is concerned with the construction of that musical object's alleged properties. Referring to an analysis by Robert Snarrenberg of Brahms's Intermezzo Op. 118, No. 2 which makes use of Schenkerian terminology, Krims notes that

what is surprising in Snarrenberg's usage is the extent to which the *music-theoretical concepts themselves* seem exempt from the radical critique of representation from which deconstruction [...] is inextricable. There is nothing wrong with engaging prolongational models; nor is the application of such models *necessarily* essentialist. [...] But Snarrenberg's analysis simply refers to prolongational conclusions, without any consideration of their status [...] There is no sign that the relationships being discussed are anything other than properties of the music itself.⁴²

In short, Krims takes issue with the idea that a deconstructive approach merely undermines the stability of 'meaning' in the more poetic sense—what a piece is 'about' or what it 'achieves'—rather than in the closer, more detailed sense intended by Derrida. If metalanguage is to be re-examined, *all* metalanguage, including analytical terminology, must be re-examined. In contrast with Krims, I will propose below that there are good reasons to treat certain technical labels not as metalanguage, but as inherent to musical language itself.

The third critique follows as a consequence of the second, and Krims chooses Lawrence Kramer's work as an example. He levels the same criticism at Kramer as he did with Snarrenberg, saying 'Kramer continually posits

⁴² Ibid., 304.

various properties of the music that are presumably intrinsic to it'.⁴³ He then goes on to point out the link between the more thoroughgoing deconstructive practices of Derrida et al (as opposed to Kramer's more tentative version) and the concept of the subject: 'the powerful critiques of the subject in deconstruction [...] rely partially on the notion that subjectivity is in some significant sense constructed linguistically [...] So, when the linguistic field turns out to be characterized by *différance*, its partiality and endless decentring may then be transferred, by inference, to the subject'.⁴⁴ He therefore concludes, *per contra*, that 'as long as music-theoretical (e.g. harmonic and contrapuntal) systems and designations (such as "tonal implication" or "structure") are taken as somehow self-evident in their designation [...], then they will themselves reinscribe the self-present listening subject'.⁴⁵

I will argue that the tacit re-inscription of the self-present subject is a hallmark of postmodern musicology, and therefore a principal contributor to its failure. Over the course of the rest of Part I, I will examine all of Krims's critiques of musicology's failed deconstructive practices from the perspective of subject-formation, with particular reference to the political and ethical consequences various attitudes to subjectivity imply. An early and vociferous critic of the New Musicology, Pieter van den Toorn, accused the critical turn of 'a kind of socio-political amplification of the self'.⁴⁶ While I do not share van den Toorn's concerns about the political motivation of the New Musicology, his phrase is a useful one, if unintentionally. A subtle change in emphasis will literally lay stress on what I consider the philosophical problem at the heart of contemporary musicology, and more broadly the postmodern epistemology within which is located: its unfortunate 'amplification of the

⁴³ Krims, 'Disciplining Deconstruction', 313.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 315.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 316.

⁴⁶ Quoted in Julian Horton, 'Postmodernism and the Critique of Musical Analysis', *The Musical Quarterly* Vol. 85 No. 2 (Summer, 2001): 343.

Self'. It is first necessary to examine the original target of Krims's critique of subjectivity, Lawrence Kramer, in greater detail, in order to extend Krims's observations beyond the original aims of his article, into a consideration of music's ontology, and musicology's ethics.

1.2.2: Lawrence Kramer and Subjectivity

Lawrence Kramer's approach to music criticism is one that is not only aware of, but proud of its interpretative fragility: 'to practice hermeneutics you have to give up the hunger for security while also clinging stubbornly to the claim that interpretations can attain to genuine knowledge'.⁴⁷ He has written persuasively about the way musicological interpretation does not reflect meaning, or falsely posit it where there is none, but rather brings it into being: 'musical interpretations are not, indeed, hypotheses; they are forms of activity, modes of performance with specific ends in view. But the performativity of these interpretations does not necessarily mean that they have no cognitive power'.⁴⁸ His implicit resolve, therefore, is that this form of investigation, this mode of knowledge, is as legitimate as any other: 'the claims of interpretation are both testable and contestable in relation to history, practice, logic, and reflection on the symbolizing process. But they are not accountable to the means or ends of empiricism because they address objects of knowledge of a different order than those of empiricism, objects to which empirical methods can at best be applied poorly'.⁴⁹

Concomitantly, Kramer criticizes the prioritization within musicology of those same empirical methods in the traditional techniques of formalist

⁴⁷ Lawrence Kramer, *Interpreting Music* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2011), 28.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

music analysis. He does not dismiss the validity of these analytical claims, but rather questions their primacy. He objects to the fact that hermeneutic readings of the sort he advocates are forced to justify themselves by means of a conceptually prior analytic reading, that ‘an independent analytic-technical description [...] must be provided as the basis of any claims about meaning. Analytic interpretation takes priority over worldly semantic interpretation’.⁵⁰ To which end, in a reading of Beethoven’s Piano Trio op. 70 no. 1 (“Ghost”), Kramer stresses the nonpriority of his analytic method: ‘the principle of nonpriority means that it does not matter where we start, with analytic description or hermeneutic intervention, nor even that we clearly distinguish one from the other’.⁵¹ This has as a logical consequence the possibility of inverting the assumption that hermeneutics must be grounded in analysis: ‘one result of this dual capacity is the currently counterintuitive idea that it is just as possible to give hermeneutic reasons for analytic claims as it is to give analytic reasons for hermeneutic claims’.⁵² After completing a reading of the trio, it is therefore inevitable that Kramer should make the following claim: ‘the analysis told us something about the world by encouraging the world to tell us something about the analysis. This procedure, moreover—and the point cannot be stressed too much—is completely reversible. We could have formed a cultural-historical interpretation [...] and found reasons for it in the analytic account of Beethoven’s Largo’.⁵³ As I will shortly argue, I do not agree that this is a viable (or ethical) model. For now, however, it is enough to observe Kramer’s striking refusal to prove his point: it may be significant that, despite all his claims, he did *not* reverse the traditional practice, and instead chose to follow the traditional schema about which he protested so fiercely.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 148.

⁵¹ Ibid., 151.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid., 157.

Nevertheless, Kramer talks a good poststructuralist game: he seeks to decentre the claims of metalanguage, and rejects the possibility of objectivity. Central to this is a vocal opposition to the idea of a stable self-present subject. Defending hermeneutics against the charge that it is 'little better than rationalized expressions of opinion', he draws attention to the 'the fiction [...] of a private, personal subjectivity external to both the musical work and the analytic process' that motivates the idea of formalist analysis's superiority.⁵⁴ However, once again, the application of his stance does not live up to his theoretical claims; Kramer's attitude towards the subject is, in fact, decidedly ambivalent. For example, after noting that 'the more detailed and complex our statements about musical meaning become, the more they may be seen to refer not to the music at all but to the rampant subjectivity of the interpreter',⁵⁵ he mounts not a defence, but a mitigation:

The claim that interpretations of music are subjective is true; the claim that their subjectivity renders them untrustworthy is false [...] The claim that interpretative statements leap cognitive gaps is true [...] The claim that the leaps invalidate the statements is false. The claim that statements interpreting music reflect back on the interpreter are true; the claim that this reflexivity merely appropriates the music as a mirror is false.⁵⁶

It is not the possible veracity of subjective statements that jars—as will be shown, the re-emergence of some kind of subjectivity is inevitable and necessary—but rather the unreflective persistence of the category of subjectivity itself that is out of place. Its continual reappearance in Kramer's writing raises questions about his commitment to the idea of the death of the

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 150.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 46.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 47.

subject upon which, as Adam Krims pointed out, so much of postmodern scholarship rests.⁵⁷

For example, especially in his earlier work, Kramer is explicitly concerned with the construction of subjectivity in musical experience. Nevertheless, as his work on Schubert *Lieder* demonstrates, the results of his activities are subtly—but crucially—different. Rather than constructing the subjectivity of the listener through an open interpretative practice, he seeks to *re-construct* a musical subjectivity, one which is most clearly aligned with the singing character themselves (and which thus is in some way already present): ‘what we can hear in the prelude is the scoring of a deeply interior kernel of subjectivity, the part of the speaker that will not cede pleasurable fantasy to unpleasant truth—that will not be a good girl’.⁵⁸ These subjectivities, then, are not opportunities for us to reconstruct ourselves, but masks to be worn and discarded at will: ‘a discrete meaning has to be cut out of the subject position addressed by the piece and pasted on the analytical field before the latter can be “resubjectified”. Like a little cut-out figure, a kind of paper doll, an idea of image from the subject position is stuck on the analytical description’.⁵⁹ Kramer notes the multiplicity of subjective interpretations available from a single analytical description, in this case of the cadenza at the end of Chopin’s Nocturne in E♭ major op. 9 no. 2:

⁵⁷ Obviously Krims is not alone in noting the centrality of the problematization of subjectivity to the postmodern project: the literature that comprises that facet of scholarship is vast, and wholly outside the narrow confines of this thesis. Overviews of the changing nature of subjectivity in relation to broader cultural theory include the following: for a general introduction, see Donald E. Hall, *Subjectivity* (New York and London: Routledge, 2004), especially pp. 118–30; for the changing place of subjectivity in literary studies, see Chapter 4 ‘Post-structuralism’, in Terry Eagleton, *Literary Theatre: An Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1983), 110–30; for a direct application of these issues to music and musicology, see Chapter 2, ‘Discourses’, in Alastair Williams, *Constructing Musicology* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2001), 21–47.

⁵⁸ Lawrence Kramer, *Franz Schubert: Sexuality, Subjectivity, and Song* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 40.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

Analysis can explain this event as an instance of triple neighbour motion around the fifth scale degree, perhaps adding that it both echoes the teasing play with dominant harmony in the A sections and decisively asserts the dominant that settles cadentially into the codetta. But this description says nothing about what the cadenza means—whether, for example, it suggests a moment of ironic detachment or even hostility towards the general atmosphere of sensitivity and refinement, or proposes an unsettling intrusion of objectified sonority on the work’s subjective field, or, in Tolstoyan terms, suddenly withdraws the generosity of subjective address in favour of an enigmatic gesture pointing to, but also veiling, the subjectivity of the composer.⁶⁰

Just as Krims suggested, rather than deconstructing these stable subjective associations, Kramer merely reinforces their mutual interchangeability, and the music’s polysemy: ‘the analytical identity of the cadenza is consistent, in different ways, with all of these suggestions’.⁶¹ Most troubling of all, however, is Kramer’s re-assertion of the priority of the subject: ‘the small figure, the cut-out, actually comes first, conceptually if not chronologically, so that the analytical field is actually produced as the extension of the subjective graft’.⁶² The entire theoretical backdrop of poststructuralism, then, has been reversed: rather than a linguistic field shot through with *différance* destabilizing the self-present subject, there is a stable (albeit disposable) cardboard subjectivity, one that gives stability in turn to an analytical field reduced to a mirror in which to admire one’s new metaphysical costume.⁶³

The confusion over the status of the subject is connected to a fundamental ambiguity over the nature of the relationship between the

⁶⁰ Lawrence Kramer, ‘The Mysteries of Animation: History, Analysis, and Subjectivity’, *Music Analysis* Vol. 20 No. 2 (July, 2001): 173.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ Again, there are several parallels between this mode of thought and a distinctly capitalist regime that prioritizes the circulation of commodities precisely because they provide the opportunity to construct (and discard) identities at will. This will be explored within a Lacanian framework in Chapter Two.

subject—however problematized—and the culture in which it is situated. Kramer explains his approach to this negotiation in the following way: ‘cultural musicology is above all a continuing effort to understand musical subjectivity in history. [...] The term does not refer to the condition of the self regarded as a private monad, but to the process whereby a person occupies a series of socially defined positions from which certain forms of action, desire, speech, and understanding become possible’.⁶⁴ Again, while at first glance this seems to be in line with the poststructuralist philosophy upon which cultural musicology is based, closer inspection reveals a series of crucial lacunae. First, Kramer’s historical bent, his ‘effort to understand musical subjectivity in history’, implies a historical subject that requires not construction, but explication. Second, his reference to ‘socially defined positions’ is decidedly structuralist: where does this society, this culture, spring from, that apparently can structure the actions, desires, speech and forms of understanding? It was to reject the entire premise of this question that poststructuralism was developed; to see it re-emerge here reveals problems within the construction of New Musicology’s underlying philosophy. Kramer avers that ‘music both reflects and helps to produce historically specific forms of subjectivity in the sense of lived positions. Far from being an obstacle, subjectivity is the medium in which music works, and through which it reveals its cultural significance’.⁶⁵ Once again, this raises more questions than it answers. How can music both reflect *and* produce subjectivity, since reflection clearly implies, as it did above, the prior existence of a stable subject? Furthermore, how can subjectivity be the medium in which music works, when it is also apparently the medium through which it is produced—or destroyed?

⁶⁴ Lawrence Kramer, ‘Musicology and Meaning’, *The Musical Times* Vol. 144 No. 1883 (Summer, 2003), 6.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 7.

This confusion is not confined to the work of Lawrence Kramer; it can be found in Gary Tomlinson's revisionist approach to historical musicology, too. Beginning in a similar fashion with a critique of traditional musical analysis, Tomlinson states that 'the ethnocentric approach [allegedly prevalent in music analysis] can tell us much about our own culture, but it has no access to Mozart's. It is bound to garble his musical signs'.⁶⁶ In its place, Tomlinson attempts to sketch a more tentative, self-aware, fallibilist notion of historical-analytical investigation: 'the [cultural] web is a construction of the historian, taking shape and gaining coherence from the reciprocal (and rich and haphazard) interaction of his evolving assumptions with his increasingly meaningful data, the events he selects for inclusion in the context. [...] There is no culture of sixteenth-century Mantua apart from our interpretations. [...] It is not [...] that sixteenth-century Mantua didn't [exist], only that we cannot know [it] directly, apodictically, but only in what we make of [it]'.⁶⁷ Unintentionally or not, Tomlinson has conjured an image not of a gently self-creating subjectivity, but an all-powerful historian-subject: far from being produced by the culture with which it interacts, Tomlinson's musicologist picks up and collates—if not creates altogether—cultures foreign in both space and time. This, surely, is the apotheosis of the Imperial colonizing subject that was one of the original targets of the postmodern revolution. Indeed, it is a type of subjectivity that Tomlinson criticizes himself, only a few pages later:

Analysts tacitly and arbitrarily assign to the works they study the meanings that arise from their own analytic ideologies. These are mostly rooted in Romantic ideas of genius, organicism, and absolute expressions; so in an ultimate analytic tautology we find Monteverdi madrigals, Bach fugues,

⁶⁶ Gary Tomlinson, 'The Web of Culture: A Context for Musicology', *19th-Century Music* Vol. 7 No. 3 (April, 1984), 357.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

Schumann songs, and Mahler symphonic movements all embodying Schenker's (and their analyst's more or less conscious) watered-down Hegelianism. This is ethnocentrism with a vengeance. And it is not a trap that analysts can hope to avoid without reference beyond the work itself, indeed beyond musical works in general. Without, that is, some effort at cultural interpretation.⁶⁸

If culture can only be made in the image of the historian, and yet precisely that approach is vigorously condemned, it would seem that musicology is in a double bind. Of course, the general aims of Tomlinson and Kramer are clear, but their rhetoric of interchange and self-doubt only clouds the fact that there is no clear ontology, no clear theory of subjectivity or culture, upon which to found their claims. On the contrary, at times they fall back on the same retrograde conception of the self-present subject that they intend to displace. In time, I will attempt to resolve these tensions through a dialectical approach to subjectivity and culture; for now it suffices to note that a hazy attempt to suggest a gentle interpretative practice, with somewhat woolly philosophical underpinnings, only serves to cloud the fundamental problem with postmodern approaches to music and musicology: the persistence of the subject.

Every writer's approach to subjectivity and culture has an effect on the style of the investigation they mount, and by extension the language they use to talk about it. Most relevant for the purposes of this thesis is the status of technical language, namely whether it is viewed as (in the pejorative sense) a subjective imposition on the object of study, or not. Kramer protests that 'Schenkerian analysis privileges the details that fit best into its schema of a "highly ramified contrapuntal process"'; by contrast, 'criticism privileges the details that carry the greatest expressive value, signifying power, and cultural

⁶⁸ Ibid., 360.

resonance. The two sets of details need not have much in common'.⁶⁹ Kramer does not seem to consider that deciding precisely which details carry the 'greatest expressive value, signifying power, and cultural resonance' is a highly mediated process, one which is fundamentally contingent on the subject position of the interpreter. That is to say, in common with the literature examined above, a coherent theory of the subject must *precede* the interpretative action, rather than—as Kramer and Tomlinson imply—follow it.

Equally, it is not at all clear that technical details and expressive value, signifying power, or cultural resonance are incommensurable, as Kramer claims. I will argue, for example, that certain technical elements of music—tonal resolution, formal structure, even 'highly ramified contrapuntal process[es]'—form part of the culture out of which certain music arose; an ethnographically aware analysis, therefore, would be forced to take these features into account when examining the music. This is a potential that Kramer himself recognizes, when he admits both that technical descriptions of music are of a different order to interpretative statements, and that the two are often linked: 'technical descriptions are, of course, themselves interpretive in the loose sense of being highly mediated, but they do not constitute interpretations in the critical-semantic-historical sense associated with hermeneutics [...]. It has mattered all the more when the types have overlapped, as they persistently tend to do'.⁷⁰ He also notes the importance of at least a minimal level of technical engagement for adequate interpretative practice: modelling musical interpretation on a quasi-dialogic 'scene of address', Kramer asserts that 'the subject who speaks in this address cannot say just anything [...] the scene of address brings certain exigencies with it,

⁶⁹ Lawrence Kramer, 'Criticizing Criticism, Analyzing Analysis', *19th-Century Music* Vol. 16 No. 1 (Summer, 1992), 78.

⁷⁰ Kramer, *Interpreting Music*, 148.

including the necessity to recognize the force of address and what it seems to be asking'.⁷¹ Using this communicative model is revealing: it suggests at least a minimal quantity of immanent meaning—or an attempt to convey meaning—presumably communicated through the parameters traditionally examined in analysis and decoded through technical description. An analysis that wilfully rejects these parameters, he says, 'alienates itself from the available resources of sense making [...]. As far as the music goes, there is nothing much we can do with it'.⁷²

In order to proceed, therefore, I make only one claim—a claim whose validity is already authorized by Kramer's hedging, above. In the analysis that follows, which I intend as a first step towards a method of writing about music that does not problematically introduce a self-present subject, I will assume that technical elements like dissonance, tonal/harmonic function, cadential cliché, and voice-leading are part of the music rather than subjective impositions on the part of a modernist, positivist, organicist subject. This returns us to Kramer's question of priority. It was seen, above, that Kramer asserted his analyses could begin either from the hermeneutic or the technical side, with one providing support for the other. The implicit justification for this is the poststructuralist truism that all meaning is constructed—*il n'y a pas de metalangage; il n'y a pas de hors-texte*—which, contrary to the subtle intentions of the original theorists, descended more commonly into a linguistic (and political) relativism.⁷³ However, while it may be true that the

⁷¹ Ibid., 49.

⁷² Ibid., 59.

⁷³ The first comment, 'there is no metalanguage', a widely quoted aphorism from Jacques Lacan. The status of metalanguage is an abiding concern for Lacanian philosophy, and thus versions of this statement are reasonably widespread in his output and that of his followers; nevertheless, the boldest assertion of the statement is in 'La Science et La Vérité', *Cahiers pour l'Analyse* Vol. 1 (1965), 18. The second 'there is nothing outside context' (often mistranslated as there is nothing outside the text) is from Jacques Derrida, *On Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1976), 158–9. A more detailed examination of French Poststructuralism, especially Lacan's philosophy, will take place in Chapter Two.

meanings we ascribe to music—such as tonic, dominant, unprepared dissonance, and so forth—are constructed (that is to say, they are not natural: one is enculturated into hearing and understanding them thus), it does not follow that one can easily do away with them as long as we are examining tonal music from the common practice era. To use Kramer’s own reasoning, ‘the claim that interpretations of music are subjective is true; the claim that their subjectivity renders them untrustworthy is false [...] The claim that interpretative statements leap cognitive gaps is true [...] The claim that the leaps invalidate the statements is false’.⁷⁴ If this is true for poetic language, then it must also be true of technical language, with the crucial exception that while the sort of poetic interpretations Kramer is defending might only hold for a relatively small interpretative situation, technical terminology articulates the conventions of comprehension for an enormous discursive community. This community might include not only anyone enculturated in the listening West today in the 21st century, but—and this is no small matter—the composers themselves. Again, Kramer’s ethnographic sensitivity and linguistic bent rebel against him: if one assumes, as he seems to do, that pieces of music are at least partly acts of communication, and that responsible hermeneutic criticism takes as its principal responsibility the effort to understand the communicative intent and significance of that text and the culture it emerged from, it seems inescapable that the technical parameters within which those composers wrote—some of which, for example in the case of the fugues of J. S. Bach, were extraordinarily stringent—should form part of that investigation.

Pace Krims, therefore, I do not think it audacious to include from the very beginning, and *a priori*, a limited amount of technical detail in the analysis that follows: affording privilege to readings that operate within the

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 46–7.

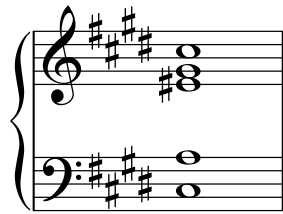
stylistic norms that were in force as the composer wrote is not an intentional fallacy, but rather an attempt to understand the music in terms of the culture that gave rise to it. Equally, it is important to point out that this attitude does not rule out a gap between the written account of music, and the 'reality' of the music in all its multifaceted being. I am not claiming, in other words, that technical description perfectly and absolutely captures any absolute 'truth' about the music it describes. In fact, on the contrary, the main achievement of analysis below is to bring this gap to life, making it the productive centre of musicological investigation. Neither do I seek to invalidate alternative modes of engagement with this, or any other, music. The fact that the technical aspects examined below are only cultural constructions would become obvious if the piece were encountered by a member of an entirely different musical community, for example a non-Western listening subject: their experience of the rhythmic, harmonic, melodic, and structural aspects of the music would be entirely different, due to the distinct cultural background against which interpretation would take place. There is nothing to suggest that these experiences, the interpretations to which they give rise, or the emotions they may or may not provoke, are incorrect or invalid. Indeed the appreciation of this difference is crucial: the fact that a certain approach to musical criticism is contingent on a chosen perspective does not invalidate it, either as a form of musical experience or an object of research. Rather, it raises an important question: what is to be gained by approaching music from this perspective? Which is to say, it is a problem of ethics.

As I have shown, a certain brand of postmodern musicology considers the technical analysis of tonal music to be ethically suspect. I will argue instead, beginning in Chapter Two, that this is not the case, and that the careful engagement with music's conceptual elements can be a positive ethical force. First, however, a case study will show that the technical

examination of music and the destabilization of the self-present analytical subject are not mutually exclusive, but can rather be mutually reinforcing.

1.3: Case Study

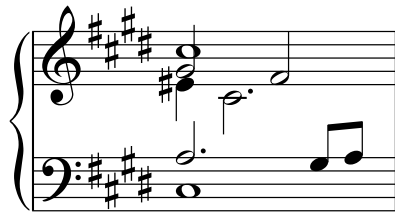
The analysis begins with a chord:



Example 1.1: *A problem chord*

How could this chord be described? C# major with an added minor sixth. A mixture of C# major and C# augmented (the G double-sharp written enharmonically as an A natural). Should it even be called a chord—something which implies tonality? Perhaps ‘simultaneity’ would be more appropriate. Pitch-class set 4-19B. The reason it is difficult to decide is that putting a name to a something without knowing its context is an almost impossible task: *il n’y a pas de hors-texte*. Then of course, before even looking at the context, it is necessary to consider the question of why one might want to label a chord (or a simultaneity) in the first place. Is not the act of naming something inherently restrictive? Since naming—especially harmonic labelling such as is called for here—implies function, which itself implies relating the part to the whole and vice versa, is the process of analysis not a gradual shutting-down of interpretative freedom? This is the criticism of analysis: that as every analytical definition implies the next, as the ‘naming circle’ expands outwards drawing even more of the music into its purview, so freedom declines in inverse correlation. What started as an open-minded search for context—the

better to 'objectively' understand a small musical function—slowly becomes the imposition of a single interpretative perspective, a unique and uniquely restrictive *subject-position*. Opening up the analytic process does not grant greater flexibility, it merely extends the event-horizon of a selfish black hole, spaghettifying what was once an open, polysemic musical construction into a single linear thread. As will be shown, this is not necessarily the case.



Example 1.2: *The chord in its local context*

Hearing the whole bar sets up a local function, and therefore the possibility of naming the chord. It is tonally functional, but apparently contrapuntally constructed: this generates new expectations—expectations of tonal resolution and harmonic movement. We can clearly see that a swift resolution in the first and second alto parts leaves an F# minor chord: it appears retrospectively that this was not a type of C# major chord at all—the E# and G# were not functional elements of the chord, but contrapuntal ornaments, a double appoggiatura elaborating F# minor. This seems a fairly secure reading, and only two potential difficulties remain: assuming this piece is situated within the common-practice contrapuntal tradition, how are those dissonant notes prepared, and why is the F# minor chord in second inversion? It is necessary to look at the whole passage in question.



Example 1.3: J. S. Bach, *Fugue in C# minor, BWV 849/2, bars 110–end*

In fact, putting the chord in its broader context does not solve those two difficulties, but makes them more acute. The chord appears in the last few bars of Bach's *Fugue in C# minor, BWV 849/2*, from book one of *The Well-Tempered Clavier*. The context now solidifies: the expectations are those of the common practice era, specifically Bach's vocabulary and the conventions of a 'discursive community' broadly identified with late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century Germany. The additional musical information has likewise affected the perception of the contrapuntal motion around the mystery chord: it is clear that the E# is not strongly prepared, and given the immediate motion of the bass line and the melody, along with the harmonic and melodic argument of the preceding two bars, the arrival of the E# (and the continuation of the sustained G#) makes this event seem much more like a perfect cadence onto C# major. Nevertheless, it is clear that the A \flat is not prepared either, and thus the question of what is going on in that bar goes unanswered. To summarize, there is a chord that, at the most immediate level, functions as a well-behaved F# minor chord with a double appoggiatura; in context, however, it behaves (and sounds) more like a bizarre C# major chord. Moreover, a semitone clash between G# and A \flat , neither adequately prepared or resolved, frustrates both readings by clouding the harmonic-contrapuntal argument of each.

It might be tempting to leave the question open at this point, and suggest that the responsible thing is to accept the ambiguity of this chord as an inherently valuable property; certainly, advancing any further analytical

arguments invites potential criticisms that I might be imposing a unified analytical reading on an irreducible multiplicity. That analysis, to varying degrees, tends towards impositions of single, linear readings over the celebration of ambiguity—or, to use Krims's word, polysemy—has been an abiding criticism from various quarters. It is worth considering the specific criticisms against musical unity; although not a perfect fit with the example analysed here—since the debate centres on the 'unity' of a single chord, rather than the larger expanse of an entire passage or movement—the terms in which the criticism is set resonate with the concerns presently under discussion.

Alan Street has argued that the analyst's quest for a unified musical vision has the result that 'disjunction, conflicts and diversities are thereby resolved within a single overall perspective', largely by suppressing or ignoring discrepant details which might work against this vision.⁷⁵ Jonathan D. Kramer has discussed bars 247–51 of Mozart's *Symphony in G minor*, K. 550 in the following way (drawing, as he states, on an unpublished analysis by Brian Hyer):

[Bars 247–51] have neither motivic precedent nor consequent, they do not appear in the corresponding place in the exposition, and—most significantly—they are motivated not by any global harmonic plan but only by the tonal logic of the preceding few measures [...]. This passage is exciting because of its textual disunity rather than any sense of belonging organically. The textual unity it contains is, by comparison, rather ordinary [...]. A traditional analysis would point to the voice-leading connections between this passage and the previous and subsequent music, thereby positing both unity and continuity;

⁷⁵ Alan Street, 'Superior Myths, Dogmatic Allegories', *Music Analysis* Vol. 8 No. 1/2 (March–July, 1989), 80.

this passage is not, after all, divorced from the movement's continuity in every possible way.⁷⁶

He concludes by asserting that performing such an analysis—one that demonstrates its continuity with previous music, and so forth—'privileges continuity over discontinuity, textual unity over disunity', adding that 'it is the prejudices of the analysis that make us more able, and more willing, to understand and accept the former over the latter'.⁷⁷ Therefore, in a later article, he argues that 'disunity needs to be appreciated not only as the absence of unity, but also as a musical experience in and of itself'.⁷⁸

While the motivations for this critique are understandable, it nevertheless raises awkward questions. After an initial diagnosis of 'disunity', it is hard to see how an analysis might progress: moments like bars 247–51 of the G minor symphony, or the mysterious chord at the end of Bach's C# minor fugue become aesthetic black holes into which we cannot look, or, in Wittgensteinian fashion, must pass over in silence. The reason *those particular* notes were chosen, even for their 'disunified' effect, seem inaccessible, and the particular significance of that purported disunity—why, for example, disunity might be appropriate at that particular time—is not considered. Alan Street is even more explicit, drawing a link between formalist analytical tools, the Romantic ontology that supposedly undergirds them, and a deceitful reinscription of subjective wholeness (of a piece with the kind that concerns the earlier part of this chapter):

⁷⁶ Jonathan D. Kramer 'Beyond Unity: Towards an Understanding of Musical Postmodernism', in Elizabeth West Marvin and Richard Hermann (eds.), *Concert Music, Rock, and Jazz since 1945: Essays and Analytical Studies* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 1995), 16.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ Jonathan D. Kramer, 'The Concept of Disunity and Musical Analysis', *Music Analysis* Vol. 23 No. 2–3 (2004), 362. The article by Robert P. Morgan, to which Kramer's is a response, is 'The Concept of Unity and Music Analysis', *Music Analysis* Vol. 22 No. 1–2 (2003): 7–50.

The mystified state of organist consciousness originally evolved from the supposed capacity of the aesthetic to heal the division between subject and object through a final, transcendent reconciliation of sensuous cognition with conceptual understanding. Equally plain is the fact that faithful realization of the aesthetic depended on confirmation of the symbol—a fusion of signification with participation—as the only genuinely self-present mode of expression. As a result the blurring of language and reality became the primary model for converting culture in to nature [...]. Reversing the definition, therefore, the essence of formalism can be seen as the symbolic wish to identify the wholeness and integrity of the interpretative image with that of the work itself.⁷⁹

The chain is clear: assertions of unity imply that the unified analytical ‘image’ is identical with the object being analysed itself—that the musical object is itself unified, and not just the analyst’s perception of it. This expression of faith in the perfected ability of language (‘culture’) to capture reality (‘nature’) itself covers the modernist anxiety of profound disconnection between ourselves as subjects and the world as observed object. Thus the formalist project is a way of taming the aesthetic realm as a site where, finally, nature in its infinity can be comprehended in perfected language, bringing about, as Street terms it, a ‘transcendent reconciliation’. The negative connotations that thus cluster around certain music theoretical concepts—‘analysis’, ‘formalism’, even ‘conceptual understanding’ itself—seemingly make any kind of prolonged or specialized theoretical examination of music impossible, leaving the discipline fundamentally unmoored—especially when confronted with moments such as the end of Bach’s Fugue in C# minor BWV 849.⁸⁰

⁷⁹ Alan Street, ‘Superior Myths, Dogmatic Allegories’, 101–2.

⁸⁰ For an account of the nervous atmosphere within music analysis following the critiques of the 1980s and 90s, see Julian Horton ‘In Defence of Musical Analysis’, keynote speech presented to the Society for Music Analysis’s ‘Theory and Analysis Graduate Students’ Conference’, Royal Holloway, University of London, 2 May 2014. Published in the Society for Music Analysis Newsletter (September, 2014): 11–30 (see especially 11–15) <http://www.sma.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/SMA_newsletter_Sep-2014.pdf> (accessed 29 May 2017)

One might consider the end of this fugue similar to the moments of disunity noted by Jonathan D. Kramer and others: one way of conceptualizing the chord is as a moment wherein each of the dissonant harmony notes (the tenor A \flat , the second alto E \sharp , and the first alto G \sharp) pulls the music in a different direction, each acting as a ‘wrong note’ under different readings. To demonstrate this, there follows three recompositions of that bar, each removing a different one of those notes, and providing a possible function for that chord. In so doing, I hope to demonstrate that the application of even a limited number of traditional analytical tools—or at least a classical analytical mindset—does not necessarily reinforce a positivist approach to music, and does not of necessity falsely reinscribe a stable self-present analyzing subject. On the contrary, careful analysis can participate in the project of decentring the subject, and can reinforce interpretative freedom as much as any other critical approach.

First, the tenor A \flat is removed:

The image shows a musical score for the first recomposition of the end of the fugue in C# minor, BWV 849/2. The score is written for piano and consists of two staves: a treble staff and a bass staff. The key signature is C# minor (three sharps: F#, C#, G#). The time signature is 4/4. The score shows a sequence of chords and melodic lines. Below the bass staff, there are figured bass notations: 7 43 - 6 4 - 7 43 - 6 4 - - - 5 43.

Example 1.2: J. S. Bach, *Fugue in C# minor*, BWV 849/2, bars 110–end. *First recomposition*

This recomposition produces a perfect cadence to the major tonic (with a stylistic added seventh), pushing up further to the minor subdominant, before resolving back to the tonic with a *tierce de Picardie*. This is an extremely common cadential trope in Bach’s works, used in eleven other minor-key pieces in the first volume of the *Well-Tempered Clavier*—which is to say, almost half. This standard formula is strongly implied by both the melody and the large-scale harmonic motion; only the anticipated A \flat confounds the reading.

Removing the E# gives another possibility:

Example 1.3: J. S. Bach, *Fugue in C# minor*, BWV 849/2, bars 110–end. *Second recomposition*

Here the harmony jumps immediately to the subdominant minor, with a suspended G# adding contrapuntal interest. Subtly different in effect, this is a far less common harmonic gambit; interestingly, however, it rhymes with the final cadence of its pendant piece, the preceding *Prelude in C# minor*:

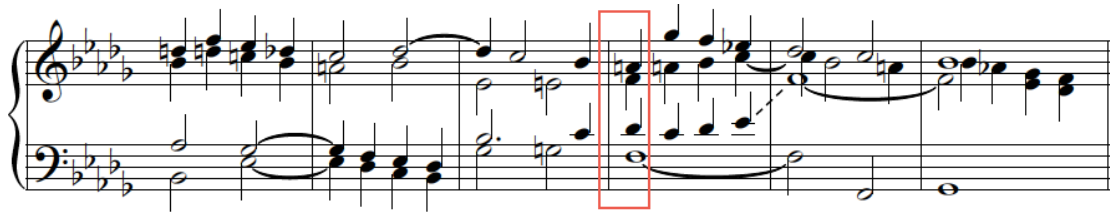
Example 1.4: J. S. Bach, *Prelude in C# minor*, BWV 849/1, bars 38–end

Here, too, the harmony moves directly to iv_4^6 with a suspended G#, before moving to the tonic major. Heard together, then, the final cadence of the second piece might sound like an intensification end of the first.

Finally, by removing the suspended G#, a third possible reading emerges:

Example 1.5: J. S. Bach, *Fugue in C# minor*, BWV 849/2, bars 110–end. *Third recomposition*

Here, the unusual $iv_{\#3}^6$ chord inhabits a liminal space between the tonic major (sounding as it does like $C\#$ augmented) and a minor subdominant with a 7–8 appoggiatura. This unusual harmony is not without precedent; in the fugue in $B\flat$ minor of Volume 1 of the *Well-Tempered Clavier* (which like the $C\#$ minor fugue is highly chromatic and in five parts, although only four are active in the extract below), a similar chord appears towards the end:



Example 1.6: J. S. Bach, *Fugue in $B\flat$ minor*, BWV 867/2, bars 59–64

The local context is different, since the movement is onto an altered version of the global dominant in root position (or an altered tonic in second inversion depending on one's perspective) rather than a form of tonic or subdominant; nevertheless, it demonstrates Bach using this unusual, unstable chord to heighten the tension in the final moments of a chromatically fraught piece. It is also interesting to note that, in the final bar of the example from the $B\flat$ minor fugue, the interrupted cadence moves V–IV, just as in the second hypothetical recomposition (although here the subdominant is in first, rather than second inversion). The possibility of reading the final cadence of the $C\#$ minor fugue as a bold intensification and/or conflation of both processes—interrupted cadence and chromatic augmented chord—presents itself.

The three notes singled out as possible interlopers have given rise to three ways of interpreting the chord Bach is playing with in this bar. The chord's function remains undecidable, while at the same time being crystal clear: even before the analysis began in earnest, it was clear that the phrase, having set up a perfect cadence in the tonic, goes on to thwart it with an

intensely chromatic (and therefore dramatic) chord, pushing the harmony towards the subdominant area long enough for a final statement of two of the three fugal subjects, over a plagal cadence. The relationship between this higher level of clarity and material ambiguity (or what Jonathan D. Kramer might call 'perceptual unity' and 'textual disunity'), and the specific process used to uncover it means that none of the usual approaches to such fraught moments have been taken.⁸¹ It is not possible, for instance, to pick one reading as the 'correct' one, and to make an argument that this is how the piece 'should' be heard. Not only would this (rightly) attract criticisms of chauvinistic formalism, but it would actively work against the text: the striking thing about Bach's chord is that it is *not* any one of those readings, which is what makes it interesting.

For similar reasons, it would not be satisfactory to recognize the merits of all three readings, thereby authorizing the potential for different people to choose different readings, or even the same person to hear different readings at different times—in other words, a polysemic approach. Each of those 'analytical bottom lines', as Krims memorably puts it, is equally distant from the actual text: it is obvious that this chord is *not* (for example) an augmented chord—and that is the point. Paradoxically, however, the different interpretative strands not only undermine and invalidate each other, but complement each other as well. On the one hand the possibility of interpretation number three cuts across the stability of interpretation number two; on the other hand, the way both interpretations reach out intertextually to other pieces within the collection, the way they both intensify, conflate and distil processes in those intertexts, means that the competing readings simultaneously enrich as well as destabilize each other.

⁸¹ For 'perceptual' and 'textual' unity, see Jonathan D. Kramer, 'Beyond Unity'. He states, for example, that 'since perceiving is an ordering process, perceptual unity is certainly not remarkable. Any music that makes even a modicum of sense to a listener is understood to possess perceptual unity' (14).

This, then, appears to be a truly deconstructive analysis, but it is not a nihilistic one: the third option, the rejection of all readings, and the assertion that an inability to pinpoint a single interpretation demonstrates it to be fundamentally unanalysable, is equally wrongheaded. It was noted above that such rejections—the privileging of disunity and difference over unity and comprehension—were justified by the suspicion that an act of analysis in some way took the interpreter further away from the music, by narrowing the richness of the musical object. This is clearly not the case here: each stage of analytical scrutiny uncovered another level of potential musical meaning: the process continued without a sense of necessary closure, and the analysis could have continued indefinitely, at each moment uncovering new interpretative pathways without ever settling on any one ‘unified’ reading. The analytical process, in other words, was completely open. For, ironically, to christen a moment ‘disunified’ or ‘unanalyzable’ is only to reinscribe the master signifier of unity: one still relates the construction of a piece of music to the concept of unity, but negatively. The only difference is that this inaccessibility is now valorized, except that without the ability to scrutinize the inner workings of this aestheticized analytical void, it is disunity rather than unity that appears positively theological. In this way, postmodern received wisdom is turned on its head: surrendering to the void of disunity closes interpretative procedure; careful and self-conscious analysis creates the possibility of continually fruitful interpretation.

The fact that supposedly emancipatory interpretations of musical moments as ‘disunified’ or ‘unanalysable’ nevertheless smuggle analytical forms within them (albeit negatively) is summed up by Julian Horton, who criticizes the prioritization of allegedly empty subjective assessments over analytical processes: ‘it is not that analysis suppresses the subjective in musical experience, but rather that placing an emphasis on immediacy obscures the

fact that it always collapses back into the analytical'.⁸² Analytical judgments, of one type or another, are always with us; the least we can do is be honest about it. Most importantly, examining the chord does not send us further and further away from it, either towards a formalist-chauvinist ideological perspective (as anti-analysts might claim), or towards an unreflexive and undeclared stable—if 'postmodern'—subjectivity (as I have accused Kramer, among others, of doing); rather, it draws inward, deeper into the musical text, producing richer material the more is asked of it, but never settling on self-present meaning. Horton has accused the obsessively sceptical postmodern attitude towards music analysis of leading to a 'spiralling discursive self-referentiality that becomes at each stage arithmetically more distant from the objects of music history'—that is to say, away from the musical materials themselves; in this chapter, I have alleged that what it spirals towards is an undisclosed re-inscription of the self-present subjectivity of the analyst, no matter the strength of their protests.⁸³ By contrast, I would argue that the approach outlined here leads to an entirely different subjective spiral, one more in line with the developments of poststructuralist theory upon which the New Musicological project was originally founded, towards the fundamental 'textuality'—the ultimate undecidability—of the musical object, that which gives it its richness.

If one accepts my original—minimal—injunction, that certain elements of music theory are proper to the musical text itself, such as contrapuntal norms, concepts of local and global (i.e. tonal) dissonance, and standard harmonic labels (chord names and functions, i.e. 'subdominant' and 'tonic'), then the analytical process begins with no subjective imposition onto the musical material. As far as possible, the music is allowed to present itself in all its multiplicity. Thus, the subjective position is in fact formed in response

⁸² Horton 'Postmodernism', 357.

⁸³ Horton, 'Postmodernism', 356.

to the musical material itself—the subject becomes that position from which the music is observable in that multiplicity, and as such, the subject changes in response to the analytical process, so that it can encompass the ongoing development of the interpretation. The analytical process becomes a dialectical one. The *process* of naming produces new insight, but the perpetual postponement of the *act* of naming allows that process to continue relentlessly. Thus the two opposing impulses—to name, and to refrain from naming—push each other forward relentlessly, spiralling further into music and music history. The subject position that is formed in response to this process inevitably dialectically evolves in step with it: the inability to take up a stable position in relation to the musical object (‘do I perceive it as a subdominant? Or as an altered tonic?’) is nothing more than the relentless instability of the subject position itself. It is a fractured subjectivity because it is the perspective formed onto an inherently fractured object: in other words, the subject position comes *after* the object, rather than before it, and neither settles into self-presence, because one produces the other. What is crucial, at least for the purposes of this thesis, is that while this approach is fully responsive to—indeed, it enables—the decentring of the subject ushered in by poststructuralism (and, more specifically, the New Musicology), it is entirely contingent on the use of music theory and music analysis. As has been demonstrated, a disavowal of theory and analysis would not only frustrate this process, but actively work against it.

Two ethically freighted consequences of this exercise are already coming into focus. First, if the political critiques of the New Musicology relied to any extent on their critique of subjectivity, then the fact that this approach follows that critique through to its fullest extent suggests that it too might be politically (and ethically) ramified. Second, and more abstractly, questions of subjectivity are always ethically implicated since they raise the question ‘what sort of subject do I want to be?’. This mode of musicological engagement has

an ethos because it prescribes a way of interacting with a (musical) world: to be the type of subject that is formed in response to the being of the world, constantly unsettling the solidity of that world in a continuous dialectical motion not only to uncover the buried meanings that only reveal themselves in this disturbed motion, but to uncover the most profound meaning of all, that stable meaning, like stable subjectivity, is impossible. The ramifications of such a subject position will be elucidated in Parts II and III of this thesis; before that can be done, it is the work of Chapter 2 to examine in more detail the direct political consequences the of the as-yet unreconstructed New Musicology, and the type of musicological engagement it advocates.

Chapter Two: The Ethics of Postmodernism

2.1: Modernism and Postmodernism

Alastair Williams writes that ‘the new musicology’s “discovery” that music is a contextual art is strikingly ironic when one considers that the most developed existing theory of modernism—Adorno’s *Aesthetic Theory*—was written by a man fascinated by the intersections of music, sociology and philosophy’.¹ In puncturing the discipline’s ‘cultural turn’ so pithily he draws attention to a crucial truth of postmodernism: it is substantively identical to modernism. If there is any novelty in the movement, then it is only a difference in attitude towards the tenets of modernism. While the distinction between modernism and postmodernism is a fraught topic of debate, for our purposes it can be most usefully understood as responding to the same anxieties, often with the same answers, while valuing those answers completely differently.

For example, the constructedness of meaning, the death of naturalism, the necessity of choosing to interpret rather than passively receiving representation, are all modernist anxieties which were explored to their fullest extent in avant-garde art. This trend reached crisis point when no more extreme statement of meaning’s arbitrariness and abstraction could be made, as Zygmunt Bauman explains:

The natural limit of the avant-garde was reached in the blank or charred canvas, the erased Rauschenberg drawings, the empty New York gallery at Yves Klein’s private viewing, the hole dug up by Walter de Maria in Kassel, Cage’s silent

¹ Alastair Williams ‘Torn Halves: Structure and Subjectivity in Analysis’, *Music Analysis* Vol. 17 No. 3 (October, 1998), 281.

piano composition, Robert Barry's 'telepathic exhibition', empty pages of unwritten poems. The limit of arts lived as a permanent revolution was self-destruction. A moment arrived when there was nowhere to go.²

Postmodernism, having fully understood the impossibility of meaning and the contingency of interpretation, rather than either fighting this conclusion—determinedly attempting meaningfulness in the teeth of the void—or abandoning hope altogether, simply embraced emptiness, producing ever more ways of saying much the same thing: that nothing, really, could be said. As Susan McClary put it, postmodernism was 'revelling in the rubble'.³

This affected not only the production of art under the postmodern regime, but also the way art was thought about. Indeed, the two were fundamentally linked, as Robert Hughes, one of the fiercest critics of the obsessively postmodernist New York scene of the 1980s, points out: 'theory tended to be raised above practice and making', which resulted in an 'exaggerated drift toward the conceptual'.⁴ The specific materiality of the artwork was declared redundant—inevitably, since postmodern philosophy posited an insurmountable disconnect between the object of art and the meaning it conveyed (or rather, could *not* convey). But this conceptual element was also hamstrung, since the only concept that could be put across under such a regime was that there was *no* concept; it was this sort of thoroughgoing assault on the very idea of art—now neither craftsmanship nor communication—that could lead Stephen Melville to declare that

² Zygmunt Bauman *Postmodernity and its Discontents* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1997), 100.

³ 'Revelling in the Rubble: The Postmodern Condition' is the title of the fifth and final chapter of McClary's book, *Conventional Wisdom* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2000), 139–170.

⁴ Robert Hughes, *Nothing if Not Critical*, (London: The Harvill Press, 2001), 12.

'painting turned out, at its core, not to be painting at all but merely the deployment of an object in space'.⁵

Naturally, this is true; nevertheless, one might be forgiven for thinking that considering painting as 'merely the deployment of an object in space' is a strangely useless way of thinking about it. Even setting any philosophical objections (temporarily) aside, such a view raises the question of why one might continue to produce art, knowing it was so useless. An unkind critic might suggest that, if all art were merely an exploration of the impossibility of meaning, the world only required one example of such an artwork—unless of course there were something specifically valuable about that second, third or hundredth intervention, unless that 'object deployed in space' itself had something specific to recommend it. But that would merely re-instate the objecthood of art—the idea that it might contain something in and of itself to make it worthwhile—which is precisely what postmodernism purports to destroy. Alternatively, one might see in the continued production of such art, despite its self-declared uselessness, a confirmation of Adorno's theories on the 'culture industry', insofar as an 'empty' artwork, the craftsmanship of which is at best irrelevant, at worst non-existent, conforms in nearly every respect to Adorno's notion of a commodified artwork.⁶ The postmodern critical project might then be seen as complicit in the project of late capitalism by providing a theoretical justification for the entrance of commodity circulation into the artistic sphere, hitherto held back by precisely those modernist values—transcendence, and inherent value—which it sets out to destroy.

⁵ Stephen Melville, 'Postmodernism and art: postmodernism now and again', in *The Cambridge Companion to Postmodernism*, ed. Steven Connor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 88.

⁶ The most thorough, and most famous, exposition of Adorno's theory of the commodification of music is of course his article "On Popular Music", with the assistance of George Simpson, in *Essays on Music*, ed. by Richard Leppert (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2002), 437–69.

As blunt as that reading might seem at first glance, examining in greater detail the relationship between artworks and their interpreting subjects under postmodernism will reveal exactly this sort of complicity, in turn raising important questions regarding the ethics of such critical procedures. In order to do this, it is worthwhile returning once again to postmodern constructions of subjectivity.

2.2: Towards a Critique of Postmodern Musicology

Stephen Melville, writing about a series of drawings by Robert Longo, describes the effect of their deliberate ambiguity: ‘one is simply self before the image with its striking salience and with its opposed and undecidable readings’.⁷ The construction of the art, in other words, demands a prior subjectivity in order to understand it—just as in Kramer’s analyses in the previous chapter. Here, however, the nature of the art object requires this perspective; it is a form that is itself a collation, and demands the activity of collation in response. This is observable in the Longo sketches (which provoke ‘opposed and undecidable readings’), but even more so in, for example, the musical work of John Zorn—an intentionally confusing, contradictory assemblage of composition and quotation from a dizzying array of sources and in a dizzying array of styles. As Jonathan D. Kramer says, ‘the perceiver must assume the burden of rendering his or her perception of it coherent. To make sense of a chaotic piece like [Zorn’s] *Forbidden Fruit*, for example, the listener must invest some effort. And, since the ordering is largely the listener’s the piece might well mean or even be very different things to different perceivers’.⁸ These examples, then, are one step beyond the polysemous quality that Krims alleged was being read into art under

⁷ Melville, ‘Postmodernism and art’, 85.

⁸ Jonathan D. Kramer, ‘Beyond Unity’, 28.

postmodernism; here, art is a collation of ambiguous, non-signifying objects to such a degree that there are not just multiple meanings, but no meaning whatsoever. Not in the Derridean sense of no *fixed* meaning, but rather a chaotic emptiness that demands the interpreting subject (which must, therefore, be prior) provide one, in effect completing the act of collage left incomplete by the artist. A criticism of postmodernism on its own terms, insofar as it undermines the destabilizing of the self-present subject, is therefore inevitable.

Furthermore, thinking postmodernism from the perspective of 'collation' makes clear its links with late capitalism. As Steven Connor notes, 'one definition of postmodernism might be: that condition in which for the first time, and as a result of technologies that allow large-scale storage, access, and reproduction of records of the past, the past appears to be included in the present, or at the present's disposal, and in which the relation between present and past has therefore changed'.⁹ Put differently, there is an omnivorous quality to the postmodern subject, enabled and entitled to access, extract, reproduce, and juxtapose an almost infinite variety of cultural fragments. Indeed, it is central to the postmodern worldview that this is what constitutes the production of meaning—that is to say, that this form of interacting with the world is not only valuable, but that it is the *only valuable way* of doing so. It is a decidedly imperialist subject position—sallying forth to plunder historically and geographically remote cultural repositories, creating no so much artworks as collections of souvenirs from one's crusades, vitrines which become a representation of one's own subjecthood—but it is also a capitalist one. The evacuation of immanent value, or rather the detachment of meaning from an (artistic) object's materiality, such that any meaning can only be ascribed to it, is of a piece with capitalist epistemology:

⁹ Steven Connor, 'Introduction', *The Cambridge Companion to Postmodernism*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 10.

it is literally the commodification of the aesthetic realm. Under the postmodern regime, something akin to a piece of music's 'use value' is erased, and an 'exchange value' takes its place: something is only worth what you would pay for it, as the old saying goes—under postmodernism, art only means what you say it means.

Examining in more detail the process of subjectification that this attitude entails will expose even deeper links to the workings of late capitalist/postmodernist thought. It was noted in Chapter One (section 1.3.2) that Lawrence Kramer outlined an approach to music and subjectivity that offered the possibility not of constructing subjectivity, but instead of taking up and discarding pre-packaged subjectivities at will. The idea that subjective identities can be gifted through interaction with cultural objects—identities that can affect how one moves through the world, but can be inhabited and abandoned at will—is at the heart of consumer capitalist ideology. A Lacanian analysis would see the cultural object in this scenario (i.e. the piece of music being interpreted) as the *objet a*: a (phallic) object of desire that promises to mend the divided ('castrated') subject.¹⁰ There is a fundamental split in the subject, a 'lack' caused by being subject to language—or, in Heideggerian terms, being 'thrown' into the world—such that part of one's existence is always exported, dependent on that world. The *objet a* promises to fill that lack by being the part of subjectivity that one has exported, if one can only possess it. In Slavoj Žižek's readings, the exemplary *objet a* is Coca-cola. This is because the Lacanian idea of the *objet a* has as its defining feature an inability to satiate: rather than filling the lack, mending the divided subject,

¹⁰ Lacan's theories of desire evolved throughout his long career: the language used here is drawn from his later work; see, for example, 'Kant with Sade', in *Écrits* (New York and London: W. W. Norton, 2006), 645–68; and 'The Subversion of the Subject and the Dialectic of Desire in the Freudian Unconscious', in *Écrits*, 671–702. The use of Lacanian theories of desire to specifically political ends has been pioneered by Slavoj Žižek; see especially *Enjoy Your Symptom! Jacques Lacan in Hollywood and Out*, rev. ed. (New York and London: Routledge, 2001); and *How to Read Lacan* (London: Granta Books, 2006).

the *objet a*—the special ‘something’ in Coke—is impossible to possess, and so one must keep going back for more. Chasing the *objet a* is interminable: it simply drives one to seek out more and more *objets*.

This method of analysing desire has great explanatory potential for capitalism, since it adequately describes its expansionist, omnivorous quality: *objets a* provide satiety enough to give the veneer of fulfilment, but always invite re-investment when the lack once again becomes palpable, as it always does. In other words, once one has bought into the idea that part of one’s subjectivity lies outside oneself, inside cultural objects, and that it can be internalized again by possessing those objects, one has fallen prey to a destructive and endless cycle of possession: be it cigarettes, clothes, drinks, or (as Bourdieu explained, and will be examined below) ‘cultural capital’, importing one’s subjectivity wholesale from the outside world is the cornerstone of capitalist epistemology. Capitalism, then, is predicated not on the production of commodities but on the production of desires; it does not sell objects but *objets*, which are nothing more than reified splinters of subjectivity whose downfall *and attraction* is their disposability. And so, any musicological epistemology that rests on similar grounds—that interaction with musical objects can provide some sort of subjective stability—should be resisted, not only because it rests on a shaky philosophical propositions, but also because in resting on those propositions it further entrenches a mode of thought and a way of being-in-the-world that has made possible the worst excesses of consumer capitalism.

By contrast, the construction of subjectivity I offered at the end of the last chapter, the methodology behind my analysis of Bach’s mysterious chord in the fugue in C# minor, BWV 849, was an application of a Heideggerian ontology, which gave rise to a Heideggerian subject position. While not modernist in the classical sense, Heidegger represents a (modified) continuation of the Enlightenment project—deriving his theories from

Descartes and Nietzsche—rather than its abandonment, as in postmodernism. As will be demonstrated, the crucial elements of the poststructuralist critique of the subject are already present in Heidegger’s ontology: it will be useful, therefore, to spend some time exploring the essential features of Heidegger’s arguments on the topic of subjectivity.

Outlining his conception of Dasein (literally, ‘being there’—his term for, effectively, human beings) and Dasein’s relationship with the world, Heidegger states that ‘subject and Object do not coincide with Dasein and the world’; that is, the distinction between subject and object, as classically defined, does not correctly capture humankind’s relationship to the world around it.¹¹ Heidegger terms Dasein’s relationship with the world ‘Being-in-the-world’, stressing the importance of understanding it as a single concept: Dasein’s ‘in-ness’ is not separable from itself—humans *are not*, except that they are in the world: ‘the compound expression “Being-in-the-world” indicates in the very way we have coined it, that it stands for a unitary phenomenon. This primary datum must be seen as a whole’.¹² That is to say, ‘Being-in-the-world’ does not describe an independent subject’s spatial position in the world; rather, that subject is constituted by the very fact that it is in the world: ‘Being-in [...] is a state of Dasein’s Being [...]. So one cannot think of it as the Being-present-at-hand of some corporeal Thing (such as a human body) “in” an entity which is present-at-hand. [...] There is no such thing as the “side-by-side-ness” of an entity called “Dasein” with another

¹¹ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1962), 87.

¹² *Ibid.*, 78. He goes on to clarify that ‘while Being-in-the-world cannot be broken up into contents which may be pieced together, this does not prevent it from having several constitutive items in its structure’ (*ibid.*). Thus while it is unitary in function, it is compound in nature: I will go on to argue that these constituent parts—roughly, human ‘subjects’ and the ‘objects’ they encounter—are *dialectically* linked. Dialectical pairs have exactly the same relationship of being independent yet inextricable in function, and thus my dialectical reading creates no conflict with Heidegger’s original formulation; indeed, I advance it precisely because it clarifies certain aspects pertinent to the consideration of music.

entity called “world”¹³. Thus, Heidegger’s formulation rules out even a radically intersubjective conception of the world: Dasein’s worldliness is not contingent on the presence or proximity of the world, and its Being is not affected by other subjects. In fact, the whole concept of subjecthood is postponed entirely—there is only Dasein, which is radically contingent on its ‘thrownness’ into the world as a whole: ‘taking up relationships towards the world is possible only *because* Dasein, as Being-in-the-world, is as it is. This state of Being does not arise just because some other entity is present-at-hand outside of Dasein and meets up with it’.¹⁴ Differences with New Musicological thought, even the nuanced intersubjective approach of Jeff R. Warren, are beginning to emerge: the ethics of a situation, musical or otherwise, cannot simply be reduced to the relationship between a subject and the world—which other subjects and objects it comes into contact with, the nature and quality of those relationships, or the consequences of those interactions. This would be to deny the more fundamental feature of existence, which is that before being subjects, humans are Dasein, who are *already* interacting with the world. If anything, the ethics of particular situations (including musical ones) are secondary after—even contingent upon—a primary ethical scene, which is to recognize Dasein’s fundamental thrownness.

Dasein, then, is inseparable from its context and its interactions with the world. What is most striking about Heidegger’s philosophy is the manner of those interactions. For Heidegger, Dasein is to be understood as ‘in-the-world’ primarily through its *perception* of the world, which is constitutive of itself:

When Dasein directs itself towards something and grasps it, it does not somehow first get out of an inner sphere in which it has been proximally encapsulated, but its primary kind of Being is such that it is always ‘outside’

¹³ Ibid., 79–81.

¹⁴ Ibid., 84.

alongside entities which it encounters and which belong to a world already discovered. [...] The perceiving of what is known is not a process of returning with one's booty to the 'cabinet' of consciousness after one has gone out and grasped it; even in perceiving, retaining, and preserving, the Dasein which knows *remains outside*, and it does so *as Dasein*.¹⁵

Thus is it the *perception* of the world that constitutes Dasein's Being-in-the-world. This is largely because Heidegger's conception of Dasein, after Descartes, is principally defined by its consciousness—as an *ens cogitans*, a thinking entity. Fundamental to Heidegger's ontology is a virtuosic re-reading of Descartes: the emphasis on perception and consciousness ensure an idealist streak that marks it out as distinctly modernist, creating a crucial critical distance from the postmodern philosophy this chapter seeks to overcome. Nevertheless, this same idealism makes the deconstruction of the subject truly possible, because crucially, for Heidegger, Dasein—the perceiver, the consciousness thrown into the world—is *not* the same thing as a subject.

Given that 'Dasein is an entity which, in its very Being, comports itself understandingly towards that Being'—that is to say, that the ontological definition of Dasein is that it *understands*, it is self-conscious—this act of understanding takes on a primary importance, from which everything else flows, including subjectivity.¹⁶ Heidegger can therefore re-imagine Descartes's maxim *cogito ergo sum*, 'I think therefore I am', which he sees as deficient for two reasons. First, because it assumes the existence of an 'I' before proof of any existence has even been given; second, because 'I am' cannot be logically deduced from 'I think', as the word '*ergo*' implies—although they can be linked in an even stronger fashion, as will be explained below. Since Dasein is first and foremost defined by the fact that it is in-the-world, and that the

¹⁵ Ibid., 89.

¹⁶ Ibid., 78.

mode of its interaction with the world is that it understands the world, the notion of 'thinking' is too narrow. Heidegger's own translation is instead 'I represent, therefore I am'.¹⁷ As Fredric Jameson explains, 'the notion of representation is itself Heidegger's solution: for him it means exactly the same thing as the subject/object split; only the word "representation" underscores the mutual interaction of these two poles while the other formula separates them by giving each a separate name, namely subject on the one hand and object on the other'.¹⁸

Heidegger has deconstructed the subject/object split as a direct consequence of his one ontological foundation: that humans are *conscious*, and that everything flows from this. It is this consciousness—this representation of the world—that goes on to construct the object (through a representation) and a subject (the thing to which the object is represented, and which does the representing). Only this process, in which representation is primary, can give rise to a subject: 'in the human representation of an object, and through the object *as* something standing-over-and-against and represented, that "against-which" the object stands and "before which" it is presented—that is, the one representing—has already presented itself. It has done so in such a way that man, by virtue of such presenting himself to himself as the one representing, can say "I"'.¹⁹ Jameson explains the careful calculus of this approach, which avoids both a dogged materialism—insofar as the objecthood of the object is not prior to consciousness—and a postmodern self-centredness: 'on this reading of [interpretation], the [being] of the object is its [being perceived]; provided one adds the proviso that then in that case the object did not previously exist in that form at all; but also that this is not an idealist formulation and the object is not here reduced to my "idea" of the object,

¹⁷ Martin Heidegger *Nietzsche*, vol. 4, *Nihilism*, trans. Frank A. Capuzzi (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1991), 110.

¹⁸ Fredric Jameson, *A Singular Modernity*, (London and New York: Verso Books, 2012), 46.

¹⁹ Heidegger, *Nietzsche* Vol. IV, 112.

since as yet no perceiving subject exists'.²⁰ This foregrounding of representation—Descartes's *cogito*—rips apart the casual union of 'human perceiver' and 'subject', to the point where it becomes logical to state, as Heidegger does: 'Man has essentially *become* the *subiectum*'.²¹ Jameson explains the production of the subject in this process with great clarity:

What Heidegger's model suggests [...] is rather a purely formal account of this emergence of the subject: the construction of the object of representation as perceptible formally opens a place from which that perception is supposed to take place: it is this structural or formal place, and not any kind of substance or essence, which is the subject. [...] In Heidegger's narrative, the object may be said to produce the subject.²²

Cogito—representation, understanding, consciousness, thought, 'Being-in-the-world'—produces an object; the subject *becomes* the space from which this representation emerges, and to which it returns.

It was along those lines that the analysis in Chapter One proceeded, and which the analyses in the rest of this thesis will proceed in their turn. Taking a view of the end of Bach's fugue that privileged understanding in a broad sense—both of the general musical language into which the listener is thrown, and of the expectations generated by the specific musical situation in which the mysterious chord was found—the analysis prioritized the construction of the musical object. This was not the same thing as giving the chord a single, stable name: that would be to prioritize the construction of the listening subject, since it is the subject that determines the way the chord is heard. In other words, assigning a definite name to the chord (even if it were only one of many options) is counterintuitively to shore up the

²⁰ Jameson, *A Singular Modernity*, 46–7. The words in square brackets are given in Latin in Jameson's original.

²¹ Heidegger, *Nietzsche* Vol. IV, 121 (emphasis added).

²² Jameson, *A Singular Modernity*, 48.

subject-pole, which would act upon the chord by tying it to a single harmonic function. Rather, the analysis explored how *understanding itself* changed the nature of the musical object, by creating different ways for it to be heard—that is, to act upon the formal space of the listening subject. Again, this did not give rise to a list of discrete possibilities, but rather resulted in a subject position defined by its own instability, its openness to the world, and its recognition of the complexity of the objects it encounters (or rather, is constituted by). What is striking about such a perspective is the emphasis placed on perception: for one thing, its distinctly idealist, even abstract, streak places it some distance from the norms of postmodern thought. Nevertheless, the fact that it enshrines an ineluctable link with the world—not a ‘relationship’ but a fundamental oneness, a true inseparability—has obvious ethical ramifications.

Later chapters will explore in greater detail the nuances of this worldview: the dialectical interaction of subject and object, material and ideal, as well as the concept of ‘thrownness’—the forcing of consciousness into the world, which gives Dasein its special character. This chapter, however, takes this *modernist* deconstruction of subjectivity as a basis from which to critique the postmodernist attitude, which I will demonstrate to be both internally self-contradictory and ethically questionable.

2.3: Three Reflections on Postmodernism

2.3.1: Postmodern Mirrors

The promise of music analysis, from Lawrence Kramer’s perspective, is not that it allows an intricate and ultimately endless process of dialectical self-creation, but rather that it can shine your pre-existing subjectivity back at you. His metaphors are shot through with simultaneous solidity and thinness—

'dolls' and 'cardboard'—which makes musical analysis into something quicker, glossier, and instantaneous. This epistemological trend has deep roots in postmodernism's aversion to creation and depth, favouring instead replication, reflection, and surface. Along these lines, James Currie has considered postmodernism from the point of view of the mirror. He notes that postmodern art seeks to reflect the world entirely back at itself—not necessarily out of satisfaction with it, but as a method of critique:

Postmodernism seeks to transform the entirety of social existence into one massive surface by relocating the economically and representationally dispossessed from the invisible depths, where they act as a foundation, and on to the visible surface [...] Postmodernism seeks to better the world precisely through making all of its surfaces as reflective as possible. In so doing it strives to guarantee that there will be no place where the world cannot be confronted by itself, no gated mirror-free community where the agents of oppression, domination, and inequality can hide from the reflection of their own agency or from the reflected images of their victims.²³

This recalls similar comments by Fredric Jameson on the goals of early postmodern architectural projects. He notes that 'they no longer attempt, as did the masterworks and monuments of high modernism, to insert a different, a distinct, an elevated, a new Utopian language into the tawdry and commercial sign system of the surrounding city', instead blending into their surroundings by becoming one with them.²⁴ Thus, in John Portman's Westin Bonaventure Hotel, 'the entryways [...] are, as it were, lateral and rather backdoor affairs: the gardens in the back admit you to the sixth floor of the towers [...] The front entry [...] admits you, baggage and all, onto the second-

²³ James R. Currie, *Music and the Politics of Negation* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012), 7.

²⁴ Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism: or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (London and New York: Verso, 1991), 39.

story shopping balcony'.²⁵ The solidity of the building is jeopardized by its own architecture, as it seeks to melt away into the city that preceded it, rather than alter it. This is amplified, aggressively, by 'the great reflective glass skin of the Bonaventure', which 'repels the city outside' and 'achieves a peculiar and placeless dissociation [...] from its neighbourhood: it is not even an exterior, inasmuch as when you seek to look at the hotel's outer walls you cannot see the hotel itself but only the distorted images of everything that surrounds it'.²⁶ The hotel, then, not only succeeds in disappearing through its sheer depthlessness, but also because, rather than having a visual identity of its own, it sends what was already there back at itself.

Clearly there is a democratic intention at work here. Nevertheless, such obsession with reflection has as its inevitable consequence the destruction of the possibility of critique. That is to say, postmodernism's obsession with content-free 'depthlessness' makes it hard to determine whether its artworks 'reflect' the world back at the viewer in disgust, celebration, or in a tacit (and complicit) acceptance only masquerading as criticism. Robert Hughes performs a devastating critique of Andy Warhol precisely along these lines, effectively accusing him of hypocrisy: 'the People could immediately see and grasp what Warhol was painting. Let them eat soup! They were used to movie stars and Coke bottles. To make such bottles in a factory in Atlanta and sell them in Abu Dhabi was a capitalist evil; to paint them in a Factory in New York and sell them in Düsseldorf, an act of cultural criticism'.²⁷ Whether or not Hughes's lambasting of Warhol is well-placed — whether, that is, Warhol's replication of capitalist mass-production was *intentionally* indifferent to actual capitalist mass-production — the fact that such postmodern surfaces, by definition, only reflect back the subject that peers into them, means that one

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid., 42.

²⁷ Hughes, *Nothing if Not Critical*, 250.

comes away from such works unchanged. Since this art is founded on the pre-existence of a self-present subject, and since, as such, the interpreter has absolute freedom to determine the content of the work, whether the art is critical of the surrounding world or not relies entirely on whether the subject was critical of it to begin with: 'Warhol's silence became a Rorschach blot, onto which critics who admired the idea of political art—but would not have been seen dead within a hundred paces of a realist painting—could project their expectations [...]. If he declared that he was interested only in getting rich and famous, as was everyone else, he could not be telling the truth; instead, he was parodying America's obsession with celebrity, the better to deflate it'.²⁸

To return to Jameson's discussion of postmodern architecture, it is quite feasible that one might consider the destruction of traditional middle-American towns, to be replaced by gigantic multinational monoliths, a cultural crime of the highest order; on the other hand, one might consider the impoverished nature of such towns, destroyed by de-industrialization and the internationalization of labour, to be an equally heinous crime. Thus, a giant office building or up-market hotel might be received either as an unwelcome, paternalistic intrusion into traditional life, or as a watershed moment of revitalization. With their hidden entrances and reflective skin, however, these postmodern giants disguise themselves, slipping in unnoticed, and make no claims on their own behalf. One might then see in their camouflage something altogether more sinister: an intentional move to disrupt any critique, by tacitly claiming that there are no grounds for debate, since nothing has changed—what one starts with, one ends with. The giant hotels do not attempt to change the communities in which they are situated, merely to blend in, and as such, are immune from insult or injury themselves.

²⁸ Ibid., 251.

2.3.2: Musical Minimalism and Objectivity

Back in the realm of music, Currie invokes minimalism as a possible site of postmodern 'depthless' resistance:

[Postmodernism's] call for depths to be collapsed into completely self-present surfaces issues from the radically democratic project that it claims lies at the heart of most of its discourses. In the context of postmodernism, we should aim at hiding nothing, and also at making everything as available as possible. [...] Hence the value of a supposedly postmodern musical style such as minimalism: 'Minimalism is so obviously *flat* that even the most flexible depth theorist must quail before it: what is there on this surface that needs generating or explaining through a theory of structural levels?' By maximizing visibility we move toward maximizing availability, and the more of the world that is made available, the more likely it will be that we will move toward an equality of representation and a respect for difference.²⁹

The claims of minimalism that Currie invokes (which, incidentally, he does not accept) are essentially claims of immediacy. 'Two-dimensionality' in music to be lauded, since it renders it instantly comprehensible; not only this, but since music is part of the world, by grasping music instantly, one is grasping the world. The mirror metaphor, then, has been replaced—mirrors, after all, have a necessary thickness in order to function—with a vanishing plane, one that instead of forming a barrier between the subject and the world, can be reached across to a world drawn up into its vanished surface. Confronting minimalism, one can confront the world *wie es eigentlich ist*—as it really is.

As my ironic paraphrase of positivist historian Leopold von Ranke suggests, this position is essentially indistinguishable (at least ideologically)

²⁹ Currie, *Music and the Politics of Negation*, 6. The inverted commas do not denote a quotation, but rather an imagined opinion.

from the same Romantic and proto-modernist epistemology that postmodernism claims to overwrite. Examining postmodern music and musicology from this perspective—the perspective of subjectivity—is advantageous, since it makes both the intellectual genealogy of the position, and its political repercussions, crystal clear. Janet Levy noted that complexity (along with unity, originality, economy, and a host of other textual features commonly associated with musical analysis) are covertly privileged values within musicology, ultimately stemming from an organicist and objectivist view of music lately demonstrated to be problematic.³⁰ Nevertheless, tracing the assumptions surrounding music written in opposition to such values—that is, music Currie heuristically terms ‘minimalist’—reveals a number of contradictions, political as well as epistemological. For example, Michael Nyman, writing about a loosely minimalist style dubbed ‘The New Simplicity’ of which his oeuvre forms a part, claims that ‘in this new, simple experimental music the given material of a piece is its *only* material and relates only to itself; there are no contrasting, complementary, or secondary ideas’.³¹ If this sounds like an invocation of a renascent naturalism, it is not an impression he is quick to dispel: he goes as far as suggesting naming the style ‘New Objectivity’, rather than ‘New Simplicity’. Naturalism is even more notable among composers incorporating aleatoric procedures into their minimalist composition, whose thoughts Nyman includes in his own argument. Dick Higgins has asserted that ‘Cage’s emphasis on chance procedures is significant as a means of distancing oneself from one’s materials [...] The composer no longer feels the necessity of consciously influencing the creative process at every moment’.³² Morton Feldman, meanwhile, has

³⁰ Janet Levy, ‘Covert and Casual Values in Recent Writings about Music’, *The Journal of Musicology* Vol. 5 No. 1 (Winter, 1987): 3–27.

³¹ Michael Nyman, ‘Against Intellectual Complexity in Music’, in *Postmodernism: A Reader*, ed. Thomas Docherty (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1993), 211.

³² *Ibid.*, 212.

claimed that ‘only by “unfixing” the elements traditionally used to construct a piece of music could the sounds exist in themselves—not as symbols, or memories which were the memories of other music to begin with’.³³

While this is done in precisely the spirit of democratization that Currie and Jameson have pointed to as hallmarks of the postmodern movement, in reality it reintroduces a troubling naturalist metaphysics that is seemingly opposed to the values of the New Musicology movement. Schenker’s writings have rightly been critiqued for their ethnocentric claims about the ‘naturalness’ of the tonic triad (the *Naturklang*, ‘nature’s chord’); here, minimalist music seems to be asserting the naturalness of even more significant quantities of musical material—perhaps even at the level of motif or theme. When Nyman advocates for the alleged ‘absolute simplicity’ of musical themes, and lauds their apparent ‘self-referentiality’, he makes a claim of depthlessness: that musical material is not composed of constituent parts, and that it has no musical or cultural history to which it might refer back. This claim is an essential move of both capitalism—in which subjectivities are not formed through their thrownness in a fragile world of mutual construction, but rather in which subjects are glued together by a collation of illusorily whole *objets* papering over their cracks—and postmodernism in general—in which history is only another *objet* for the use of an all-powerful narcissistic subject, rather than a testament to the existence of other, previous subjects (or rather, Dasein). But more immediately, in so doing, Nyman attracts all the criticisms of ethnocentrism, of blindness towards the cultural baggage of musical composition, that have previously been levelled at Schenker and similarly formalist theoretical conceptions of music, but to a more striking degree.

³³ Ibid., 210.

Even considering that Nyman is partially referring to aleatoric composition, there is no way around the historicity of musical material. Despite employing chance procedures, a composer could never be entirely 'distanced' from their materials, as Feldman claims, since the range of possible materials from which a composer might randomly choose is itself historically and geographically circumscribed. For a great deal of Cage's and Feldman's music, and certainly for the diatonic, largely consonant music of Nyman and his acolytes, the material is drawn from notes, harmonies and rhythms which have already been selected and organized for them, through the evolution of—among other things—the Western tuning system, the instruments of the standard Western orchestra, notational convention, as well as (in more 'conservative' minimalist composition) the tonal framework, and rhythmic norms influenced by everything from the beating of a human heart (which may be the basis of the Renaissance *tactus*) to dance forms. What is more, at least in the West/global North, these compositions are received by listeners that are likely to be enculturated into that same tonal language, regardless of how distant from it the composer might be. And therefore a range of musical features will immediately be interpreted according to a catalogue of stylistic norms: as 'dissonant' or 'consonant', 'major' or 'minor', 'relatively fast' or 'relatively slow', not to mention the susceptibility of music to be given over to more poetic norms such as 'sad' or 'lively'. Ignoring this fact of enculturation erases the fundamentally intersubjective nature of musical composition, and the importance of interpretation in the communication of musical meaning; even though the examples given here represent a fairly basic level of interpretation (at least from the vantage point of professionalized musicology), it is interpretation nevertheless, and so the claim of depthlessness made in the name of postmodernism is fundamentally undermined.

2.3.3: Musicological Minimalism: Complexity is Banned

The postmodern suppression of complexity in favour of naturalness recalls Pierre Bourdieu's analysis of the relationship between aesthetic taste and class.³⁴ Once again, therefore, there is not merely a question of a philosophical self-contradiction at stake, but an additional political element that warrants investigation. Bourdieu highlights the utilitarian use of art, especially by the upper and upper-middle classes, to acquire what he terms 'cultural capital'; despite this polemical and narrow approach (it was intended as a broadside as much against avant-garde modernism as sleek postmodernism), his comments on the political and ideological force of disguising construction beneath a veneer of naturalness are revealing. Bourdieu highlights the social necessity of disguising aesthetic training to maintain the 'distinction' that gives his book its title:

The ideology of natural taste owes its plausibility and its efficacy to the fact that, like all the ideological strategies generated in the everyday class struggle, it *naturalizes* real differences, converting differences in the mode of acquisition of culture into differences of nature; it only recognizes as legitimate the relation to culture (or language) which least bears the visible marks of its genesis, which has nothing "academic", "scholastic", "bookish", "affected" or "studied" about it, but manifests by its ease and naturalness that true culture is nature.³⁵

This aesthetic training comprises, although it is not restricted to, the enculturation that was assumed in the analysis that concluded Chapter One, which enabled the 'tonal listener' to comprehend consonance and dissonance, the implications of certain chords and the possibilities of their continuation, and enough familiarity with works composed around the

³⁴ Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, trans. Richard Nice (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986).

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 68.

same time as to notice those features that are unusual as opposed to those that are ordinary. Bourdieu, of course, does not deny that this enculturation takes place: indeed, it is central to his thesis that it must. His point, made very forcefully, is that the act of suppressing that knowledge—of claiming as natural that which is learned—is a classist act: ‘the sovereign pleasure of the aesthete dispenses with concepts. It is opposed to the supposedly pleasureless thought of the petit bourgeois and the “parvenu”, who are always exposed to those forms of aesthetic perversion which put knowledge above experience [...] like film-buffs who know everything there is to know about films they have not seen’.³⁶

This suppression of intellectual sophistication is particularly noticeable, and thus particularly troubling, in certain strands of musicological writing over the last few decades. Once again, the trend seems to emerge from a practice with only the best intentions: the greater democratization of musical understanding, or resisting the abstraction away from human concerns that, according to some critics, music analysis represents. According to Gary Tomlinson, the increasing abstraction of music-analytical writing ‘represents an absolution of the musical materials involved from their human creative matrices—a manner, that is, of decontextualization’.³⁷ The Kantian ideal of disinterestedness, which he sees as a foundation stone for traditional music analysis, is accused of ‘detach[ing] (mysteriously) instrumental music from the human means and ends of its production, dissemination, and consumption’.³⁸ By contrast, Tomlinson has stated what he describes ‘a central tenet of [his] own’: ‘that musical art works are the codifications or inscribed reflections of human creative actions, and hence should be understood through a similar

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 66–7.

³⁷ Gary Tomlinson, ‘Musicology, Anthropology, History’, *Il Saggiatore Musicale* Vol. 8 No. 1 (2001), 29.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 29–30.

interpretation of cultural context'.³⁹ These, then, are theoretical objections based on music's disputed ontology; they will be considered at length in the later parts of this thesis. However, more generally political criticisms of the technical complexity of music theory are widespread. Scott Burnham has noted concerns that 'something like a guild mentality has arisen in the theory community, with the result that theorists are perceived as self-willed musical insiders, as a privileged priesthood, keepers of the music's voice, that most incorporeal of relics'.⁴⁰

Lawrence Kramer combines both critiques in his exhortation for a more deliberately humanist musical criticism. Building on his assertion (quoted in Chapter One) that analysis and criticism were separated by the fact that, while analysis is largely concerned with the fine textual details of the musical score, music criticism 'privileges the details that carry the greatest expressive value, signifying power, and cultural resonance', he concludes that 'one consequence of this is that many satisfying acts of musical criticism need never go beyond the foreground; the foreground is, so to speak, the main portal of musical expressivity'.⁴¹ This ontological claim (which will be examined below) is the philosophical root of a larger, social claim made in a different publication:

All too often, interpreters of culture are hobbled by the formidable mystique of music as a foreign language, of the score as hieroglyph, of musical form as technical and esoteric. Musical analysts sometimes allow the same mystique to isolate music from culture, or to disavow the seriousness of musical studies that lack deep formal analysis. Though not utterly baseless, this mystique of a secret craft obscures the primary fact that most music is kept in

³⁹ Gary Tomlinson, 'The Web of Culture: A Context for Musicology', *19th-Century Music* Vol. 7 No. 3 (April, 1984), 351.

⁴⁰ Scott Burnham, 'Theorists and "The Music Itself"', *The Journal of Musicology* Vol. 15 No. 3 (Summer, 1997), 327.

⁴¹ Lawrence Kramer, 'Criticizing Criticism, Analyzing Analysis', *19th-Century Music* Vol. 16 No. 1 (Summer, 1992), 78.

circulation by the preferences and listening habits of non-specialist audiences. If a composition is widely intelligible, its intelligibility must rest to some degree on patterns that can be recognized and remembered with a minimum of technical intervention, no matter how rich and strange their formal support may be.⁴²

There are several points of contention within this rich paragraph. First, Kramer's assumption that technical understanding and cultural meaning (or just aesthetic enjoyment) are totally distinct, or even at opposite ends of a continuous spectrum, is not as straightforward as he implies: it is a commonplace among music analysts, for example, that one of the functions of technical analysis is to explain *why* something might be meaningful or enjoyable, and the practice is therefore an exploration of the unconscious responses of an enculturated listener. It was to this end that, at the end of the previous chapter, I demonstrated the way in which a (limited) technical exploration might *increase* the understanding, and even the enjoyment, of a musical moment. By drawing out the competing implications of an ambiguous harmony, I provided an opportunity to dwell on an aesthetic moment that, within the context of a performance, would pass too quickly to be savoured fully. Thus, when Kramer claims that 'the foreground of the Funeral March in the *Eroica* may try to confront human mortality in the light of modern warfare; the middleground and background do not', he fundamentally misunderstands the way the middleground and background operate, and especially how they interact with the foreground.⁴³ Rather than being distinct, impermeable, and sharply hierarchical registers, as he implies, each creates the possibility of the other: it is the structure of the background that gives the foreground the possibility of confronting 'human mortality in

⁴² Lawrence Kramer, 'Culture and Musical Hermeneutics: The Salome Complex', *Cambridge Opera Journal* Vol. 2 No. 3 (November, 1990), 270.

⁴³ Lawrence Kramer, 'Haydn's Chaos, Schenker's Order: Or, Hermeneutics and Musical Analysis: Can They Mix?', *19th-Century Music* Vol. 16 No. 1 (Summer, 1992), 5.

the light of modern warfare', and it is a confrontation that might become richer and more compelling if formal and structural features are taken into account.

This is something that Kramer seems to understand when he notes that 'one of the most dramatic moments in [Haydn's] "Representation of Chaos" is a sudden harmonic move from the dominant of E \flat to four measures of D \flat (mm. 20–24); the musical image suggests a Lucretian materiality, masses of matter colliding and grating each other in the void not yet filled by the divine Will'.⁴⁴ Clearly, the reason this moment is so striking, so redolent of primordial chaos, is the unmotivated and tonally dysfunctional move from V to \flat VII; the unfilled void which Kramer invokes is a space without tonality, without harmonic direction. In a flourish that must be knowingly ironic, he even engages language that is strongly evocative of Schenker's 'Will of the Tones'. Nevertheless, this is all done in the service of criticizing Schenker, whose reading of the moment Kramer finds insufficient: 'Schenker's foreground sketch duly notes the D \flat episode, but all he has to say about it is that "the fundamental tone D \flat remains at rest and clarifies the passing nature of the chords changing above it"'.⁴⁵ Regardless of whether or not Schenker's particular reading is deficient, this does not alter the fact that by invoking concepts such as harmonic functionality and tonal expectation, not to mention the teleological concept of 'Will' that he so clearly aligns with tonal resolution, Kramer is dealing with middleground and background structures; moreover, there is nothing in his critique to suggest that moving beyond this intentionally basic level of analysis would not yield further critical insights.

On the other hand, one could retain the distinction between analysis and aesthetic enjoyment that Kramer polices, but dispense with his implicit negative judgment. His negative judgment emerges from a buried ontological

⁴⁴ Kramer, 'Criticizing Criticism', 78.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

assessment that music exists most truly in performance—that it ‘is’ performance (rather than, say, something that can be read off a page), and therefore that to be a responsible musicologist one must approach it from within the parameters of performance; naturally, this rules out complex textual analysis. On the other hand, if one disagrees that music is *exclusively* something to be performed, one can maintain that analysis simply undertakes a different task from that of aesthetic listening, avoiding the choice that Kramer sets himself. The first claim—that analysis can enhance aesthetic enjoyment—has already been explored, and the second—that music is not most sensibly considered as something exclusively geared towards performance—will be examined closely in Chapter Five. In fact, this thesis as a whole will attempt to demonstrate a dialectical interaction between these two extremes, analysis and performance, which will slowly emerge over the next three chapters through close engagement with musical ontology. In any case, and more germane to the immediate task at hand, it is easy to conclude that Kramer’s assumptions are by no means self-evident.

There is a second objection to Kramer’s claims of the benefits of simplicity in musicology, namely the sheer difficulty of the *critical* work Kramer performs. Throughout his article, he draws parallels with literature and visual art spanning ‘Flaubert, Huysmans, Baudelaire, Wilde, Beardsley and Klimt, in order to “read” the Salome story as a cultural text of the late nineteenth century’.⁴⁶ He goes on to subject this comparative work to Freudian, Lacanian, Nietzschean, feminist, and queer readings, alongside his allegedly non-specialist musical analysis. There is, in other words, nothing to suggest that Kramer is attempting critical simplicity, and this in itself is revealing: that he should deem, for example, theories of the male gaze or symbolic castration more accessible than a technical understanding of tonal

⁴⁶ Kramer, ‘Culture and Musical Hermeneutics’, 270.

music places his critique in a particular political situation, at least with regards to the status of music and musical education within public and academic discourse. This will be elaborated below.

Finally, it is questionable whether Kramer even lives up to his own aims of music-theoretical simplicity. The disparity between the standards he advocates and those he practices is most noticeable in his interpretation of key relationships within *Salome*, especially that between C major and C# major, which he aligns with the head and the body respectively.⁴⁷ It seems doubtful whether an 'ordinary' listener would be able to tell the difference between C major and C# major; indeed, in Strauss's chromatically saturated language, even a professional musician might be hard-pressed to distinguish movement between keys only a semitone apart. Nevertheless, it seems clear that Kramer intends this relationship to be heard, since he ascribes part of its significance to the complementarity of the two keys, which he aligns with the complementarity of Jochanaan (C major) and Salome (C# major): 'each fills the tonal space that the other leaves void.'⁴⁸ Moreover, Kramer explicitly invokes the written tradition when supporting his interpretation, laying emphasis on the decision to notate the music in C# rather than D \flat . Not only is C# a 'notationally difficult key', but it has symbolic significance, since the cross of the sharp sign can be seen as 'cancelling out' the C major, due to a linguistic pun that gives the German terminology a double meaning, 'sharp' and 'cross': '*Kreuz*: the sign of cancellation, defacement and crucifixion. Strauss's notation, then, articulates a symbolic division between saint and dancer, work and flesh, (masculine) Purity and (feminine) Perversion'.⁴⁹

It seems fair, therefore, to charge Kramer—in Scott Burnham's words—with a 'loss of critical integrity which obtains when the ideology of music

⁴⁷ Ibid., 290–3.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 292.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 291.

analysis is rejected, yet the terms and basic analytical notations generated under that ideology are preserved and continue to be validated'.⁵⁰ Despite any claims to the contrary, it seems clear that Kramer remains committed to a notion of specialist scholarship that necessitates intellectual complexity, at least in the field of critical theory and philosophy; indeed, despite his assurances to the contrary, he also still bears the weight of considerable specialist music-theoretical training, which, when it is not 'hiding in plain sight', is merely implicit in the structure of the musical arguments he advances. By suppressing that training, he merely drives the specialism under the surface, making it harder to determine exactly what his musicological justifications are, and therefore making it harder to critically engage with his interpretations.

The most deleterious political consequences of a postmodern abandonment of music-theoretical complexity is even more noticeable in the work of Carolyn Abbate and Roger Parker. In *A History of Opera: The Last Four Hundred Years* they proudly declare an absence of 'abstract structural analyses of music, or extended descriptions of notes interacting with each other', with precisely the same democratizing justification that has been observed throughout this chapter: 'out of a desire to find a broader audience, one not involved in the disciplinary habits of musicology'.⁵¹ However, Michael Graham has pointed out what he terms the 'hypocrisy' of Abbate and Parker's position:

The only reason that they are able to interpret their opera 'events' so knowledgably is precisely because they have such detailed knowledge of the musical text in question, and the history and conventions of specific works and opera in general. To deny a reader this knowledge smacks of the very elitism

⁵⁰ Scott Burnham, 'The Criticism of Analysis and the Analysis of Criticism', *19th-Century Music* Vol. 16 No. 1 (Summer 1992), 75.

⁵¹ Carolyn Abbate and Roger Parker, *A History of Opera: The Last Four Hundred Years*, rev. ed. (London: Penguin, 2015), xvii.

that they seem so eager to avoid. Ironically, by writing so-called ‘accessible’ work, they maintain or even widen the gap between academics and readers who might wish to enhance their knowledge of a certain topic, but are unable to do so fully because the authors have decided not to present them with all of the relevant information.⁵²

That is to say, the discussion has come full circle, returning to Bourdieu’s critique of a bourgeois ‘naturalist’ taste. Far from being democratic, scholars who refuse to include technical explanations within their interpretations while nevertheless implicitly relying on them might be pulling up the ladder behind them. At best, it displays an unbecoming lack of critical self-awareness regarding the extent to which their supposedly unmediated musical instincts rely on highly circumstantial and privileged enculturation. At worst, it perpetuates the ethnocentric and classist assumption as to what constitutes natural or unmediated knowledge. Those who possess it have their sense of entitlement confirmed, while those who do not are permanently excluded. In the end, everything returns to subjectivity: under this paradigm, the subject that approaches art music and its criticism is sent away, reflected as in one of Currie’s mirrors, but unchanged.

2.4: Conclusion: Resisting Postmodernism

Part I began by examining the various intersections of music and ethics that have come to prominence over the last thirty years. I argued that all of those approaches rested, to varying degrees, on a previous rejection of the concept of music ‘as music’ — that is to say, any semi-autonomous conception of music or musical works. This was itself a partially ethical (or at least political)

⁵² Michael Graham, ‘Shakespeare and Modern British Opera: Into *The Knot Garden*’ (PhD diss., Royal Holloway, University of London, 2017), 28–9.

judgment: it has become a commonplace, after the emergence of New Musicology, that such conceptions of music perform objectionable political work and should therefore be rejected. However, I demonstrated that this (essentially ontological) judgment over the status of music rested on shaky philosophical ground, and that it incorporated significant misreadings of the poststructuralist texts that lay at its roots: for example, by reducing a radical deconstruction of meaning to a more anodyne polysemy, or relativism. These philosophical errors produce, as both symptom and consequence, the reinscription of the stable self-present subject, a concept which formed one of the original targets of the postmodern (or at least poststructuralist) revolution. The entire enterprise is then, to a significant degree, self-contradictory.

Examining musicological discourse from the perspective of subjectivity is particularly enlightening, not only because it unsettles the epistemic assumptions of previous studies on musical ethics, but also because the questions about subjectivity that it raises carry with them their own ethical and political consequences. For instance, a great deal of the political critiques of old-fashioned musical discourse (the most sensitive example of which is technically complex theory and analysis) centred on the desire for 'freedom' of the interpreting subject. Nevertheless, it is hard to imagine how to construct a coherent model of individual interpretative freedom that does not rely on a prior self-present subject that exercises that freedom as it were—in the parlance common to that strain of critical thought—'subjectively'. Equally, it is far from clear that such an individualist conception of what is essentially *discursive* freedom amounts to freedom in any meaningful sense. Adam Krims warns us that while 'postmodern theories of culture are indispensable for understanding music's role in identity formation [...] there may often be shaping forces behind discourse that are not themselves

discursive'.⁵³ That is to say, there are broader social and political forces that act upon the supposedly free individual—to give but the most obvious example, economics—that are not open to negotiation from this individualist standpoint. These non-discursive limits (or at least limits that are not internal to the discourse they structure) constrain that possible freedom, by constraining what is thinkable in it.

I have explored the way in which the prevailing political and economic atmosphere might be unwittingly replicated in the interaction between postmodern art and its would-be interpreters, with reference to Bourdieu's examination of the link between social class and taste. Alastair Williams pithily summarizes that critical perspective, invoking the same Lacanian apparatus that was mobilized in this chapter (in this case, the notion of the Symbolic, an essential yet oppressive function of language that amounts to its social structuration). He states that 'the problems encountered when theory tries to eliminate the subject are now familiar: in Peter Dews' words, the situation "leads merely to the instatement of the symbolic system itself, self-enacting and self-perpetuating, as a kind of meta-subject"—a meta-subject that touches the steering mechanisms of modernity, but ahistoricizes them to a natural condition. Ironically, John Cage's attempts to remove the composing subject release the far-from-neutral determinants of industrial society'.⁵⁴

That the political realm will always break through—all the more potently if it is allowed to pass implicitly, rather than being explicitly invoked—can most clearly be seen in the way that the supposedly progressive methodologies of certain musicologists end up replicating the oppressive political structures of present-day capitalism. In the final section of Chapter Two, I showed that postmodern epistemologies of music either

⁵³ Adam Krimms, 'Marxism, Urban Geography and Classical Recording: An Alternative to Cultural Studies', *Music Analysis* Vol. 20 No. 3 (October, 2001), 361.

⁵⁴ Williams, 'Torn Halves', 284.

maintained, inadvertently or not, a class-based divide with its roots in educational discrimination, or perpetuated the essentially liberal-capitalist epistemology of value-free relativist individualism. In this latter case, the construction of an 'acceptable' identity through interaction with certain privileged cultural objects is the norm, the very ontology of which hamstrings the possibility of critique, since the only function of those objects is to reflect the subjectivity of the interlocutor even as it provides it for them.

In this way, Part I has collapsed both the ontological and political difficulties of the postmodern approach to musicology into a singular failure: a failure of change. If one agrees that the world is imperfect, that the human political and social condition is characterised by inequality, exploitation and oppression, then the postmodern approaches examined here do not offer any possibility of subjective resistance. At best they offer a confirmation of one's initial convictions, or merely a carnivalesque enjoyment—a distraction from the material reality of the world. At worst, the type of political subjectivity postmodernism constructs—individualist, monadic, and reactionary to the objects around it—makes one complicit in those political processes themselves.

That said, it is possible to avoid such an explicitly political (or politically partisan) reading, by limiting the discussion to the possibilities for subjective freedom. The postmodern attempt to erase the subject frustrates the very possibilities of subjective freedom that it was supposed to protect, since it only drives the self-present subject further undercover. Foremost among those possibilities is the opportunity not only to form our subjectivity in response to the world, but in so doing to form the world itself; this (dialectical) process amounts to no more than interacting meaningfully with the world, rather than confronting it as a series of (mirrored) barriers that send us away unchanged, and unchanging.

In other words, this thesis advocates a return to the Heideggerian notion of Being-in-the-world: thrown into the world as 'Being', the phenomenon of consciousness continues to form both the objects of perception and the formal vanishing point from which that perception emerges—the subject. The attempt at total erasure of the subject under postmodernism, then, fails because it is the *wrong* kind of erasure. The subject must be maintained, in Derrida's term, 'under erasure', as a positive negativity. It is not an emptiness that can be filled by (interaction with) the culture it inhabits, but rather is a productive void that gives birth to the world around it. As Heidegger explains, 'the celebrated "universal" significance of "Being" is not the reified emptiness of a huge receptacle into which everything capable of transformation can be thrown. What misleads us in the direction of this notion is our long-accustomed way of thinking that thinks "Being" as the most universal determination of all, and that therefore can admit the manifold only as the sort of thing that fills the vast empty shell of the most universal concept'.⁵⁵ Thus, resolving the 'dialectical bind' that Williams identifies with regards to the contrary pull between the analytic 'rationality' of the (problematized) subject and the 'empathy' that is symptomatic of its ultimate fictitiousness, is to cast it—after Adorno—as a negative dialectic: in this way, subjectivity becomes a void from which a subject is continually produced, asserting itself all the more strongly precisely because it is empty and therefore demands construction.⁵⁶ Again, this follows Heidegger's modernist construction of subjectivity closely: for him, Being is the absent centre of everything. Not a state in itself, it is rather the empty condition of possibility for every other action: 'Being is the most said, not only because the "is" and all forms of the verb "to be" are perhaps most often expressed, but because in *every* verb, even when its conjugated forms do not

⁵⁵ Heidegger, *Nietzsche* Vol. 4, 191.

⁵⁶ Williams, 'Torn Halves', 286.

use the word “Being”, Being is nonetheless said. Every verb, and not just every verb but every substantive and adjective, all words and articulations of words, say Being. What is most said is at the same time the most reticent in the special sense that it keeps its essence silent, perhaps is reticence itself.⁵⁷ ‘Being’ is not a noun, but a verb—an activity, a forceful eking out of existence, that silently undergirds every other thing in reality: *Be-ing*.

There is, therefore, considerable critical power in casting the problems of postmodernism, as Williams does, in terms of the Symbolic. Late twentieth-century musicology is fraught with anxiety about the status of the Symbolic, especially its essentially fictive nature. Certainly, the political value-judgments on the status of music analysis revolve around a conviction that such musical discourse, as a cultural construct, is *a priori* oppressive. However, as Williams points out, ‘structural listening is not alone in depending on an aesthetic formation, nor is it substantially invalidated by this perspective since no mode of listening can claim to be value free’.⁵⁸ Indeed I have argued that this fictiveness, if engaged with necessary self-awareness, can instead become a valuable source of productivity and freedom. By contrast, every attempt to circumvent the Symbolic is always doomed to failure, no more than an exercise in (literal) Self-denial. The active, rather than substantive, nature of Being (*Be-ing*) makes it inevitable that all investigation of reality is fictive: that is what consciousness is—a representation of the world that constructs us as subjects. What is important is to realize that, and be honest about it.

Thus, Part I has returned precisely the opposite conclusion from the received wisdom of New Musicology. While I do not claim that Western Art Music *must* be studied according to technical music-theoretical norms, since to do so would be merely to revert to high modernist

⁵⁷ Heidegger, *Nietzsche* Vol. 4, 193.

⁵⁸ Williams, ‘Torn Halves’, 282.

idealism/naturalism/organicism, I conclude that the axiomatic *exclusion* of such exploration in all circumstances is wrongheaded. Music-theoretical investigation is a narrative about music that posits it as a remnant of the human culture that produced it, whose communicative power is at least partially contained in its ideal existence, rather than simply its musical performance. It is thus a narrative that constructs the human subjects who undertake analysis as themselves at least partially defined by their ideal existence, rather than only their material appearance. If one accepts Heideggerian metaphysics, this would appear to be a more accurate representation of what being human entails: from an ontological perspective, then, accepting the possibility of such interaction with the world, including the musical world, would appear to be the better approach.

Nevertheless, beyond the investigations into human ontology, I have also offered several observations on the immediate political consequences of an approach that axiomatically excludes theoretical complexity and technical description. While Part I has created a theoretical clearing, in which it is no longer possible to reject *a priori* this sort of approach to interpreting music—that is, I have shown the technical analysis of musical artworks is not inevitably politically regressive—it has thus far remained a largely negative undertaking. To make a *positive* case that such technical understandings might be politically *progressive* (particularly in terms of liberating subjectivity) is the task of the rest of the thesis. To this end I now turn to Part II, and a concrete case study of the interaction between analysis, subjectivity, and politics.

PART II: Musical Objects and Society

Chapter Three: Schubert's Sonata in A major D. 959/ii, 'Andantino', and the Dialectic of Tonality

3.1: Introduction – Letting Schubert Speak Freely

Studying Schubert is as fraught in the twenty-first century as it was in the nineteenth. Christopher H. Gibbs notes that, in the early reception of the composer's works, 'when set against Beethovenian paradigms, Schubert's formal structures were often judged lacking'.¹ A pervasive criticism has been that Schubert was at best a gifted composer of *Lieder*, whose lack of technical skill frustrated attempts in the weightier genres of sonata or symphony. Gibbs summarizes the typical clichés: 'Schubert as the natural composer, not adept in large-scale forms, but gifted in song, who recognized his own limitations and wisely sought academic counsel shortly before his death'.² This perception had its beginning in Schubert's own time, partly because of the chronology of the dissemination of Schubert's works: very few of his large-scale compositions, and none of his mature piano sonatas or symphonies, were published in his lifetime. The critical consensus that had already sprung up around Beethoven's musical style also destined Schubert's efforts to be read constantly (and mostly unfavourably) against the elder composer's example.³ Similar criticisms remained in place well into

¹ Christopher H. Gibbs, 'Introduction', in *The Cambridge Companion to Schubert*, ed. Christopher H. Gibbs (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 7.

² Christopher H. Gibbs, 'Images and Legends of the Composer', in *The Cambridge Companion to Schubert*, ed. Christopher H. Gibbs (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 50.

³ Christopher H. Gibbs gives an account of the reception of Schubert's music in Germany from the composer's lifetime onwards in 'German Reception: Schubert's "Journey to Immortality"', in *The Cambridge Companion to Schubert*, ed. Christopher H. Gibbs (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 241–53. Suzannah Clark also provides an illuminating analysis of the mythology of Schubert's music and its relation to his (imputed) biography, in the first chapter of *Analyzing Schubert* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 6–55.

the twentieth century, and are reflected in the views of Felix Salzer and Theodor Adorno; a notable exception is a famous essay by Donald Francis Tovey, in which Schubert is included fully within, rather than partially outside, the tradition of tonal writing that includes Hadyn, Mozart, and Beethoven.⁴

By and large, such criticisms have fallen by the wayside in recent years, with Schubert's unique harmonic language and use of form being looked upon with benevolence—not inferior to the Beethovenian model, but merely different from it. Nevertheless, while the negative assessment of Schubert may have disappeared from view, the structure of the criticism remains firmly in place. That is to say, a great deal of scholarship still examines Schubert's music, life, and legacy in direct comparison with Beethoven's.⁵ Even when indirect, the comparisons are often implicit insofar as Schubert's music is measured against analytical or theoretical models that are distinctly Beethovenian, as the quote that opened this chapter attests. As a result, the

⁴ Felix Salzer's interpretation of Schubert's sonata form—as, effectively, a defective version of Beethovenian practice—was enormously influential in the first half of the twentieth century: 'Die Sonatenform bei Franz Schubert', *Studien für Musikwissenschaft* Vol. 15 (1928): 86–125. Adorno's essay on Schubert was equally influential: 'Schubert', translated with an introduction by Jonathan Dunsby and Beate Perrey, *19th-century Music* Vol. 29 No. 1 (Summer, 2005): 3–14. Although sympathetic to Schubert's musical style, Adorno's classification of Schubert's formal strategy as 'potpourri' (p. 9), as opposed to an organic, teleological Beethovenian approach, has had lasting implications for the analysis of Schubert's music. Donald Francis Tovey's essay, 'Tonality', *Music & Letters* Vol. 9 No. 4 (October, 1928): 341–63, is now also remembered as the source of the description of Schubert's harmony 'as wonderful as star-clusters', used as a starting point by Richard Cohn for his groundbreaking application of neo-Riemannian theory to Schubert's music (see this chapter, section 3).

⁵ There is, naturally, a large literature on this topic, from which only the most salient examples follow. Direct comparisons between Schubert's compositions and those of Beethoven include: Edward T. Cone, 'Schubert's Beethoven', *The Musical Quarterly* Vol. 56 No. 4 (October, 1970): 779–93; Maynard Solomon, 'Schubert and Beethoven', *19th-Century Music* Vol. 3 No. 2 (November, 1979): 114–25; Nicholas Temperley 'Schubert and Beethoven's Eight-Six Chord', *19th-Century Music* Vol. 5 No. 2 (Autumn, 1981): 142–54; Beth Shamgar, 'Three Missing Months in Schubert's Biography: a Further Consideration of Beethoven's Influence on Schubert', *The Musical Quarterly* Vol. 73 No. 3 (1989): 417–434. There are several more discursive works, in which general aspects of Schubert's compositional development are related to his relationship with and knowledge of Beethoven and his works: Richard Kramer, 'Gradus ad Parnassum: Beethoven, Schubert, and the Romance of Counterpoint', *19th-Century Music* Vol. 11 No. 2 (Autumn, 1987): 107–120, casts Schubert's late music as a struggle to get to grips with Handelian counterpoint by way of Beethoven's efforts in his last decade; John Gingerich 'Unfinished Considerations: Schubert's "Unfinished" in the Context of his Beethoven Project', *19th-Century Music* Vol. 31 No. 2 (November, 2007): 99–112, reads the Eighth Symphony, along with the *Quartettssatz*, as a (partially successful) attempt to tackle the Beethovenian 'grand' forms.

most sustained attention within the study of Schubert's instrumental music has been given to those movements in sonata form (almost always outer movements of multi-movement works), and their relationship with (Beethovenian) sonata paradigms.⁶

This problem extends beyond narrow analytical confines, into hermeneutic space. Indeed, the most insidious aspect of the Beethoven–Schubert binary is the strongly gendered terms in which it is manifested, from the composer's own time until our own. The myth of the 'feminine Schubert' as opposed to a 'masculine Beethoven' has functioned as a master signifier, 'explaining' Schubert's lyricism, his small forms, his supposedly rapid composition and his unusual tonal structures—in one instance with recourse to a spurious posthumous comparison of their skulls.⁷ A contemporary outgrowth of this mode of thought can be seen in the late twentieth-century debate over Schubert's sexuality; interestingly, however, while recent readings of Schubert's gender and sexual identity have relied heavily on his interaction with Beethovenian norms, in its first flowering this work was carried out without reference to any norms whatsoever, either Beethovenian or more broadly masculine ones.⁸ Thus while there

⁶ In many ways the foundational text in this vein is Felix Salzer's article, cited above (see n. 4). James Webster, 'Schubert's Sonata Form and Brahms's First Maturity', *19th-Century Music* Vol. 2 No. 1 (July, 1978): 18–35 gives a conspectus of Schubert's strategies in sonata movements; Daniel Coren 'Ambiguity in Schubert's Recapitulations', *The Musical Quarterly* Vol. 60 No. 4 (October, 1974): 568–82, takes the same comprehensive approach, but deals more specifically—as the title suggests—with ambiguity in his recapitulations. Several articles deal in detail with analytical concerns, such as Brian Black, 'The Functions of Harmonic Motives in Schubert's Sonata Forms', *Intégral* Vol. 23 (2009): 1–61; and two by Gordon Sly: 'The Architecture of Key and Motive in a Schubert Sonata', *Intégral* Vol. 9 (1995): 67–89; and 'Schubert's Innovations in Sonata Form: Compositional Logic and Structural Interpretation', *Journal of Music Theory* Vol. 45 No. 1 (Spring, 2001): 119–150. Very few articles deal in detail with movements other than the first—those that do include Beth Shamgar, 'Schubert's Classic Legacy: Some Thoughts on Exposition—Recap. Form', *The Journal of Musicology* Vol. 18 No. 1 (Winter, 2001): 150–169, which treats the slow movement of the 'Great' C major Symphony; and Thomas A. Denny, 'Articulation, Elision, and Ambiguity in Schubert's Mature Sonata Forms: The Op. 99 Trio Finale in Its Context', *The Journal of Musicology* Vol. 6 No. 3 (Summer 1988): 340–66. Two key articles that set out to complicate the easy assumptions of Beethovenian/Classical Sonata form are: David Beach, 'Schubert's Experiments with Sonata Form: Formal-Tonal Design versus Underlying Structure', *Music Theory Spectrum* Vol. 19 No. 1 (Spring, 1993): 1–18; and Su Yin Mak, 'Schubert's Sonata Forms and the Poetics of the Lyric', *The Journal of Musicology* Vol. 23 No. 2 (Spring, 2006): 263–306.

⁷ Gibbs, 'Images and Legends of the Composer', 51.

⁸ The groundbreaking article was of course Maynard Solomon, 'Franz Schubert and the Peacocks of Benvenuto Cellini', *19th-Century Music* Vol. 12 No. 3 (Spring, 1989): 193–206. This article centred solely

is a common history in the nineteenth- and twentieth-century receptions of Schubert's music in light of his perceived sexual and gender identity, the latter investigation began in purely historical, rather than discursive terms. This changed upon the publication of Susan McClary's analysis of the slow movement of Schubert's Symphony No. 8, 'Unfinished'; McClary read the piece as a deviant—and therefore 'queer'—third-based intervention in the Beethoven-centred, fifth-based tonal canon, effectively re-introducing the shadow of Beethoven into this new area of investigation.⁹ As McClary explains in a later article, 'as the work produced in the context of later subcultures shows, artists do sometimes *choose* to make differences related to factors such as sexuality (or gender, ethnicity, or class) in what they create. [...] Schubert was writing at a time when the articulation of what was taken to be the artist's interiority was precisely what was valued, and his particular experiences of self and intimacies might well be understood as factors that influenced the formal procedures he designed'.¹⁰ Thus, with McClary's contributions, the historically pejorative reception of Schubert's 'feminine' style is given a positive spin—as an act of resistance against patriarchal tonal norms—as well as an analytical footing.

on historical documents, largely letters and diary entries by Schubert and his companions, with historical analysis of the social life of 19th-Century Vienna. The historical research was attacked by Rita Steblin in 'The Peacock's Tale: Schubert's Sexuality Reconsidered', *19th-Century Music* Vol. 17 No. 1 'Schubert: Music, Sexuality, Culture' (Summer, 1993): 5–33. This criticism led to a major backlash, with several musicologists arguing that Steblin's defence was motivated by homophobia, attempting to 'save' Schubert from being considered homosexual: see, for example, Charles Rosen 'Music à la Mode', *New York Review of Books*, 20th October, 1994, accessed 12th December 2016, <<http://www.nybooks.com/articles/1994/10/20/schubert-a-la-mode/>>. Solomon provided his own response to Steblin's criticisms in 'Some Consequences of Nostalgia', *19th-Century Music* Vol. 17 No. 1 'Schubert: Music, Sexuality, Culture' (Summer, 1993): 34–46. Equally, Kristina Muxfeldt's article from the same issue, 'Political Crimes and Liberty, or Why Would Schubert Eat a Peacock?', *19th-Century Music* Vol. 17 No. 1 'Schubert: Music, Sexuality, Culture' (Summer, 1993): 47–64, is a long, thorough defence of Solomon's most important piece of evidence—a diary reference to Schubert hunting peacocks, which Solomon interprets a metaphor for seeking (young, male) sexual partners—and therefore appears to be a sly criticism of Steblin's protests.

⁹ Susan McClary, 'Constructions of Subjectivity in Schubert's Music', in *Queering the Pitch*, 2nd ed., ed. Philip Brett, Elizabeth Wood, and Gary C. Thomas (New York and London: Routledge, 2006), 205–34.

¹⁰ Susan McClary, 'Schubert and Sexuality: on the Steblin/Solomon Debate', *19th-Century Music* Vol. 17 No. 1 'Schubert: Music, Sexuality, Culture' (Summer, 1993), 87.

This is important for the purposes of this chapter because of the way it structures the discussion around Schubert's relationship with the norms of his time. At bottom, the nineteenth-century model of understanding Schubert's gender identity (there was no concept of sexuality at that time) was an oppositional one (he was understood against Beethoven, and Beethoven against him) and an essentialist one ('Beethoven' and 'Schubert' represented embodied monadic conceptions of 'masculinity' and 'femininity'). In contrast to Solomon's empirical study, McClary might be seen to reinscribe such discursive essentialism: by understanding Schubert's tonal strategies as a reaction against Beethovenian masculinity, which is then automatically interpreted as encoding a certain femininity (and thence homosexuality), McClary could be accused of perpetuating the same monadic identity stereotypes as nineteenth-century critics. This is a valid criticism even though her proposed value-judgments on those stereotypes has changed: that is, it is no longer shameful (at least to McClary's intended audience) to be homosexual, or to reject masculinist paradigms. This accusation has been levelled by, among others, James Webster, who claims that, 'notwithstanding her many disclaimers', she 'remains grounded within essentialist thinking'.¹¹ She, in turn, has been defended by Philip Brett, who criticizes Webster for ignoring nineteenth-century 'negotiations surrounding the social construction of desire and subjectivity', specifically as enshrined within tonality.¹² He argues—following McClary's original formulation in *Feminine Endings*—that, rather than McClary reading essentialist tropes into the music of Beethoven and Schubert, these tropes were already present and productive in nineteenth-century Vienna: McClary is not encoding essentialism, but rather *decoding* the gendered norms that were already in force. Therefore it is Webster, not McClary, who is retrogressive: far from putting him into a straightjacket, Brett claims McClary

¹¹ James Webster, 'Music, Pathology, Sexuality, Beethoven, Schubert', *19th-Century Music* Vol. 17 No. 1, Schubert: Music, Sexuality, Culture (Summer, 1993), 92.

¹² Philip Brett, 'Piano Four Hands: Schubert and the Performance of Gay Male Desire', *19th-Century Music* Vol. 21 No. 2, Franz Schubert: Bicentenary Essays (Autumn, 1997), 151.

(and, presumably, scholars pursuing similar agendas) are letting Schubert speak freely.

This is a curiously paradoxical situation, and is at the heart of the problems with Schubert interpretation: Schubert's music has often been understood in essentialist terms, interpreted as operating in conflict with some hegemonic power, be it Beethoven or heterosexuality. Nevertheless, since those hegemonies were in place at the time Schubert was composing, and to a large extent remain in place today, 'letting Schubert speak freely' cannot be a question of ignoring or suppressing those conflicts. Since ignoring hegemony within hegemonic structures amounts to nothing more than tacitly replicating those structures, ignoring the 'Beethoven problem' renders Schubert's music illegible, just as it was to earlier audiences, unable to conceive of any other musical model than a Beethovenian one (even if they did not realize it). Meanwhile, ignoring the question of his sexuality or relationship to gender norms simply allows the normative assumption that he was an unremarkable heterosexual man—as all men are assumed to be under this paradigm, unless shown to be otherwise—to continue unchallenged. The answer, of course, is to replace the simple oppositional model with a dialectical one: Schubert's music, indeed Schubert's subjectivity, is formed in relation to the social structures in which it appears, but it also always exceeds them. Moreover, Schubert's interventions affect those social structures in turn, such that the meanings of 'tonality', or 'sonata form'—or, indeed, 'sexuality'—are changed.¹³

¹³ For a start, this avoids Webster's accusation of 'vulgar Marxism': a 'view of the artwork as an epiphenomenon of its creator's personality', or 'according to which art is mere "superstructure" over a social-psychological, and ultimately economic, "base"'. Webster, 'Music, Pathology, Sexuality', 93.

3.2: A Dialectical Approach to Music and Subjectivity

With these considerations in mind, this chapter will forge a different path from the criticism that has come before. Rather than focusing on a first-movement sonata form, this chapter will analyse Schubert's approach to tonality in the second movement of his Piano Sonata in A Major, D. 959. While it is impossible to escape normative explanatory systems totally, given that the ultimate aim of a dialectical approach is to change the meaning and effect of these norms, starting from a relatively unburdened position—that is, a movement *not* already imbricated in the debates and discourses of sonata form—will make this task easier. While previous value judgments on Schubert's idiosyncratic approach to tonality within sonata form has been overturned—his sonata form movements are now, by and large, 'legible' thanks to the careful work of a generation of Schubert scholars—his writing outside of sonata form remains for the most part illegible, or at least unread. As will be demonstrated shortly, the writing on the slow movement of D. 959 suggests either that it is unremarkable (that it has no antagonistic relationship with the inherited norms of tonality), or, in complete contrast, that it is so antagonistic as to be unanalysable.¹⁴ I argue, however, that since Schubert wrote this movement under the same broad cultural and social circumstances as he wrote the first movement (or any other movement) it seems right to try and understand it as well as one might try to understand the first movement (or any others). If our understanding of Schubertian tonality has not provided a useful insight into this movement so far, then—given the dialectical argument advanced above—the most likely reason is that our model of Schubertian tonality is insufficient.

Suzannah Clark has raised a similar point about the treatment of Schubert's music by analysts and theorists. She notes that critical assessment of Schubert's harmonic practice has remained the same as it ever was in recent years, with only the critical evaluation of it reversed:

¹⁴ This is especially true for the central section, which a number of commentators—examined below—appear to consider random.

While the metaphors of wandering, enigma, mirage, will-o'-the-wisp, and magic all seem strikingly close to the accusations of nineteenth-century critics, Fisk and [other similar scholars] embrace the reversal of the nineteenth-century critical and aesthetic judgement of Schubert's music. They celebrate, rather than condemn, Schubert's harmonic practice. His music is not *really* aimless or wandering or enigmatic but is carefully constructed to sound that way.¹⁵

Clark sees the same need to engage with Schubert's musical language, as it were, on its own terms, rather than merely hypothesizing poetic excuses for its unintelligibility. Using song as a contrasting example, she argues that, while a *Lied* can rely on its text for what Jonathan Kramer terms 'perceptual unity', instrumental music, with no textual support, must logically provide its own 'perceptual unity', its own means of being understood:

I contend that Schubert's exploration of harmony in the sonata forms was, to be sure, also expressive but, more important, Schubert was necessarily constrained by large-scale formal concerns. I argue the opposite intuition to the one that may be traced in modern Schubert studies: new paradigms of transferable harmonic large-scale structures are unnecessary for the songs but are imperative for the sonata forms. In other words, instrumental music—or at least, 'organized' instrumental music, such as sonata, ternary, binary and rondo forms as opposed to fantasies, preludes et cetera—requires a balance of harmonic design that song does not demand.¹⁶

One model for this is the work of Richard Cohn, who seeks to precisely explain the details of Schubert's harmonic language, and demonstrate that there is little need for such poetic intervention:

Cohn understood his hexatonic model to offer a systematic account of those Schubertian moments traditionally seen as tonally 'indeterminate', 'arbitrary', 'aimless', and 'puzzling'. His cycles were precisely designed to clarify the logic behind the harmonies

¹⁵ Suzannah Clarke, *Analyzing Schubert*, 155.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 144. For 'perceptual unity', see Chapter One, n. 81.

that Fisk and Pesic take to represent wandering and banishment, to illuminate the modulations that Adorno says occlude daylight, and to expose the trade secrets behind what Kurth views as Romantic magic.¹⁷

Clark clarifies that such work does not imply that poetic interpretations of Schubert's music are misguided. Rather, she notes that while there is a level on which these interpretations are clearly necessary, there is also a level on which they are not—Schubert's formal structures *can* be understood without recourse to them: 'Of course, I do not mean to imply that instrumental music is not narrative; I merely point out that the exploration of narratives and new vocabularies has come at the expense of new technical analyses or the development of new paradigms for Schubert's instrumental music'.¹⁸

While I agree with Clark's aims, I have some reservations about her methods and results. First, as the quotations above show, Clark is mainly concerned with Schubert's sonata forms. This immediately limits the possibility for any truly radical re-imagining of form and tonality in Schubert. Second, although I share her enthusiasm for Cohn's work in explaining Schubert's more opaque passages, there is a difficulty in reconciling the small-scale progressions that hexatonic theory probes so well, and questions of large-scale formal organization that are essential to Schubert's extended works. So far, the mediation of fine harmonic detail under hexatonic analysis and long-range tonal planning of the sort elucidated by Schenkerian theory has not been successful.¹⁹ My own analysis will attempt precisely that conjunction.

Exploring a dialectical approach to tonality in this movement will alter not only the way Schubert's idiosyncratic *treatment* of tonality is understood, but the way tonality *itself* is understood, at least when Schubert's contributions are accounted for.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 153.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 228.

¹⁹ This has been pointed out recently by J. P. E. Harper-Scott in his review-article '*Tonality 1900–1950: Concept and Practice*, ed. Felix Wörner, Ullrich Scheideler, and Philip Rupprecht (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 2012)', *Music Analysis* Vol. 33 No. 3 (2014): 388–405. His claims will be examined in detail in this chapter, below, and in the next.

The types of claims I will be making, therefore, are markedly different from those that have been made before. On the one hand, the claims will have the effect of opening up, rather than closing down, conceptions of tonality in Schubert. Far from domesticating Schubert's formal and harmonic strategies within extant models, or even expanding those models to accommodate his more experimental inventions, I will be attempting to show how these models are wholly insufficient—that they miss in their very nature the whole tonal enterprise that Schubert enacts, at least in this movement. I will not, in other words, be making any concrete claims whatever—that this piece *is* in such a form, or that the tonality functions in this sort of way; on the contrary, I will be opening up a series of previously unconsidered *possibilities* for understanding Schubert.

On the other hand, if I am presenting the possibility that tonality in Schubert can be considered in certain new ways, that is because I am making a claim about what tonality is: the reason I can claim that current models for understanding Schubertian tonality are insufficient at the level of practice is because I am arguing for a different understanding of tonality at the level of theory. In other words, while I do not wish to make specific claims about how this piece works in all its peculiarity, that is only because I am making specific claims about what tonality and music are at a more fundamental *ontological* level. This, too, is a dialectical relationship: the reason that these contrasting approaches do not pull apart (how can I make higher-level claims without restricting the options at lower levels?) is because they do not form a causal binary, but rather a dialectical pair: the nature of tonal music does not act as a genotype, directing the phenotypical expression of individual music features. Rather, the ontological formulation only creates possibilities that can be articulated on the musical surface; these possibilities in turn can be seen as pathways to understanding the fundamental ontological level.

Finally, I will argue that this dialectical nature is itself at the heart of music. In fact, I will claim that art music's dialectical form is its principal defining feature: it is the fact that music's ontological being can never be fully expressed in its material

manifestation that makes art music what it is. It is therefore important to state plainly the role of Schubert's music in this ontology. I must be very clear: I am not claiming that this dialectical property is unique to Schubert's music, nor am I claiming—by using Schubert's music as a case study—that his music is somehow better, or more authentic, or more 'truthful' than any other music. I merely consider it the case that Schubert's music, in its peculiarities, reveals very clearly something about tonal art music that may be harder to discern in other music. Schubert's music is shot through with dialectical complications: his relationship to Beethovenian musical form and his relationship to nineteenth-century subjectivity have already been highlighted. But—and this is the key to dialectical relations—it is also true that Schubert's music exceeds these binaries, that what makes Schubert 'Schubert' is located in the excess, in the ways his music *cannot* be described in relation to Beethoven, or sonata form, or in the way he *cannot* simply be understood as a homosexual or effeminate composer. He is always more than that. Music in general, but Schubert's music in particular, is fascinating because it seems to indicate relationships with wider social and theoretical concerns and yet cannot simply be reduced to them. This is the essence of a dialectical relationship, and it is only by confronting this paradox head-on that one can hope to make any progress.

3.3: Schubert's Piano Sonata in A Major, D. 959

Although literature on Schubert's Sonata in A Major, D. 959 is not entirely absent, it is noticeable that the attention given to this piece has been less extensive and of a different kind than that given to his final sonata, D. 960 in B \flat major. That sonata has been elevated to nothing short of an exemplar of Schubert's late style: in his essay 'Franz Schubert', Tovey's selects it as his sole example for an extended discussion of Schubert's sonata form practice, calling attention to the poetic provocation of its

‘thunder rolls’—the trill between F and G \flat at the opening of the movement.²⁰ The fact that, as Charles Fisk notes, this trill seems to give rise to the key scheme for the entire movement, and anticipates several moments on/in G \flat and F \sharp in subsequent movements, is an almost irresistible union of hermeneutic and analytical signification, elevating the sonata to a *locus classicus* of Schubert’s late style, and inspiring a generation of musicological engagement.²¹ Nicholas Marston has used the sonata as a basis for an analytical perspective on metaphors of home and homecoming, Su Yin Mak treats it as an extended case study in her theory of Schubert’s ‘lyricism’, while Richard Cohn has taken Tovey’s description of the harmony preceding the recapitulation in the first movement—‘as wonderful as star-clusters’—as a starting point for his elaboration of neo-Riemannian theory.²² All of these writers examine both the fine details of Schubert’s musical surface alongside its harmonic and formal structure, when drawing their interpretative conclusions.

The Sonata in A Major D. 959 has attracted a different sort of response. In line with Clark’s general rule, the responses are more immediately poetic: William Kinderman examines the second movement’s reflections of ‘wandering archetypes’, concerning himself mainly with possible intertextual links—to other movements in the sonata, other works (including *Lieder*) by Schubert, possible models by Beethoven,

²⁰ Donald Francis Tovey, ‘Franz Schubert’, in *Essays and Lectures on Music*, ed. Hubert J. Foss (London, 1949), 119–22.

²¹ Charles Fisk, ‘What Schubert’s Last Sonata Might Hold’, in *Music and Meaning*, ed. Jenefer Robinson (Ithaca NY, and London: 1997), 179–200. The clear antecedent to this sort of interpretation is Edward T. Cone, ‘Schubert’s Promissory Note: An Exercise in Musical Hermeneutics’, *19th-Century Music* Vol. 5 No. 3 (Spring, 1982): 233–41, which reads an unresolved E \natural near the start of Schubert’s *Moment musical* in A \flat op. 94 No. 6 as beginning a process that structures the rest of the piece. Two developments from Cone’s approach might therefore be noted by the time we reach the 1990s and 2000s: first, the increased sophistication of both the music-analytical (or ‘congeneric’, as Cone would say) and literary-critical (‘extrageneric’) observations; and second, the implication that this sort of procedure—that of a literary or poetic device, especially one of interruption or completion, providing the fundamental interpretative anchor to a piece of music—is a hallmark of Schubert’s style, especially in his later period.

²² Nicholas Marston, ‘Schubert’s Homecoming’, *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* Vol. 125 No. 2 (2000): 248–270; Su Yin Mak, ‘Schubert’s Sonata Forms’; Richard Cohn, ‘As Wonderful as Star Clusters: Instruments for Gazing at Tonality in Schubert’, *19th-Century Music* Vol. 22 No. 3 (Spring, 1999): 213–232.

and a painting by Goya.²³ Robert S. Hatten examines the whole sonata with reference to the alleged structural importance of resonance and gesture.²⁴ Overwhelmingly, only the first movement is submitted to thoroughgoing analytical procedures: Hatten's article spends only two-and-a-half paragraphs on the second movement; Roy Howat's study of formal 'architecture' focuses mainly on the first movement, with only a small amount dedicated to the coda and codetta of the second, (and even then, specifically how they relate to other movements); meanwhile, Ivan Waldbauer's 1988 article deals exclusively with the opening movement.²⁵

Despite this, the second movement is singled out, even among these examples, as being highly significant within the sonata: Howat has called it the 'emotional and dramatic crux' of the work, while Kinderman considers it 'extraordinary' and the sonata's 'centre of gravity'.²⁶ It is perhaps strange, then, that so little detailed attention has been given to the movement's 'music itself'. On the other hand, this seems to reflect a difficulty in coming to terms with the organization of the movement. Most accounts stress the central section, specifically the striking contrast with the rest of the movement in terms of its musical language and affect. Robert Winter has called this section 'as close to a nervous breakdown as anything in Schubert's output', while Kinderman asserts that the 'middle section seems to unleash not just turbulence and foreboding, but chaotic violence'.²⁷ Charles Fisk hears in the 'extraordinarily wild episode' a rocking boat tossed 'through a terrifying storm', 'uncanny shifts of

²³ William Kinderman, 'Wandering Archetypes in Schubert's Instrumental Music', *19th-Century Music* Vol. 21 No. 2 (Autumn, 1997): 208–222.

²⁴ Robert S. Hatten, 'Schubert the Progressive: the Role of Resonance and Gesture in the Piano Sonata in A Major, D. 959', *Intégral* Vol. 7 (1993): 38–81.

²⁵ Hatten, 'Schubert the Progressive', 67–69 and 75; Roy Howat, 'Architecture as Drama in Late Schubert', *Schubert Studies* ed. Brian Newbould (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998), 166–190; Ivan Waldbauer, 'Recurrent Harmonic Patterns in the First Movement of Schubert's Sonata in A Major, D. 959', *19th-Century Music* Vol. 12 No. 1 (Summer, 1988): 64–73.

²⁶ Howat, 'Architecture as Drama', 187; William Kinderman, 'Schubert's piano music: probing the human condition', in *The Cambridge Companion to Schubert* ed. Christopher H. Gibbs (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 162.

²⁷ Robert Winter, et al, 'Schubert, Franz', *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online* (Oxford University Press) <<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/25109pg2>> (accessed 10 August 2017); William Kinderman, 'Schubert's piano music', 162.

harmonic focus' and a 'deeply sinister, [...] profoundly disorienting' air.²⁸ Hatten describes this section as 'near-representational'.²⁹ All of these reactions suggest that Schubert's compositional choices in the movement were not motivated by introversive musical argument, but extroversive, perhaps narrative, goals. Furthermore, it is taken for granted that there is an utter dissociation between the calmer outer sections and the contrasting middle: Kinderman asserts that 'the outer sections of this ternary musical form thus embody the reflective mood of the lyrical subject, but the music of the contrasting middle section annihilates this frame of reference'.³⁰ If he determines that 'the contrasting sections are brought together purposefully and need to be heard in relation to one another',³¹ it is only so that the 'modern existential dilemma' can be made clear: 'the duality of inward imagination and outward perception', and 'the dialectic of "love" and "pain"'.³² While I agree that this movement is best understood dialectically, I disagree that it is so bald as the conflict between a calm outer section and a chaotic middle section.³³

In contrast with the preceding analyses, I will propose a properly dialectical understanding of the Andantino. While it cannot be denied that the contrast between the outer sections and the middle is crucial to the rhetoric of the piece, an important aspect of my analysis will be the demonstration that the harmonic argument of the outer parts is not as straightforward as one might immediately think, nor is the argument of the contrasting middle as inscrutable. Rather I will show how, in their own way and together, they enact the materialist dialectic at the heart of music: either in concert, both outer and inner sections negotiating both dialectical poles in similar fashion, or in contrast, where their conflict transcends mere opposition and itself

²⁸ Charles Fisk, *Returning Cycles: Contexts for the Interpretation of Schubert's Impromptus and Last Sonatas* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2001), 222.

²⁹ Hatten, 'The Role of Resonance and Gesture in the Piano Sonata in A', 69.

³⁰ Kinderman, 'Wandering Archetypes', 218.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² *Ibid.*, 222.

³³ Furthermore, it is not clear how Kinderman's interpretation can be considered properly dialectical, as opposed to merely oppositional.

becomes dialectical. And thus, although I do not reject the poetic interpretations of the movement out of hand, in line with Clark's suggestion I will demonstrate an additional introversive frame of reference for understanding the Andantino, one whose construction of musical subjectivity goes beyond the merely representational.

3.4: As Wonderful as Star Clusters: Two Dialectics

'Schubert's tonality is as wonderful as star clusters'; so said Tovey, and it was upon this metaphor that Richard Cohn seized, in the development of his neo-Riemannian model for analysing Schubert. Cohn observes that 'the traditional metaphorical source for tonal relations is the solar system, where positions are determined relative to a central unifying element. A star cluster evokes a network of elements and relations, none of which hold prior privileged status'.³⁴ Taking Tovey's metaphor in an unexpected direction, Cohn therefore proposes 'to position triadic harmonies [in Schubert] in relation to neither a diatonic system nor a tonal centre, but rather to other triadic harmonies on the basis of the number of pitch-classes that they share, and more generally on the efficiency of the voice leading between them'.³⁵ Or, putting it back into astronomical terms, 'substituting a constellational for a solar conception of the musical universe'.³⁶

While for the purposes of musical metaphor the comparison is apt enough—by and large the stars in a cluster are co-dependent, rather than revolving around a central mass—a more precise engagement with the metaphor provides a jumping off point for a different interpretation of tonality in Schubert. While Cohn sees the jettisoning of the 'solar' model of tonality as an advantage for analytical understanding, this methodology has recently been criticized by J. P. E. Harper-Scott for undervaluing the importance of tonality as a historical force in musical

³⁴ Cohn, 'As Wonderful as Star Clusters', 213.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 214.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 214–5.

composition.³⁷ While the finer details of that debate will be examined in due course, it is useful to note that, on one level, the confrontation between Cohn and Harper-Scott is about ‘the way things are’ and ‘the way they are perceived’—or, as Harper-Scott puts it, between science and history. With that in mind, I should like to draw attention to a feature of star clusters that has been notably absent from their musicological instrumentalization so far. The most widespread (and largest) variety of star clusters, ‘globular clusters’, look from afar much like single stars. Several globular clusters can be seen with the naked eye or binoculars from Earth; Fig. 3.1 shows a photograph of the night sky with globular cluster Messier 13 highlighted: it appears to be an exceptionally large, bright, if hazy point in the sky. Only upon closer examination and telescopic magnification can one appreciate that it is composed of hundreds of thousands of individual smaller stars (see Fig. 3.2).

³⁷ J.P.E. Harper-Scott, *Tonality 1900–1950: Concept and Practice*.

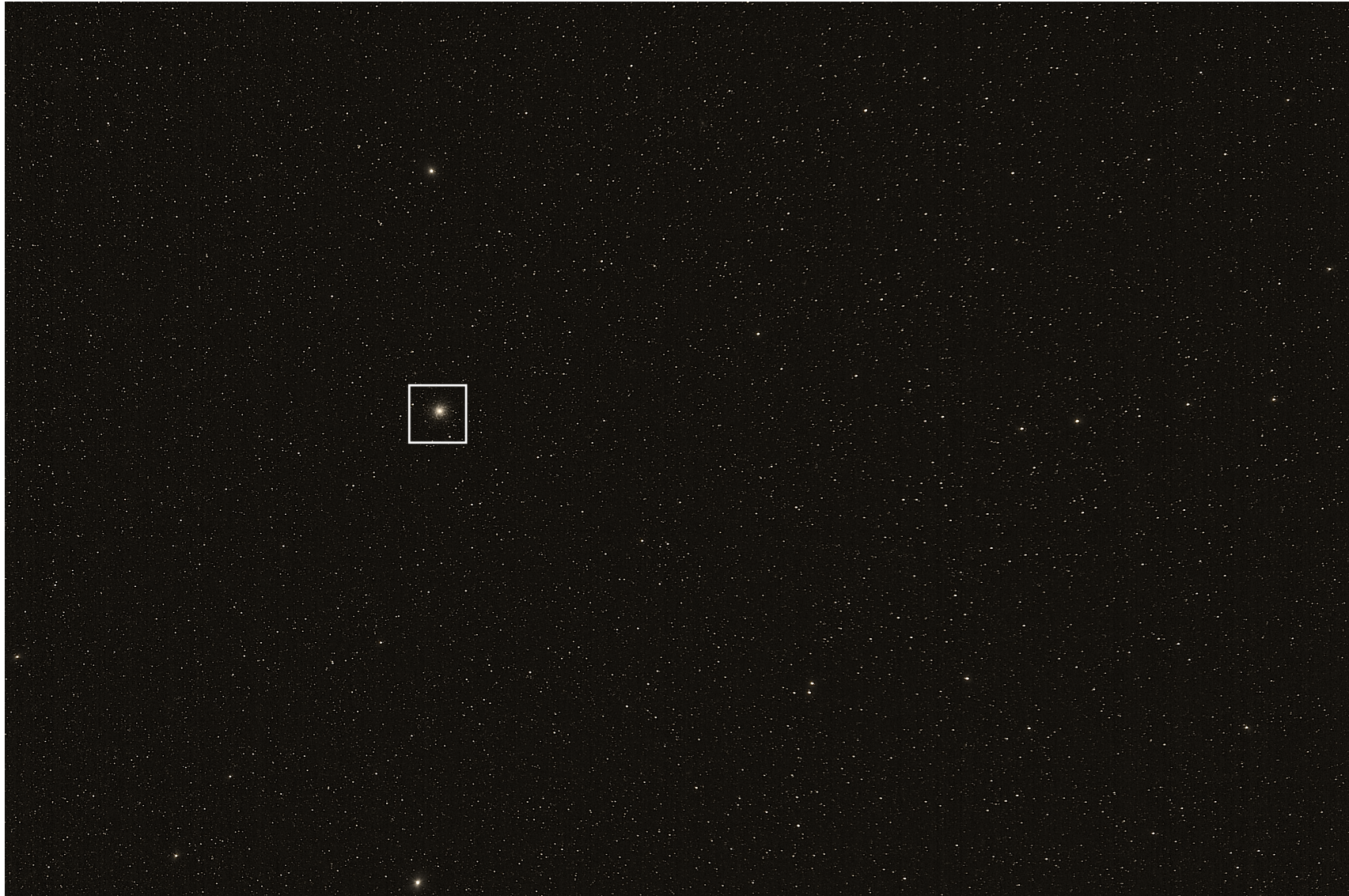


Figure 3.1: *Star Cluster Messier 13 as seen from Earth* ©Lars Karlsson (<http://www.astrofriend.eu/astronomy/my-astronomy-photo/globular-clusters/images/m13/m13-20160903-rgb-full.jpg>)

This complex association between how something is actually composed, and how it appears depending on the level of scrutiny, is another useful way of thinking about tonality, especially in Schubert. Like star clusters, tonality in Schubert—indeed, tonality in general—is not monolithic and straightforward, but a complex and multifaceted system. Nevertheless, it tells us very little of our *experience* of tonality to begin with this conclusion: as Harper-Scott states, ‘there is nothing “natural” in hearing a chord as either consonant or dissonant—or even as a chord. Everything is constructed somehow, and [... everyone] find[s] their response to music mediated by their own particular historically conditioned subjectivity’.³⁸ Everything is constructed somehow, eventually every unity breaks down: to hold steadfast to Cohn’s view would both ignore the fact that Schubert’s music *is* heard against a backdrop of tonal unity (or ‘solarity’), and implicitly deny that other music, perhaps more immediately perceptually tonally unified, is nevertheless equally arbitrary (or ‘constellational’). In other words, Schubert wrote tonal music, but decidedly hazy tonal music: all music is a star cluster eventually, and Schubert has just increased the magnification for us already. As such, neither accepting tonal constructs at face value, nor pulling them entirely apart, can do music justice. Rather, it is fitting to explore how it is that apparently self-contained wholes can contain multitudes: a materialist dialectic. The individual stars that are the material of a star cluster are themselves only organized through the concept of the star cluster, perpetually defined by their belonging within it; so it is with tonality. Individual notes, phrases, and gestures make up the musical artefact that we understand as ‘tonality’, but they cannot be considered independent of the very artefact they form part of: one is always understood by means of the other. Neither stars nor cluster, neither notes nor tonal system, is primary, since each must have *always already* occurred for the other to be legible. In this vein, it is time to turn to the outer sections of Schubert’s Andantino.

³⁸ J. P. E. Harper-Scott, ‘On Hexatonic Poles’ (letter exchange with Richard Cohn), *Music Analysis* Vol. 35 No. 1 (2016), 137.

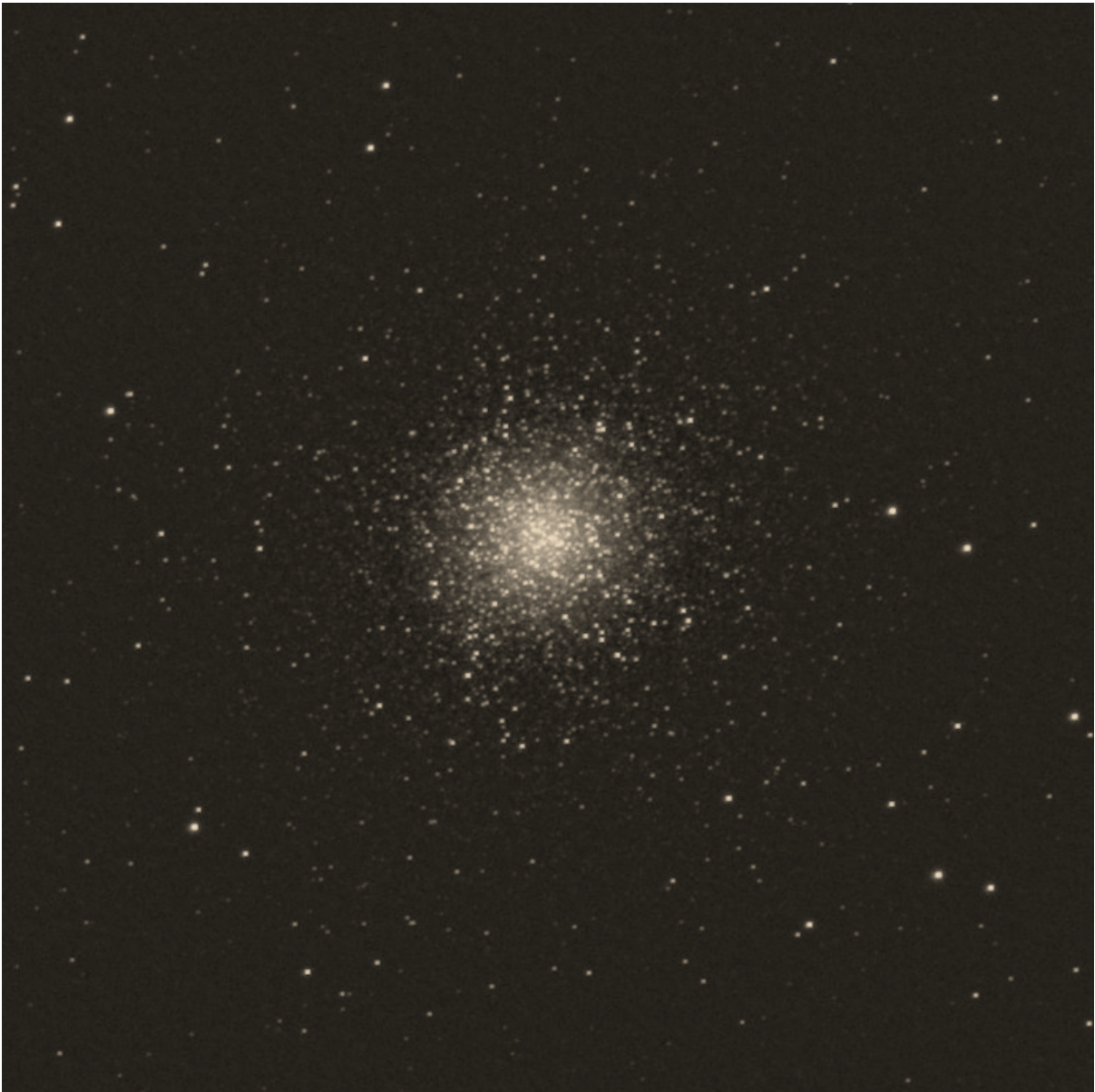


Figure 3.2: *Messier 13, magnified* ©Lars Karlsson (<http://www.astrofriend.eu/astronomy/my-astronomy-photo/globular-clusters/images/m13/m13-20160301-sigma-stack-crop.jpg>)

3.4.1: First Dialectic—Opening and Closing

Kofi Agawu has suggested that ‘nineteenth-century composers invest the ending of a work (and with it the larger mechanism of closure) with particular significance’.³⁹ In his article, he studies Chopin’s *Préludes* op. 28 as a case study in various Romantic strategies of closure, both complete and incomplete. It is important to note that his findings are based on an initial assumption (and not an unreasonable one, in the context of the history of analysis) that structure is primarily defined teleologically. He begins his chapter with the observation that ‘the most successful theories of musical structure are those that treat musical compositions as dynamic totalities, invoking a beginning-middle-end paradigm as a referential construct throughout the analysis’.⁴⁰ The importance of closure is already implicit in this model, since it sets up a narrative model of musical composition. Here, ‘beginning’, ‘middle’, and ‘end’ are not only geographic markers, but carry a semantic force: a normative ending is not simply when the composition stops, but rather when the process initiated at the beginning, and developed in the middle, is satisfactorily concluded. Although this conclusion does not always occur, the word ‘totality’ makes it clear that it is a reasonable expectation. Since music occurs in time, the beginning is fixed as soon as it occurs—everything is thus contingent on the ending: whether or not the ending given is the ending of that particular beginning determines whether *closure* has occurred.⁴¹

³⁹ Kofi Agawu, ‘Concepts of Closure and Chopin’s Opus 28’, *Music Theory Spectrum* (Spring, 1987): 1–17.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 1.

⁴¹ Agawu himself makes the point that ‘closure is not the same thing as an ending’ (*ibid.*, 4). However, he defines it as ‘the sum total of all the tendencies to close that occur in the composition, whether or not these are actually fulfilled’ (4). In his paper he studies withheld closure as much as closure achieved: he is thus speaking of closure in a very abstract sense.

This normative expectation is inscribed into the very fabric of a Schenkerian conception of musical composition. At its most fundamental, Schenkerian analysis demonstrates the way in which a piece of music can be considered to be in the tonic. Of course, in all (normative) Schenkerian *Ursätze* there is a progression from instability to stability, as the *Kopftön* descends from $\hat{8}$, $\hat{5}$, or $\hat{3}$ (that is to say, *not* $\hat{1}$, a position of rest) to resolution on $\hat{1}$; nevertheless, since the *Urlinie* is just a special linear progression—the most fundamental linear progression in a musical composition—it follows that the entire *Ursatz* is just a grand prolongation of the tonic. This fundamental distillation of Schenkerian thought will be crucial for the analysis that follows. It creates its own tension between closing and opening, since the concept of prolongation understands sonorities that are not identical on the musical surface to be equivalent—or more accurately, different facets of the same thing—on the fundamental level; nevertheless, it only understands it in this way on the basis that the entire piece works its way towards structural closure. The *Urlinie* is only a prolongation of the tonic insofar as it is already geared towards ultimate resolution, and thus sonorities are understood only within a tonic key if it is *always already* closed, at least at a conceptual level. Once again, this points to a crucial potential: the expectation of closure is inextricable within this framework, and for this very reason it does not need to be fulfilled. That is to say, tonal closure is always already understood at a conceptual level, since it is always the paradigm against which tonal pieces are read. Even when it is not given, then, closure is present in its absence.

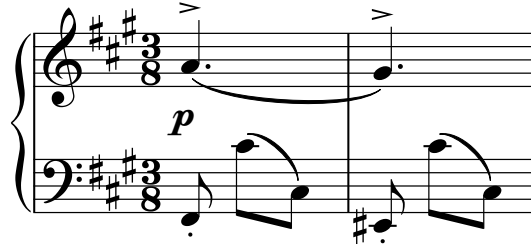
What makes Chopin's *Préludes* exceptional for Agawu is that, in a large number of cases, they undermine expectations of closure: in their eschewal of traditional strategies of closure, they partake of a particular nineteenth-century 'poetic' impulse, one that values openness and incompleteness.⁴² I will argue that Schubert's *Andantino* is motivated by a similar impulse, one that fundamentally undermines the stability of a teleologically conceived structure; in keeping with the

⁴² See *ibid.*, especially pp. 2–3 and 17.

dialectical perspective of this thesis, however, I will argue that rather than being exceptional this merely draws attention to the constructed nature of the original teleological assumption. The way Schubert negotiates the teleological assumption at the heart of tonal music draws attention to the ontological gap between the ideal level on which a piece of music is always grasped as a complete totality—again, Jonathan Kramer’s ‘perceptual unity’—and the material level on which those concepts are actually realized. It thus builds on the assertion made in Part I that musical compositions are always ‘conceptually unified’ and should be understood as such, by highlighting the way this expectation is operative even, indeed especially, in a piece riven with disunity and fragmentation.

The most striking aspect of the movement’s opening melody is its sheer simplicity. Based around two notes—bare, decorated, or inverted—the entire passage simply spins out the initial descending semitone, supported by a parallel descent in the bass, articulating tonic-dominant harmony (Ex. 3.1). This creates a tight tonic-dominant nexus that has the potential to continue indefinitely, immediately calling into question the assumptions of teleological closure that, according to Agawu, listeners automatically apply. Kinderman notes the ‘almost hypnotic effect of its main theme [...] the controlled melodic repetitions of this theme [...] create an atmosphere of melancholic contemplation, or obsession’.⁴³ This hypnotic calm is unsettled, and yet intensified, by the occasional harmonic articulations that intrude on this slow tonic-dominant rocking. At bar 5, the bass leaps from its leading note E# to an A natural,

⁴³ Kinderman, ‘Schubert’s Piano Music’, 162.



Example 3.1: Bars 1–2, showing the descending semitone motif

ushering in one bar of implied A major harmony.⁴⁴ Although this is only a temporary diversion, immediately swerving back to a half cadence in F# minor, it is developed in bars 19–26, when a sudden harmonic shift presents the whole theme reharmonized on A (over a dominant pedal E). Apart from light decoration of the inverted semitone motif (which—significantly perhaps—was the site of the A major digression the first time around), the melody is presented unchanged. Once again, the music is deflected back to the tonic as quickly as it was drawn away from it, an ascending bass line in bar 25 leading to another half cadence on F# minor.

It is obvious how such moves unsettle the steady rhythm of tonic-dominant rocking. Yet, from a strictly analytical perspective, this is normative behaviour: as the voice-leading reduction shows (see Fig. 3.3), these A major inflections are merely components of a tonic arpeggiation. It thus merely reinforces the centrality of the tonic key. If one were to take the claims made about Schenkerian analysis’s prioritization of monolithic unity at face value, one might see the A major passages ‘erased’, leaving Schubert’s harmonic richness subordinated to an endless self-assertion of the tonic. However, ridding oneself of an oppositional conception of background and foreground, this contrast can instead be understood dialectically: A major is simply one of the ways that F# minor is articulated on the musical surface. It is essential to stress the dialectical, rather than hierarchical, nature of this relationship: A major is

⁴⁴ Although only A and C# are sounded, with no E# present, the shift is so abrupt—breaking off the expected harmonic resolution—that the identity of A major is incontrovertible; indeed, the angular diminished fourth in the bass part is dissonant enough to take the place, aurally, of the missing E#–E# false relation.

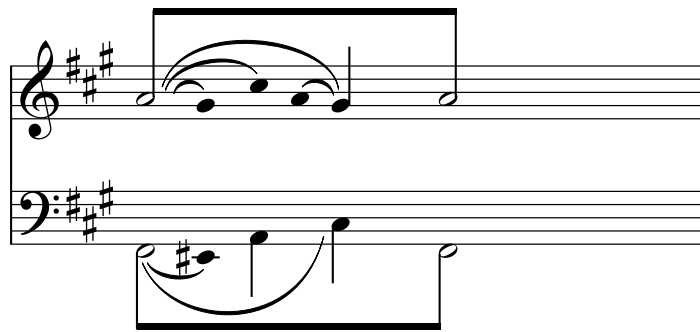


Figure 3.3: Voice leading reduction of bars 1–9

neither subordinated to F# minor on the ‘musical surface’,⁴⁵ nor is it subordinated ontologically—it is not, that is to say, an ‘appearing’, an imperfect or deformed shadow, of the ‘real’ F# minor. Rather, it *is* F# minor (the key, not the chord): it is one of the ways this key asserts itself, as much as the chord of F# minor does. Within the language of tonality, the sonority of F# minor is the Master Signifier, it is the quilting point that binds the key together, and as such, the appearance of an actual F# minor chord is the necessary precondition of satisfactory closure; nevertheless, the fact that such satisfactory closure can be evaded without calling into question the stability of tonality as a functional concept—as I have already demonstrated with reference to Agawu’s readings of Chopin’s *Préludes*—demonstrates that the sonority of F# minor and the concept of *being in* F# minor are not coextensive. This is a conclusion available from even traditional Schenkerian theory, if it is read carefully enough.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Thus the (almost certainly untrue) story recounted by Charles Rosen of Schoenberg’s complaint regarding a Schenkerian analysis of Beethoven’s ‘Eroica’ symphony falls flat: ‘but where are my favourite passages? Ah, there they are, in those tiny notes’, in *The Classical Style* rev. ed. (London: Faber & Faber, 1997), 35. The view that the Schenkerian levels shows any kind of qualitative hierarchy is highly misguided.

⁴⁶ Thus Carl Schachter’s response to Schoenberg’s apocryphal quip is somewhat unsatisfying: Schachter analyses several musical moments, including in Schubert’s *oeuvre*, in which the *Urlinie*—that is, the background—directly intrudes on the foreground. He is attempting to demonstrate that, *pace* ‘Schoenberg’, one’s favourite moments need not be buried in the tiny notes of the notionally excluded foreground, but rather might themselves be located in the background. While this is undeniably true for certain pieces in the repertoire, it does not serve as an adequate response, since it misses the crucial fact that even when moments, significant or not, are relegated entirely to the ‘tiny notes’ of the foreground, they are nevertheless connected dialectically to the background, insofar as all foreground is a prolongation of the background, and thus the interpretative substance is located (at least partially) in the *interrelation* of these two layers. Schachter is merely demonstrating that, on



Example 3.2: Bars 13–18, showing an IAC, followed by a PAC in a two-bar tag

From the very beginning, then, Schubert's *Andantino* puts the dialectic of tonality right at the heart of its musical argument, making it audible. On the one hand, there is no question that the tonic is regularly reinforced through alternation with the dominant, the rocking $\hat{3}$ – $\hat{2}$ melodic line, and the composing out via A major. But, on the other hand, these same features lead the music to sound constantly in motion, open-ended, and given to indefinite continuation. While a propensity towards half cadences most obviously contributes to the sense of instability, it is the constant oscillation between tonic and dominant that generates an expectation that, even when a tonic chord does eventually arrive, it could easily give way again to the dominant, continuing the cycle.

The sense of fluid motion, the unsettling simultaneity of stasis and instability, is intensified by the phrase structure. The principal theme is formed of regular four-bar units arranged in an ABAC format. In Schubert's *Andantino*, the conventional expectation of a Perfect Authentic Cadence is all the more intensified due to the obsessive repetition of the $\hat{3}$ – $\hat{2}$ descending melodic motif: $\hat{1}$ is palpably the object of desire, the goal of this melody. However, rather than fulfilling this local desire at the end of the first musical paragraph, the melody bounces back to $\hat{3}$ at bar 16, creating an Imperfect Authentic Cadence. Full melodic closure is relegated to a two-bar tag at bars 17–18, an afterthought that increases the instability wrought by the delayed closure by breaking up what was, thus far, neat periodic phrasing (see Ex. 3.2).

occasion, the background can be *audible*. The task of this chapter is to elucidate the dialectical relationship, such that it will become clear how the background can become audible *even as foreground*. See Carl Schachter, 'Structure as Foreground: Das Drama des Ursatzes', in *Schenker Studies* 2, ed. Carl Schachter and Hedi Siegel (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 298–314.

Example 3.3: Bars 19–32, showing a foreshortened phrase structure

This is both balanced and intensified by the subsequent phrase. Although continuing in four-bar units, the structure as a whole is foreshortened: in answer to the ABAC format that preceded it, bars 19–32 are organized A'BC, the return of the 'A' unit omitted (see Ex. 3.3). To compound this, the same melodic deflection towards an IAC occurs again at bars 29–30, leaving melodic closure to another two-bar tag at bars 31–32. The subsequent phrase is, then, even more unbalanced than the first: three four-bar units followed by a two-bar tag, asymmetrical in every way. On the other hand, the sum of these several irregularities has the result that the two phrases together amount to thirty-two bars: the length that would have occurred with strictly regular periodic phrasing. The idiosyncratic shortening of the second phrase balances out the lengthening of the first, and the structure as a whole—in theory, at least—regains balance.

A rich tonal space is therefore opened up at the start of the movement, one that has already established its identity partially through reference to expectations of tonal closure. The gentle tonic-dominant rocking, although generically normative, is given a rhetorical edge by the continuous $\hat{3}$ – $\hat{2}$ movement. Combined with the inclusion of A major as a tonic prolongation, this means that although the music never really leaves

the tonic, it never really settles either: neither meditative nor exploratory, it is merely restless. The tonic—the very idea of F# minor tonality and all the relationships it implies—has been set in motion: stability, and dynamism.⁴⁷ This is emphasized, in an almost playful way, by the phrase structure: despite the simplicity of the musical argument ($\hat{3}-\hat{2}-\hat{1}$ over I-V-I), the reharmonizations, omissions, and delayed PACs serve to unsettle the entire passage, all the while remaining within a 32-bar framework.

Given that the tonic-dominant rocking takes away any definitiveness to V-I movement, creating the strong impression that any arrival on the tonic could immediately give way, it is not surprising that firm cadential resolution relies on another harmony. It is the subdominant chords at bars 13 and 27 that alert the listener to the impending closure—in the end, of course, postponed—as Ex. 3.4 shows. Once again, this is normative practice: Agawu dedicates an entire section to ‘the Subdominant as Signifier of Closure’, again implicitly relying on the conventional understanding that cadential motion is often signalled by a pre-dominant of some kind.⁴⁸

Nevertheless, the particularities of its mobilization here are worth examining. Charles Fisk has noted a peculiar interrelation between tonic and dominant in the first movement of this sonata, positing that ‘instead of opposing dominant to tonic, this first movement might be viewed as establishing a tonal opposition between tonic and dominant together, taken as one pole, and the tonalities and tonal procedures that arise from the chromatic [subsidiary theme] taken as the other’.⁴⁹ James Webster,

⁴⁷ Of course, this is the very idea of the Schenkerian background: ‘the overtone series, this vertical sound of nature, this chord in which all the tones sound at once, is transformed into a succession, a horizontal arpeggiation’ — Heinrich Schenker, *Free Composition*, trans. and ed. Ernst Oster (New York: Schirmer Books, 1979), 10. Putting aside his questionable naturalist metaphysics, it is clear that for Schenker tonal music’s basic motivating force is a vertical phenomenon (the tonic triad) pushed into horizontal motion (the fundamental structure, and thence the successive layers of the composition).

⁴⁸ Agawu, ‘Closure in Chopin’, 10–1.

⁴⁹ Fisk, *Returning Cycles*, 210.



Example 3.4: Bars 9–16, showing the subdominant preparation for the cadence

meanwhile, has written of Schubert's 'unease with the dominant', that only in the home key was he 'at ease relating dominant and tonic'.⁵⁰

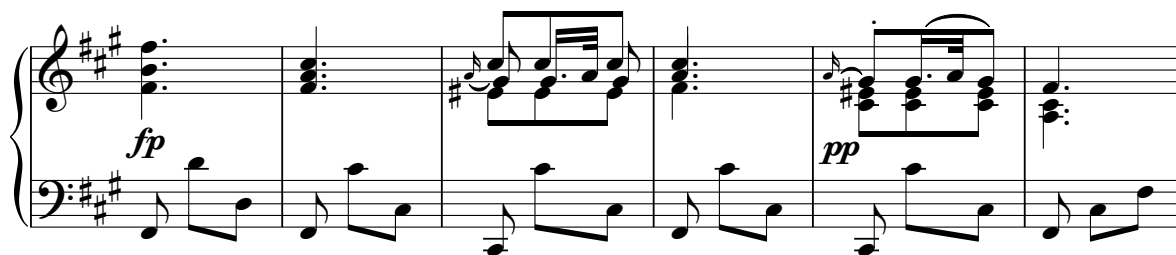
Both of these writers are dealing with Schubert's first movement sonata forms, and on a different scale to that under examination here: Fisk is writing about Schubert's long-range tonal practice, while Webster is concerned with Schubert's modulatory practice. Thus while neither observation is directly applicable to the small-scale phrase structure of the second-movement *Andantino*, their observations nevertheless chime with the impressions of the main theme outlined thus far. Their point is that Schubert so strongly intertwines the dominant with the tonic that their identities become inextricably aligned: the dominant can no longer function as the tonic's 'Other', and bring about a satisfactory teleological musical argument. It is possible to interpret the *Andantino* in a similar fashion: Schubert's propensity to bring the tonic and dominant into a single group leads to the endless spooling out of $\hat{3}-\hat{2}$ movement, never creating an arc towards closure, but rather merely composing out the tonic—in this case, composed out even further to include the mediant, A major, as

⁵⁰ Webster, 'Schubert's Sonata Forms and Brahms's First Maturity', 26.

well. It requires a different chord to break this reverie, and provide the significant 'Other' that propels the phrase to cadential closure.

There is further nuance to this: since technically the chord does not function as a subdominant, but as I_4^6 , this moment is simply a continuation of the tonic elaboration, albeit at the highest level of dissonance. There is no true harmonic motion, then, but simply a contrapuntal development of the tonic that, on the uppermost surface of the music, envelops tonic, dominant, mediant, and 'subdominant' chords. This is animated and dramatized by the careful balancing of rhythm, phrase structure, and control of dissonance. Thus, the burden of responsibility for the musical argument has been shifted from the 'ideal' level of the background tonal structure to the 'material' concerns of the musical reality—the fine details of the placement of individual notes and their sounding. While from a Schenkerian perspective it is normative for an opening section to compose out the tonic region (indeed, as has been stressed already, all pieces are understood as composings-out of the tonic at the most fundamental Schenkerian structural level), what is striking about the *Andantino* is how this process is made audible. One does not have to abstract far from the score itself, or its sounding reality, to say that the opening 32 bars are simply the tonic chord put in motion: one might say that there is very little difference between the foreground level and the background level, or—to put it another way—that in this opening section there is no middleground level.

The final 'material' facet that it is important to consider in the *Andantino* is register. Although register only becomes of central importance in the final section of the movement, which will be examined shortly, it is nevertheless anticipated by the finer details of the opening section. From bar 6 a subordinate voice is present in the right hand; the first hint of its future significance comes at bars 27–32, when it is thickened to two parts, enveloping the melodic descent $\hat{4}-\hat{3}-\hat{2}-\hat{1}$ (which presumably still ought to be considered the principal melody). Indeed, the descant $F\#\prime\prime$ at bar 27 which heralds this melodic subsumption coincides with the pivotal *fp* I_4^6 chord discussed above; this second voice is thus gesturally marked enough that it threatens



Example 3.5: Bars 27–32, showing textural confusion—at the start of the extract the melody is in the middle of the right-hand texture, before resuming its position at the top

to usurp the melody completely—the listener’s ears are pulled to this upper register as attention is deflected from the middle tessitura (see Ex. 3.5).

Not only is the movement towards melodic closure further weakened by obscuring the interrupted descent, but the melody’s very identity is put in jeopardy. This launch into the upper register is compounded after bar 33, as the entire passage is repeated doubled at the upper octave; the right hand eventually thickens significantly, culminating in a four-part exploration of the upper reaches of the keyboard. The main questions posed by this early textural development, then, are: what is the significance of the descant that threatens to overwhelm the melody? And what is to be done about the enormous registral arena opened up by the constant upward mobility of the melody and descant? Is the first presentation merely a foretaste, an initial ascent, while the obligatory register is only reached at bar 33, or is the material from bar 33 merely yet another repetition—a further composing out of this complex tonic space?⁵¹ The central section raises registral contrast to a thematic level, such that by the final section of the piece the tessitural conflicts are palpably in need of resolution. A separate analysis will examine the central section and its relation to the outer sections; to determine how the questions raised by the movement’s opening are eventually resolved, it is necessary to skip directly to the final section.

⁵¹ One might reasonably ask, in sceptical fashion, whether concepts such as ‘obligatory register’ and the neutralization of pitch space are in fact merely outdated Schenkerian extravagances. The analysis that follows will demonstrate that pitch space and obligatory register carry rhetorical weight within this piece: the upper tessitura engaged from bar 33 is construed as unstable by what follows, and is felt to be in need of resolution by the end of the piece.

159

pp

163

168

cresc.

173

p

pp

179

f

Example 3.6: Bars 159–186

Example 3.6 (cont.): Bars 187–end

At first glance, the final section appears straightforward. Beginning at bar 159, it is a varied reprise of the opening theme. Among the differences with the opening is a semiquaver accompaniment replacing the reserved left-hand quavers of the start, causing the music to flow with a greater sense of forward motion. The second contrapuntal voice, meanwhile, which only crept underneath the melody in the sixth bar of the original presentation, is this time introduced from the very start: it is a haunting presence above the melody, beginning as a tense pedal in the middle register, but eventually climbing much higher. This reopens the same upper melodic space as in the theme's first presentation. Unlike the first section, however, there is no repeat to probe this area's identity. Instead, a single iteration attempts to 'deal with' both registers in one swoop. The descant appears to draw the main melody upwards: as the melody rises to its C[#]–D[#] peak at bar 163–164, the descant shifts to accommodate it, maintaining an anchoring pitch around a fourth above the principle melody. However, as the melody descends in the following two bars, the descant remains in place, ultimately coming to rest on G[#], a whole octave above the melody (with two subordinate voices separating them). This upward pull continues as the

cycle begins again at bar 167: beginning with both voices in their original positions the descant again begins to rise, first a fifth above the melody at bar 171, then a sixth at bar 172. At this point a significant change occurs: the (by now expected) Imperfect Authentic Cadence at bars 173–4 is drawn up to meet the descant, finishing an octave too high, with a final C^{♯'''} ringing out in the uppermost voice, as if to highlight the double disappointment: an IAC rather than a PAC, and the abandonment of the obligatory register. Although the two-bar tag completes the Perfect Authentic Cadence an octave lower, in the expected register, rather than bringing comfort this merely compounds the tension: it serves as a baldly direct presentation of the massive registral disjunction that has been developed over the course of the movement, putting the need for textural resolution beyond doubt.

The structural cadence occurs a few bars later, across bars 187–8. That it is the best candidate for a structural cadence is beyond doubt: it is the final perfect cadence in root position in the piece, supporting a melodic $\hat{2}-\hat{1}$ in the upper voice of the right hand. Moreover, what follows bar 188 is clearly a coda: although there is a final cadential gesture at bars 195–6, it is not structurally secure, since the bass movement is a chromatic descent into the depths of the piano rather than a root position cadence, while the right hand lacks any smooth linear descent. By contrast, the cadence at bars 187–8 rhetorically emphasizes its own finality. At bar 186 the right hand leaps up an entire octave; although this displaces the $I_4^6-I_3^5$ harmonic resolution, it recaptures the uppermost octave left hanging at the end of the first section, but kept alive by the incomplete neighbour motion around C^{♯'''} in the retransition and the bell-like C^{♯'''} of bar 174. The cadence that follows fills part of that gap in reverse, rushing down from D^{'''}-F^{♯''} over the root position V-I motion, and suggesting the possibility of final closure.

Nevertheless, full resolution is withheld, since the cadence is limited to the upper octave, and the obligatory register—the register of the beginning of the movement, and the beginning of the reprise—is left like a hanging question mark. That this is not a question of Schenkerian sophistry is apparent from the immediate

context of the structural cadence. It is clear that the music from the beginning of the reprise at bar 159 to the cadence of bars 173–4 functions to bridge the gap between the two registers opened up in the first half; that the obligatory register is still primary is confirmed by the fact that the IAC at bars 173–4 is ‘corrected’ by a PAC at the original octave. This sense is further reinforced by the phrase structure, already shown to be a crucial structural marker in this movement. The IAC at the ‘wrong’ octave, immediately ‘corrected’ by a PAC in the obligatory register, occurs at the halfway division of the reprise: the double sentence from bars 159–174 (with a two-bar tag, bars 175–6) forms the antecedent of a large period structure, the consequent of which runs from bar 177 to 188. It is therefore expected that the consequent will conclude in a way that rhymes with the end of the antecedent, albeit more definitively. The listener should then expect a confirmatory two-bar tag, which previously appeared at every analogous cadence, after the cadence at the upper octave in bars 187–8: in order to rhyme with the antecedent, and to close the registral argument of the movement, a PAC in the obligatory register is required. That this expectation is thwarted is therefore keenly felt, unsettling the harmonic, melodic and phrase-structural balance in one go. From bar 189, the music begins its slow chromatic descent into the piano’s depths, spiked with dark Neapolitan harmonies—the G₄s almost spitefully frustrating the necessary $\hat{2}$ – $\hat{1}$ closure in the obligatory register; instead, the right hand pointedly closes an octave too low, any repose in the expected octave palpably lacking.

This withheld closure clearly adds to the melancholy, even tragic atmosphere of the *Andantino*. However, it also forms part of the dialectic of tonality advanced above. I find it significant that it is ‘only’ surface features, such as register and phrase structure, that frustrate normative tonal resolution. This can be easily grasped if other candidates for the structural cadence—the moment of final resolution—are considered, and the reasons why they too fall short are examined. The impetuous bounce back to $\hat{3}$ that makes bar 174 an unsatisfactory option, and the registral tension that makes bars 174, 176 and 188 problematic, are all surface issues: perhaps this is why it is so tempting to do away with the idea of obligatory register—it is, more than

anything, simply ‘annoying’ that one cannot consider these cadences fully resolved. Even bars 184–5 have the air of a possible cadence about them: with a melodic line moving $\hat{2}-\hat{1}-\hat{7}-\hat{1}$ and a bass line moving V–I, it is only the dissonant $\frac{7}{4}$ chord, the same contrapuntal elaboration that articulated the opening section, that frustrates total closure. Put another way, at this point in the movement, closure is set up formally, rhetorically, and harmonically: the passage is full of potential closing gestures, all of which only just fall short. Paradoxically, this both confirms and weakens the sense of closure. It confirms closure because closure is never in any doubt: both higher-level formal features, such as the clear ternary form, and rhetorical surface features all construct this section as an ending. The final section clearly demonstrates, therefore, that the piece is alive to the invitation to structural teleology, as invoked by Agawu’s model. That it ultimately declines that invitation, however, leads one to question the entire premise. After all, the cadence at bars 187–8 is only *arbitrarily* the structural cadence: the final section is only as closed as the first section was, insofar as they both end with a perfect authentic cadence in the tonic.⁵² This is an important point: it has been demonstrated that the first section performs no tonal work, not even firmly confirming the tonic via some dialectical tonal ‘Other’, instead merely spooling it onward through a multifaceted composing-out. In this way, and compounded especially by introducing textural confusion towards the end of the section, the entire opening became exploratory, rather than goal-orientated. While from a Schenkerian standpoint this is normal for an opening section, the same cannot be said for a final

⁵² Thus that the clear ternary form is considered a ‘higher-level formal feature’ must be taken in context: it is not a higher-level *structural* feature, which for Schenker could only be the *Ursatz*. The ternary form is a surface feature, in terms of the fundamental *structure* of the piece—it is an element of the structure’s materialization, rather than its ideal concept, as much as the rhetorical features of closure are. This issue is taken up by David Beach in ‘Schubert’s Experiments with Sonata Form’. My whole approach can be seen to share the spirit of Peter H. Smith’s paper ‘Structural Tonic or Apparent Tonic?: Parametric Conflict, Temporal Perspective, and a Continuum of Articulative Possibilities’, *Journal of Music Theory* Vol. 39 No. 2 (Autumn, 1995): 245–283. Smith likewise examines the way neat Schenkerian principles can be undermined on the foreground by elements such as rhythm and phrase structure; on the whole, however, and in contradistinction to my own approach, Smith maintains a generally conventional Schenkerian practice while critiquing Schenker’s premises. My own approach is the opposite.

Figure 3.4: Voice-leading reduction of the transition into the reprise, showing prolongation of the lower neighbour G#

section, which must be end-weighted by definition: it ought to provide the fundamental descent of the *Urlinie*, to bring the dynamized tonic (initially $\hat{3}/i$) to a position of rest via a strong structural cadence ($\hat{2}/V$ to $\hat{1}/i$). However, Schubert's flat-out refusal of this process goes beyond a mere failure to fulfil a teleological promise, and instead highlights the way the whole movement is fundamentally non-teleological. Both sections are to an equal degree more concerned with *exploring* F# minor supporting $\hat{3}$, than shutting it down, which is the preeminent requirement of a normative *Ursatz*.

Instead, in its refusal of teleology—or end-weightedness—the movement's final section becomes noticeably front-weighted. This front-weightedness gains an enormous amount of its momentum from the firm tonic arrival that begins the reprise at bar 159. As Fig. 3.4 shows, the preceding recitative section (from bar 123) introduces and prolongs the neighbour note G#, after which the dominant is tonicized (by a PAC ending at bar 147, but prepared as early as bar 141), rapidly assuming a clear dominant function (bar 156), before leading back into the reprise in the tonic F# minor.

This is by far the strongest tonic confirmation of the whole movement, serving not only to neutralize the extreme harmonic digressions that characterize the middle section, but to place the piece incontrovertibly back in F# minor. And this is the crucial irregularity of the *Andantino's* tonal strategy: the fundamental tonal motion in this

Figure 3.5: Suggested background graph for the Sonata in A major, D. 959, 2nd movement

movement does not take place at the end, where Schenker and Agawu would look for it, but between the outer sections and the middle. That is to say, there is no tonal motion in the outer sections; even were the middle passage not as wildly chromatic as it is, *any* tonal contrast whatsoever would overshadow the insistent ‘tonicism’ of the outer sections. One could be as bold as to suggest the divergent, unconventional Schenkerian graph presented in Fig. 3.5 to capture the tonal drama of the Andantino. Here, the structural cadence is not at the end of the final section, but at the beginning: it is at this point that the *tendencies toward* closure begin, as F# minor as tonic is explored. It only becomes retrospectively apparent that bar 159 is the tonal anchor, the point from which the rest of the movement spins out: although the (shorter-range) tonal motions do not resolve, there is a species of tonal stability that is bound to this point.

On the other hand, as Fig. 3.5 shows, the rocking $\hat{3}-\hat{2}-\hat{3}$ over I-V-I that constitutes the principal thematic content of the outer sections is merely a reflection of the fundamental background structure of the whole movement (or vice versa). So while the perfect cadence that announces the start of the reprise is a moment of significant tonic arrival, it also a higher-level appearance of the endless tonic non-committal spooling that characterizes the surface of the movement. In this sense, there is no sense of closure here either: even at this fundamental level, the dominant cannot

function as the tonic's confirmatory tonal other. Instead it is drawn into the domain of the tonic, prompting not a closing down, but another opening up—something that gives additional meaning to the irresolute nature of the final section: structural closure is declined because, even at the most fundamental background level, the *Andantino* is concerned with opening, not closing. This is just one reason why an interpretation resting on the supposedly irreconcilable contrast between the outer and inner sections is overly simplistic. It is reasonable to suggest, instead, that at every level this movement is more concerned with introducing the possibilities of navigating the tonic than with firmly delineating it through any fundamental formal or cadential structure.

The lack of a normative structural cadence highlights the dialectical nature of tonality, or tonal stability. Were there a firm structural cadence, especially after such a turbulent, tonally dissonant middle, it might suggest that tonal stability is achieved in a particular moment, that 'the tonic' is a chord that can either appear or be withheld, or that 'being in F# minor' is contingent on the resolution of a purely linear process. A structural cadence might suggest itself, in other words, as the very instant that F# minor is confirmed. There is, of course, a linear tension on the surface of the *Andantino*; however, just as obviously—as the foregoing analysis has shown—the state of being in a key is decidedly more complex than that, as are concepts such as tonal stability, or closure. For example, for all the lack of a structural close at the end of the piece, the fact that F# minor is the tonic key is not in any doubt. Instead, this piece's musical argument is centred on a more profound vertical tension, between the ideal level in which this piece is in F# minor—the way everything emanates from, and ultimately composes out, F# minor as tonic—and how this tonic is articulated (or not) at the surface. This dialectical tension is dramatized in the *Andantino* by the obsessive motivic repetitions that constantly insist on the presence of the tonic, while the shifting harmonies and unbalanced phrasing simultaneously undermine its confirmation. And it is further dramatized by the strategy Schubert employs in the retransition and reprise, which retrospectively quilts the start of the reprise as a highpoint of tonal stability, out of which is once again unrolled a refractive tonic exploration.

By rejecting any kind of overarching teleology, and instead positing a structure primarily geared to opening rather than closing of tonal possibilities, the entire structure (including the fundamental background $\hat{3}-\hat{2}-\hat{3}$ motion) is simply a composing out of the tonic.⁵³ Likewise, the anchor of tonal stability is pushed further and further into the background: cadential functions are a purely material concern in this piece, having no link to the fundamental (ideal) background. Structural cadences in more conventional compositions are absolute coincidences of the ideal and material realms: consider, for example, a final trill over $\hat{2}-\hat{1}$ in a Viennese piano sonata. There, the full weight of the background tonal tension is articulated in the foreground, providing closure at both levels, and the state of ‘being in the tonic’ is perfectly aligned with the sounding of a tonic chord after a perfect cadence. In the *Andantino*, far from providing any sort of quilting point between the two levels, Schubert forcibly widens the gap between them. In its stead, vague anchors at the beginning of the first and last sections provide a kind of tonal starting-point, the articulation and elaboration of which is left entirely up to the foreground.

It might be possible to claim that the lack of any satisfying tonal closure in the foreground of the piece only draws attention to the fact that the tonic is ideally present all along—it is, in other words, notable by its material absence; this would be the conventional reading, of a kind with Agawu’s interpretations of Chopin. On the other hand, one could claim precisely the opposite: that despite the tonic being materially present on the surface—in literally hundreds of tonic chords, as well as dozens of perfect cadences and closed melodic forms—it is *not* confirmed at the ideal level through a stable resolution of the *Ursatz*. This paradox is at the heart of the matter: by creating the possibility of these conflicting readings, Schubert shows that tonality is not localizable to one or the other of the material or the ideal realms, background or

⁵³ As I have already stated, Schenker would argue that all music is the composing out of the tonic, simply in a very specific way in which the fundamental background is always a descending linear progression. But the palpable difference here, there being no overall goal, might best be rendered with italics: composing-*out*.

foreground, but rather shows that it consists in the dialectical interaction of the two. The Andantino, therefore, demonstrates that tonality is something that, while from a great distance appearing to be a unity, proves upon closer inspection to be a more complex and mutually reinforcing system, a blurred and variegated dynamo, whose fascination resides in the fact that it cannot be understood either as a monolith or as a series of smaller component parts, but rather—observed askew, in time, through a *process* rather than an *act* of looking—as both. And with that, I have recapitulated my description of star clusters.

3.4.2: Second Dialectic—Schubert’s Chromatic Materialism

The previous dialectical investigations attempted to unravel the interaction between the material and ideal levels in the outer sections of Schubert’s Andantino: it was demonstrated that the neatly unified ideal level of the piece—its tonal identity—was refracted and distorted in its material instantiation, left open and incomplete. Nevertheless—dialectically—this material disruption proved crucial to the idea of its tonality in the first instance. The piece escaped the confines of a straightjacketed conception of tonality, and the intimation of its ideal level, as a result, was all the richer.

One way of thinking about the ideal level is that level on which music is comprehensible, conceptualizable, subject to *logos*. The outer sections seemed fully comprehensible—if anything, they seemed a little dull; the star-cluster-like encounter with them showed that this was not the whole story. The middle section contrasts in nearly every way: melodically unrelated to the rest of the movement’s material and texturally extreme, it abruptly shifts into foreign harmonic realms, moving between them by means of unvarnished semitonal swerves. It is no wonder, then, that this section has been described as ‘chaotic’, and like a ‘nervous breakdown’.⁵⁴ However,

⁵⁴ See note 27, above.

the preceding dialectical analysis concerned itself with the processual aspect of music analysis, demonstrating that an act of mere labelling was insufficient to understand fully how music operated. In its focus on closure, the analysis of the outer sections was a departure from the normal synchronic tendencies of analysis, towards a diachronic method that attempts to capture music as it is experienced. If the reading advanced in the previous section is to hold, then simply designating the central section a ‘contrasting middle’—one that seems to perform no discernible experiential (diachronic) function other than this (synchronic concept of) contrast—will not suffice. The next analysis will show how this central section can contribute to a dialectical understanding of tonality, one rooted in the material performance of ideal structuring concepts.

There is a second philosophical objection to entertaining the idea that the central section is intractable to analysis, despite the obvious surface semiotic role that contrast plays. It would, of course, be ludicrous to attempt to explain away the contrast to reveal some hidden unity—such an analysis would not help anyone to understand the piece more; arguably one would understand it less.⁵⁵ Nevertheless, to claim that there are no analytical possibilities for this section—to claim that there are no independent structuring principles behind it—is to imply a great deal more. If one

⁵⁵ This recalls the point made by Carolyn Abbate and Roger Parker regarding the finale of Act II of *Le Nozze di Figaro*: noting the extent of critical focus on the ‘harmonic juggernaut’ of fifth relations that secures E♭ major as the tonic at the end of Act II, they note that ‘the music seems at odds with the stage action [...] the plot at this moment is wide open, at a moment of maximum instability [...] there is no escaping the fact that the overall tonal argument of the finale cannot pretend to be an allegory for the overall state of the stage action’—Carolyn Abbate and Roger Parker, ‘Dismembering Mozart’, *Cambridge Opera Journal* Vol. 2 No. 2 (July, 1990), 194–5. Their point is that detailed formal analysis cannot be guaranteed to elucidate the ‘meaning’ of music. While the difficulty they point out is a cautionary tale against simplistic uses of formal analysis, I do not wish to give way to their implicit anti-analytical stance (already pointed out in Chapter 2, section 2.3.3.): I am interested in what analysis has to offer. Thus my position is closer to that of Charles Rosen, who rebuffs Abbate and Parker’s claims: instead of simply noting the disparity between formal unity and dramatic tension, he demonstrates the significance of the keys and key relationships on a larger scale, giving an interpretation of the harmonic organization of Act II finale rooted in a deeper understanding of its role in the whole opera (Charles Rosen, *The Classical Style*, rev. ed. (London: Faber & Faber, 1997), xxii–xxvi). In other words, Rosen reaches a more satisfying conclusion by going *further*, by engaging in more sophisticated analysis than Abbate and Parker, rather than abandoning it all together: it is a procedure I wish to emulate here.

maintained that the central section bore no ideal relation to the movement around it, it might imply that the central section is essentially exchangeable with any other passage of music, that a completely different contrasting middle could be interpolated in its place without losing any aesthetic effect. And if one maintained that the passage was truly 'unanalysable'—that the individual notes had no structuring principle behind them—it might imply that those individual notes are themselves exchangeable, even random. With radical consequences for any notion of artistic effort and accomplishment (Schubert's, or indeed any composer's), it would suggest that the details—and not even the fine ones—of this passage and similar ones are wholly irrelevant. In a typically postmodern fashion this would anachronistically privilege concept over craft, leading to the equally postmodern conclusion that the 'concept' is that 'there is no concept'.⁵⁶

Of course (and in keeping with the dialectical spirit of Part II) this is merely the opposite pole of the situation obtaining in the first dialectic, above. The hypothetical argument here is that the music has *totally* escaped the rationalized bounds of the ideal, where in the outer sections it had been eclipsed by it. However, if, as I have claimed, tonal music is at base dialectical, then the central section must have a relationship with the ideal level: the material excess must be equally inflected by the ideal, just as in the outer sections the ideal level is inflected by the material excess of its musical surface. Thus the analysis to come is not intended to explain away the contrast, so obviously crucial for the aesthetic identity of the movement, but rather to show how in this movement mere contrast is raised to dialectical opposition. It will be suggested that underneath the surface opposition of the outer and inner sections lies a fundamental dialectical interaction, between the ideal and material levels of music, which structures the entire movement. It will be argued that the chaotic central passage only carries to extremes the same strategy observed in the outer sections: it

⁵⁶ These are actually identical claims, but starting at opposite extremes—clearly, if one took the second claim to its logical conclusion, changing *all* of the notes of the central passage, one would arrive at the first claim: an entirely different central passage.

shifts the structural weight from the background/ideal level to the foreground/material level, in a way that highlights the dialectical interaction of the two. In the course of this analysis, then, it will be necessary to examine with much greater detail the concept of musical materialism, the opposing dialectical pole to the ideal level which has traditionally grounded music-theoretical thought.

3.4.2.1: Analytical Approaches to the Central Section

The first stage of this undertaking is a preliminary analysis of the central passage, in order to ascertain to what extent it eludes traditional theoretical comprehension. Fig. 3.6 shows a reduction of bars 64–122, with the main harmonies visited in this passage labelled beneath the staff. Two long-range tonal relationships are discernible: a progression from C to F between bars 85 and 90, nested within a longer-range progression from the F# minor of the opening (re-taken at bar 103), towards C# minor, the ultimate goal of the section. Nevertheless, Fig. 3.6 is not a standard Schenkerian voice-leading reduction, since the movement between these areas is not contrapuntal. The bass and treble largely move in unison, occasionally expanding out to movement in fifths (such as at bars 91 and 100); ultimately, the passage does not lend itself to Schenkerian reduction since it is effectively in one voice. Equally, aside from these larger-scale relationships, which suggest traditional tonal motion, no other harmonic movement in the section is conventionally prepared (i.e. by fifth motion in the bass). In fact, tonal relationships seem to have been abandoned entirely in this section; it is for this reason that Fig. 3.6 adopts letter-name harmonic labelling, instead of the more conventional Roman numerals and figured bass. Finally, the hints at overall tonal motion notwithstanding, the entire passage is separated off from the rest of the movement by semitonal movement: an unexpected shift upwards from F# minor to G at the start, and an equally unexpected shift from F minor back to F# at the end. There is a sense, then, in which this passage *is* an interpolation, a crazy

Figure 3.6: Voice-leading reduction of bars 64–122. Upper-case letter denote major-key areas, lower-case letters, minor

interjection: it breaks up a simple harmonic movement, F# minor to C# minor, with a series of seemingly unrelated harmonies, moving in highly unconventional ways.

Given the breakdown of the traditional approaches to understanding this music, it might be useful to follow Robert C. Cook's lead, and apply a contextual, or intuitive approach: simply put, what does it *sound* like is going on?⁵⁷ The rest of this section will measure the effectiveness of the analytical procedures against their ability

⁵⁷ Robert C. Cook has extensively practiced, and theorized, a self-reflective approach to analysis, especially transformational or neo-Riemannian analysis. See in particular 'Tonal Interpretation, Transformational Models, and the Chromatic Calls to Repent in Franck's *Le Chasseur Maudit*', in *The Oxford Handbook of Neo-Riemannian Music Theories* ed. Edward Gollin and Alexander Rehding (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 512–47; and 'Parsimony and Extravagance', *Journal of Music Theory* Vol. 49 No. 1 (Spring 2005): 109–40, especially sections I and IV.

to reflect, refine, and explain the perception of the musical events under examination.⁵⁸ The semitone shift to G in bar 75 wrenches us into a different territory, and brings about a noticeable slackening of pace. Although in theory C minor is the start of the ‘nervous breakdown’, far from coming as a shock, the music seems to relax into it. There follows a gradual increase in tension; although the harmonic shifts always feeling slightly askew, they range from the barely noticeable (bars 88–90), through the mildly surprising (90–91), to the decidedly fragmented (93–94 and 102–103). At bar 103 we reach F# minor once more, although any sense that this is an arrival home is lost: by contrast, the feeling of relief as we land a few bars later onto C# minor in second inversion (bar 107), is profound. C# minor now feels like the tonic key, something confirmed at the end of the subsequent tempestuous passage, when the sudden stop at bar 122 leaves us craving a cadence in C#.

The unusual harmonic juxtapositions are effected by means of smooth voice-leading, something which suggests a neo-Riemannian interpretation. Simplifying the harmony down to its smoothest form (following Richard Cohn)⁵⁹ gives the following result (Fig. 3.7):

⁵⁸ Of course, this too is a dialectical process: there would be no point to an analysis that only reported what one already knew, and one of the joys of the analytical act is to deepen, question, and even alter one’s interpretations of a piece. But a total non-identity between musical perception and analytical interpretation is equally unacceptable: see for example the hypothetical case given above, whereby one ‘explains away’ the self-evident contrast between the outer and inner sections of this movement in favour of a ‘unified’ reading. This would not improve anyone’s previous interpretation of this movement if it were founded on some idea of contrast or experimentation: it would simply reject it—an entirely different epistemological act.

⁵⁹ In Cohn, ‘Square Dances with Cubes’, *Journal of Music Theory* Vol. 42 No. 2 (Autumn, 1998), 283: ‘we stipulate further that the pcs [of adjacent triads] are paired such that the sum of the distances travelled by the three voices is as small as possible, i.e., the “voice-leading” involves the “principle of least motion”’. This is codified as Definition 2: $ic(j,k) = \min((j - k), (k - j)) \text{ [modulo 12]}$.

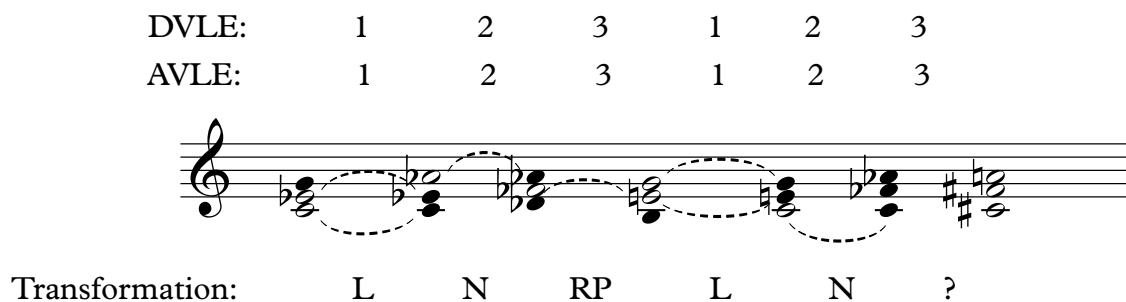


Figure 3.7: *Neo-Riemannian reduction, bars 85–102*

Fig. 3.7 presents a graph that reduces the harmony, shows common tones, gives the Voice-Leading efficiency for each transformation, as well as naming the individual transformations themselves; several investigative lines from the Schubert literature suggest themselves, and they will be dealt with in turn. Suzannah Clark has noted the way that harmonically ambitious passages in Schubert can frequently be thought of as ‘around a pitch’, rather than ‘in a key’.⁶⁰ Fig. 3.7 shows clearly the pitches that are held from one chord to the next by means of open heads and broken ties; it is immediately apparent that there is no single pitch around which the changes of harmony are arranged. Clark’s method, therefore, is not suitable in this instance.

Nevertheless, the reduction confirms that the harmonic changes are organized by common tones on a chord-to-chord basis, and that the voice-leading in the moving parts is very smooth. The letters beneath the graph show the transformations applied to the chords: there are no patterns to be found here, either. The possibility of hexatonic organization remains, again following the example of Richard Cohn.⁶¹

⁶⁰ Clark ‘On the Imagination of Tone in Schubert’s *Liedesend* (D. 473), *Trost* (D. 523), and *Gretchens Bitte* (D. 563)’, in *The Oxford Handbook of Neo-Riemannian Music Theories* ed. Edward Gollin and Alexander Rehding (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 294–321.

⁶¹ See Richard Cohn, ‘Maximally Smooth Cycles, Hexatonic Systems, and the Analysis of Late-Romantic Triadic Progressions’, *Music Analysis* Vol. 15 No. 1 (March, 1996): 9–40; and ‘Introduction to neo-Riemannian Theory: A Survey and a Historical Perspective’, *Journal of Music Theory* Vol. 42 No. 2 (Autumn, 1998): 167–80.

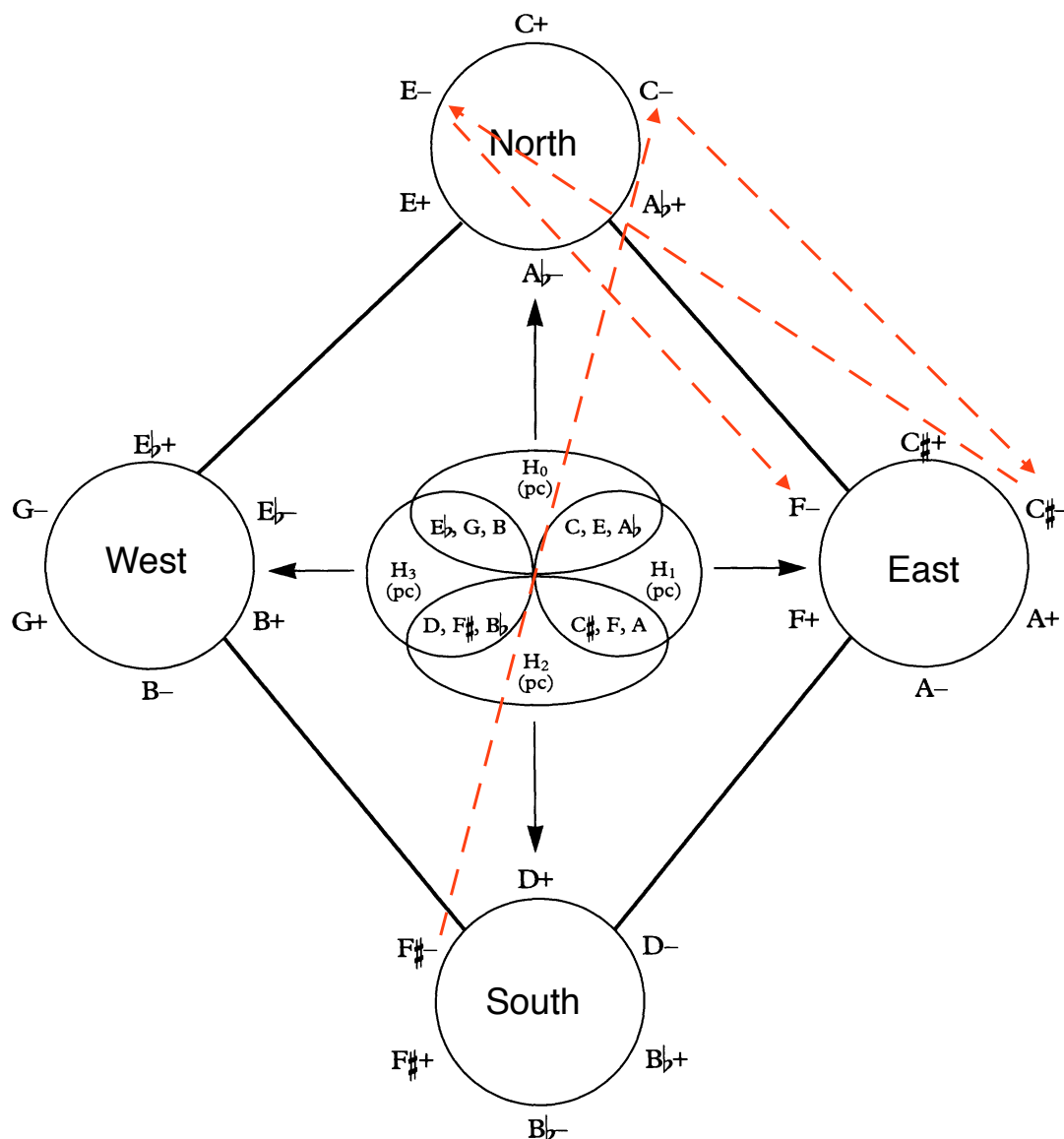


Figure 3.8: Bars 85–100, hyper-hexatonic mapping, adapted from Richard Cohn, 'Maximally Smooth Cycles', 25 Fig. 5

Mapping the harmonic changes onto the four hexatonic ('Cohn') cycles does provide some enlightenment. As Fig. 3.8 shows, unlike in the examples around which Cohn devised his hexatonic theory, the harmonies in the central section of Schubert's Andantino do not move around a single hexatonic cycle, but instead shuttle back-and-forth between two. The numbers above Fig. 3.7 are Direct Voice-Leading Efficiency (DVLE) and Absolute Voice-Leading Efficiency (AVLE), showing the number of semitones displaced—in either direction in the case of AVLE, and the 'net' displacement, calculated by subtracting downward motion from upward motion (e.g.

where a progression moves through contrary motion) in the case of DVLE. There is no contrary motion in this case, so both numbers are identical. If they all formed part of the same hexatonic cycle (i.e. the movement was maximally smooth, or parsimonious), all the values would read '1'; as Fig. 3.7 shows, they are not. Were they all to give a value of 2, they would inhabit a single Weitzmann region (which would indicate some derivation from a common augmented triad); again, they do not.⁶² A pattern can nevertheless be detected: two cycles of three steps each, the voice leading becoming less efficient throughout each cycle. This corresponds to our 'intuitive' reading above, where the shift from C minor to A \flat was scarcely perceptible, whereas the jump from C \sharp minor to E minor felt like a wrench.

While no harmonically unifying interpretation can therefore be discerned, the fact that this passage shuttles between the 'North' and 'East' cycles does tell us something. The centre of the hexatonic map shows the relationship between the four hexatonic cycles, and is what Cohn calls the 'hyper-hexatonic system'.⁶³ It shows the pitch-classes present in the four hexatonic cycles— H_0 is the set of pitch-classes present in the North cycle, H_1 corresponds to the East cycle, and so on—and it is immediately apparent that adjacent cycles share half of their pitch classes, while opposite cycles share no pitch classes (or are 'complementary', in set-theoretical terms). Thus, showing that harmonies only move between adjacent cycles confirms the smoothness of the voice leading; the fact that this is limited to only two cycles, indeed drawing pitches largely from pitch-class hyper-hexatonic cycle H_0 (only two pitches are drawn from H_1 : the C \sharp /D \flat in the C \sharp /D \flat -minor harmony, and the F in the F-minor harmony) shows a high degree of economy of pitch classes overall.

On the other hand, this doesn't reveal much more than the fact that the harmonies share common tones, something we had already discerned from the

⁶² For an explanation of AVLE and DVLE, see Cohn 'Square Dances with Cubes'. Weitzmann regions are introduced in Cohn, 'Weitzmann's Regions, My Cycles, and Douthett's Dancing Cubes', *Music Theory Spectrum* Vol. 22 No. 1 (Spring, 2000): 89–103.

⁶³ Cohn, 'Maximally Smooth Cycles', 23.

harmonic reduction. Equally, the economy of pitch classes is only at a highly abstracted background level. A glance at the score confirms a profusion of chromatic pitches on the musical surface that do not belong to the hexatonic cycles in question; the question of the absolute foreground will be dealt with at the end of this chapter. More enlightening, however, is the discovery that the shift from F# minor to C minor takes the music across the hyper-hexatonic map, into a region that shares no common tones. Remembering that the route to the eventual goal is also via F# minor, an overall sense of the harmonic architecture emerges. After the opening section closes in F# minor, the music shifts not only up a semitone, but into the contrasting hyper-hexatonic region for the middle section. It moves back by an analogous semitone shift, and back across the hyper-hexatonic map to F# minor, whence it moves conventionally to C# minor. Nevertheless, this again only confirms the principle of contrast—the sense that the central section is separated off entirely from the rest of the movement; now, at least, there are solid analytical grounds for this reading.

At this juncture it seems that neo-Riemannian theory, like Schenkerian theory, has given no hope of an analytical explanation of just why those notes in particular, rather than any others, were written. Is it necessary to conclude that this section is truly unanalysable? The previous techniques have attempted to uncover a *synchronic* function for the harmonies employed in the central section: expressions of a single hexacycle, or a Weitzmann region, or six different possible harmonizations of a single pitch. While it now seems clear that they do not, it is necessary to ask whether the passage accomplishes anything *diachronically*: does the succession of harmonies presented in the central section change anything between the end of the opening section and the beginning of the reprise? While neo-Riemannian theory generally insists on the equality of all triads, asking questions about diachronicity and change invites reference to some fixed musical reference point, something more associated with the tonal analysis already abandoned. A middle way is possible: Steven Rings has developed an approach that maps transformational relationships, such as those observed in the Andantino's middle section, onto a modified *Tonnetz*, one more

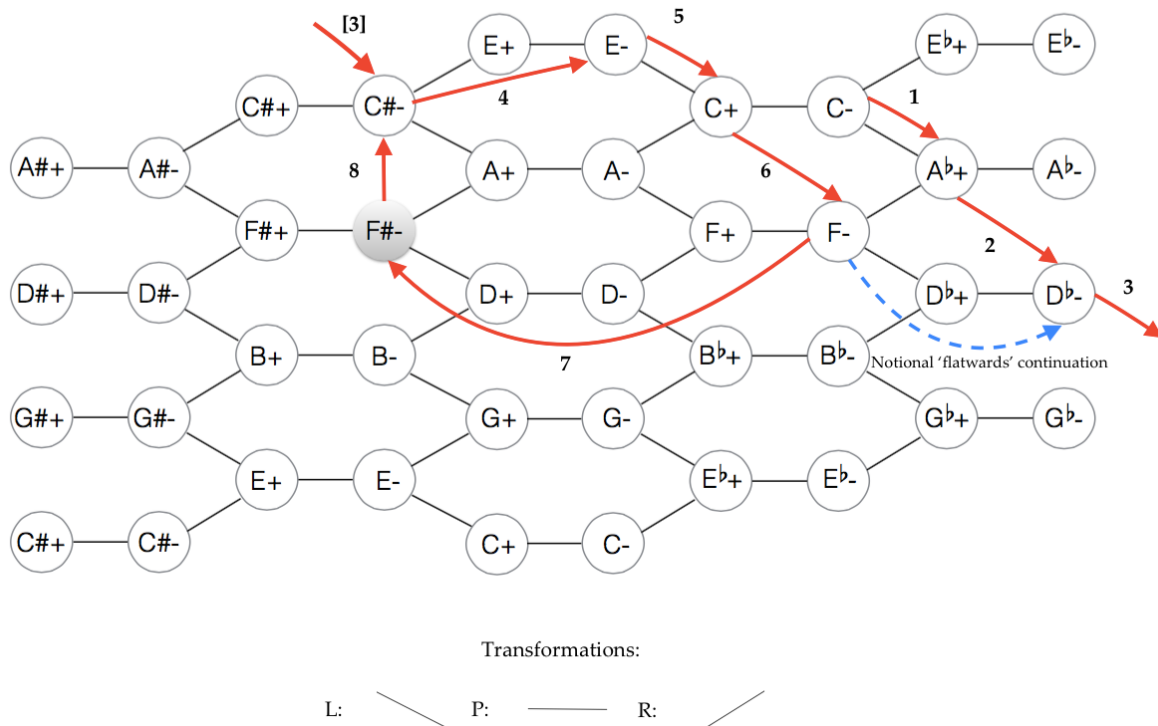


Figure 3.9: LPR map of bars 85–107

compatible with familiar tonal functions.⁶⁴ Plotting the succession of harmonies onto the ‘LPR map’, as he calls it, suggests an interpretation for this section, one that places it within the broader musical argument of the movement as a whole (see Fig. 3.9).

As Rings explains, this modification sees the traditional *Tonnetz* rotated 90 degrees, such that the line of fifths runs vertically, with rising fifths (the dominant direction) going upwards, and falling fifths (the subdominant direction) downwards. Third relationships run along the horizontal axis, flatwards to the right, and sharpwards to the left. Also unlike a normal *Tonnetz*, the nodes represent chords rather than pitches. The key shows the transformations—L, P, or R, giving the map its name—that connect the key nodes. Where arrows do not move directly along those lines, the movement is understood as a combination of transformations (see for example move no. 4, from C# minor to E minor, which was already identified in Fig.

⁶⁴ Steven Rings, ‘Riemannian Analytical Values, Paleo- and Neo-’, in *The Oxford Handbook of Neo-Riemannian Music Theories* ed. Edward Gollin and Alexander Rehding (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 500–6.

3.7 as RP: ‘relative’ followed by ‘parallel’). No neo-Riemannian transformation directly connects fifth-relationships (this is, after all, the tonal movement that neo-Riemannian theory displaces); however in this analysis, moving directly up or down the LPR map can be understood as conventional tonal movement, rather than a circuitous series of transformations which would be required to replicate it. The concerns over the harmonic organization of this section immediately begin to be alleviated: there is no need for harmonic transformations to be the same, nor even to be direct, nor for the harmonic zones visited to belong to any group or family. Instead, since this map charts harmonic direction, it is possible to draw out larger-scale relationships and situate them in a much broader, tonal, context.

The graph clearly shows that in the central section, the harmonic movement is almost without exception towards the ‘south-east’—that is to say, both flatwards and further into the subdominant region. To understand the significance of the graph fully, it is necessary to understand its geometry in greater detail. Rings bases his quasi-tonal LPR map on the ‘Chicken Wire Torus’ developed by Jack Douthett and Peter Steinbach.⁶⁵ It is a two-dimensional representation of three-dimensional space: thus, the C major and C minor nodes at the bottom of the central ‘column’ are identical to the C major and minor nodes at the top of the adjacent one—in three-dimensional space the whole complex would wrap around, allowing continuous movement, as in a helix. Beyond this—as the name suggests—Douthett and Steinbach construct it as a torus, as shown in Fig. 3.10: in their reading, the matrix is constructed not only such that the identical nodes at top and bottom are connected, but also, following the principle of enharmonic equivalence, nodes on the flat and sharp sides are connected also. G[#] minor, on the far ‘west’ side, is therefore identical to A^b minor on the ‘east’, allowing smooth continuous movement in all directions.

⁶⁵ Jack Douthett and Peter Steinbach, ‘Parsimonious Graphs: A Study in Parsimony, Contextual Transformation, and Modes of Limited Transposition’, *Journal of Music Theory* Vol. 42 No. 2 (Autumn 1998), 246–9.

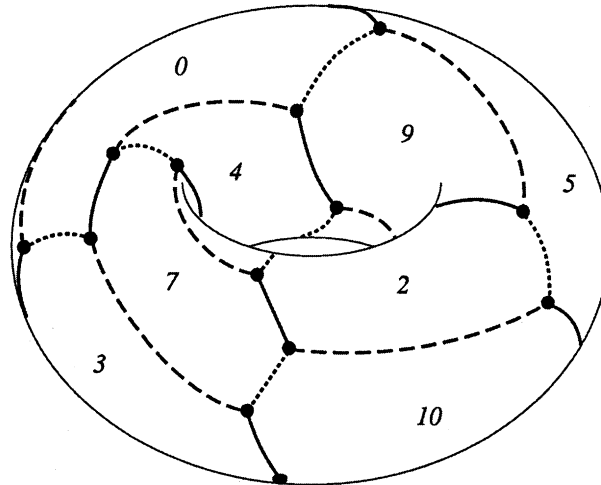


Figure 3.10: *Douthett & Steinbach's toroidal arrangement of harmonic space, taken from 'Parsimonious Graphs', 248 Fig. 7b*

For our purposes, however, it will be more useful to limit the construction to a helical, rather than toroidal arrangement. That is, while I continue to allow joining between nodes at the bottom and the top—which are truly identical, their separation/duplication merely a function of the flattening of the graph into two dimensions—principles of enharmonic difference continue to be upheld, since it is my intention to analyse this passage with reference to tonal norms. This has the result that while a move from D \flat minor to C \sharp minor is obviously 'allowed', it is registered on the graph as a profound displacement across the surface of the map. In my helical version of the LPR map, in other words, smooth voice leading within a tonally normative context should spiral continuously in one direction or another. Deviation from either smooth voice leading or *tonal*, rather than enharmonic, identity is registered as a break or a particularly large movement on the map.

This reflects the aural disjunction that can occur—and does, in this example—when chords are re-interpreted enharmonically in order to move the music in an otherwise impossible direction. Take, for example, step 3, from D \flat minor to C \sharp minor: since they are not identical harmonies on this map, this forms a separate move in itself, such that the reappearance of harmonic motion in the north-west constitutes a significant displacement. This move occurs between bars 91–92: just before the

transformation to E minor, a move which was ‘intuitively’ heard as a harmonic wrench, and which voice-leading analysis revealed, with a VLE reading of 3, to be the least smooth transformation of the section. There is now an additional explanation for this aural effect: although on the surface the transformation takes place between C# minor and E minor, which are close to each other in tonal space and on the LPR helix, in context it relies on a preceding enharmonic reinterpretation, one which moves the music suddenly from the extreme flat region to the extreme sharp region. This effect is aurally suppressed when it actually occurs because of the acoustic identity of D \flat and C# minors in an equally tempered system; nevertheless, its effects are keenly felt in the subsequent harmonic movement, which comes as a shock. It is for this reason that Douthett and Steinbach’s toroidal construction of the LPR map should be replaced in this instance with my helical version: in this tonal context, it more accurately represents the aural effects of moving across its surface.

It is now possible, therefore, to begin to make sense of this movement. First, the diachronicity of the LPR map gives a sense of structure to the central passage: no longer seeming quite as random, a certain level of internal coherence (or at least consecutive logic) comes into view. Second, the way the LPR map combines neo-Riemannian and tonal approaches allows the central section to be put into the same tonal context as the outer sections, raising the possibility of an interpretation for the whole movement that can take full account of the outlandish harmonic movement of the central passage. It is precisely such an interpretation that will enable the final chromatic move of the section, from F minor to F# minor (and thence to C# minor)—so far unexplained—to be understood. Before this is accomplished, however, it is necessary to think more critically about the methodology employed above. The apocryphal story of Schoenberg’s negative reaction to Schenkerian analysis—‘but where are my favourite passages? Ah, there they are, in those tiny notes’—was noted (and dismissed) above.⁶⁶ Nevertheless, the potential for this criticism to hit its mark in

⁶⁶ See note 46, above.

the context of the neo-Riemannian analysis advanced above needs to be assessed. If one of the aims of analysis is to answer that fundamental question, 'why *those* notes?', then the fact that the analysis conducted above has so far remained at a level of some abstraction might be discomfiting. Equally, over the course of the analyses presented in this chapter, a productive conflict between the ideal and material levels has been explored, casting the neo-Riemannian approach as heavily implicated in the 'material' existence of the piece: the fact that the charts and graphs above nevertheless remain stubbornly at a degree of separation from the actual existing composition—the musical material of the piece, in other words—might be problematic. In other words, it would seem that in this context the pseudo-Schoenbergian critique stands: where are all the missing notes?

It will now be argued that the strength of the modified neo-Riemannian approach outlined above lies in the fact that it can be extended to that level of detail, offering a conceptual model for understanding the presence of the very smallest details, while nevertheless maintaining a relationship with large-scale structure and harmonic planning. That is to say, the approach crosses between the piece's ideal existence (as structure, as an act of communication, as an intervention in tonality) and its material one (as sounding notes): this, as before, is cast as a dialectic. The central claim I will advance below is that the local harmonic and melodic choices that direct the central section of the 'Andantino' *are influenced and inflected by the physical disposition of the keyboard*. Therefore the relationship to be examined is between the ideal phenomenon of (tonal) theory, and the material existence of its sounding instrument, the piano: in other words, music here is to be analyzed in terms of a materialist dialectics. I will argue, at the end of this chapter and the next, that such a materialist dialectics is essential for the non-contradictory construction of subjectivity, and that therefore this analysis ties together the various problems of subjective construction outlined at the beginning of this chapter: between interpreting subject and musical object, but also between the subject of Schubert and the (Beethovenian) world in which he lived.

3.4.2.2: Ideal Form and the Materiality of the Keyboard

The analysis advanced here relies on an initial distinction between ‘material’ and ‘ideal’ components. This is of course a false distinction: the very point of the dialectical approach is to undermine easy binaries, demonstrating their mutual reliance and ultimate unity at a more fundamental level. Nevertheless, in order to begin the process, it is important to cast the argument in those extreme terms; the preliminary step is therefore to convert the findings outlined above into this new terminology, in order to make clear how the elements of the analysis function in this new model. At one extreme, the material element of music is that which is involved in the physical production of sound in performance: in the physical existence of the keyboard, certain notes are closer to certain others, and movement between certain chords involves physical displacement of the fingers. A materialist understanding of music would understand a piece of music through these aspects of musical performance, and the interpretation offered below will consider this aspect in detail. However, this does not give rise to a historical claim that Schubert conceived of his music, and this movement in particular, at the piano, with the result that this historical circumstance gave rise to the unusual harmonic choices he made. Apart from being undialectical (since it would *only* take into account the materiality of the keyboard), it would mean that any evidence to the contrary—for example, that he composed at his desk, or that the movement was originally intended for another instrument entirely—would render the analysis invalid.

Rather, the physical proximity of certain notes of a keyboard is secondary to the idea of proximity in musical space, unstructured by tonal hierarchy. In tonal space, of course, F major and F# major are extremely far apart; in musical space, however, they are right next to each other, separated by only a semitone. Lest it be said that, as soon as we talk about ‘musical space’ and ‘semitones’, we are necessarily talking at the ideal rather than the material level (since ‘musical space’ and ‘semitones’ are both conceptual in nature), it should be stressed that these proximities are profoundly

material even away from the keyboard: the difference between their frequencies, that is the vibration of physical objects, is very close. The sonic difference between F major and F# major is much smaller than the difference between the 'closely related' F and C. Again, of course, these definitions of distance are themselves inflected by culturally constructed norms—most significantly that of the twelve-note division of the octave—again inviting accusations that the methodology is still reliant on an 'ideal' framework for music. But this is, in fact, the point: to realize these things is simply to realize that the Western tradition of music (indeed, any tradition of music) is a perpetual and perpetually undecidable negotiation between ideal and material elements. It is, of course, the purpose of this chapter to prove that very point, and cast it as a dialectic, in order to open it up to clearer and more critical thought. This chapter, then, begins at the very limits of the material in music, only to demonstrate that it nevertheless maintains an important relationship to the ideal level of tonal functioning.

It is the relative proximity in pitch space between notes adjacent in the chromatic scale that gives rise to the two key material contexts considered in this chapter: their placement on keyboards (and other musical instruments), and the norms of voice-leading. For the remainder of the chapter, then, these two domains will be treated as material, despite the caveats outlined above regarding the inflexion of both by ideal concerns. That is to say, it does not matter if Schubert composed it at the piano, or for the violin, or entirely in his own head: what is important is that in the construction of tonal music there are nevertheless relationships between pitches that are totally separate from tonal theory: the investigation of the productive interaction of this duality is the task presently at hand.

The idea of the keyboard's physical presence being important in the music's composition is not a new one in musical scholarship. All music for piano is a testament to the physical disposition of the keyboard, and the nature of the piano's sound—this is what is meant by music being 'pianistic'. Equally, the historical development of the pianoforte has left its mark: from the obvious example of J. S. Bach's *Wohltemperirte Clavier*, to the gradual appearance of lower notes and more varied dynamic markings

in the piano sonatas of Haydn and Beethoven, the physical properties of the instrument have always left traces in the compositions written for it.⁶⁷ However, there is a sense in which these signify the overcoming of material constraints on the ideal conception of a work. One could cast such developments as technological innovation enabling a progressively more accurate realization of some purely notional musical object. These examples could be read instead as evidence of the steadily diminishing need to make compromises in the bringing-forth of a musical object already fully-formed in the composer's head.

By contrast, I set out to consider the positive contribution of materiality, and I advance the thesis that in the case of Schubert's *Andantino*, the material reality of the keyboard affects (not *affected*, in a historical sense) the formation of that notional musical object in the first instance; that is to say, it did not merely alter the way in which it might be brought into the world. Materiality here intrudes noticeably on those realms from which it is normally excluded—particularly structure and harmony—rather than remaining merely a concern for so-called 'secondary' features, such as texture and timbre; in this way, it interacts dialectically with the ideal elements of the work. As such, the music's materiality has a notable impact on the possible analytical approaches.⁶⁸ In this sense, it has a distinct kinship with the first dialectical analysis of the outer sections, above.

⁶⁷ See Peter Walls, 'Historical Performance and the Modern Performer', in *Musical Performance: A Guide to Understanding* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 26–30, for a discussion of the way the development of fortepianos and pianofortes can be inferred from the musical compositions of the time. See also a blogpost by Norbert Gertsch (an editor at G. Henle Verlag) for an explanation of the gradually disappearing pitch limitations of early pianos, and their reflection in the sonatas of Beethoven: 'Is it OK to add them? – The "missing" low notes in Beethoven's piano sonatas', <<http://www.henle.de/blog/en/2015/05/11/is-it-ok-to-add-them-%E2%80%93-the-%E2%80%9Cmissing%E2%80%9D-low-notes-in-beethoven%E2%80%99s-piano-sonatas/>> (accessed 19 February 2017).

⁶⁸ There are other notable examples, mainly from the twentieth century, of material concerns drastically altering possible analytical approaches. In music where texture and timbre are central elements of compositional construction, motivic or Schenkerian analysis may not be the most illuminating analytical option. Moreover, in this music, the centrality of these parameters may influence others; for example Ligeti's *Atmosphères*, whose extraordinary harmonic language is borne of the extended use of chromatic and modal note clusters, themselves clearly the result of textural and timbral concerns. In the case of Schubert's *Andantino*, however, tonal strategy is not relegated (as in

The literature on Chopin's piano music is instructive here. John Rink has noted the importance of improvisation in Chopin's compositional practice: '[improvisation's] role in defining Chopin's style should not be underestimated: not only did he compose at the piano, carefully crafting individual passages before committing them to paper, but he was expert at improvising in public concerts'.⁶⁹ While in his early works, this led to a 'seemingly endless succession of sequential patterns clothed in all manner of virtuoso finery', by Chopin's maturity, he had developed 'a more profound synthesis of detail and whole'.⁷⁰ Indeed, there are several examples where, like in Schubert's Andantino, material decoration provides the foundation of the music. Rink gives the example of the Nocturne in E minor Op. 72 No. 1, 'in which embellishment serves as the melodic essence, not mere surface decoration'; Jean-Jacques Eigeldinger, meanwhile, declares that in the 'Berceuse' Op. 57, Chopin 'elevates ornamentation to a structural principle'.⁷¹

In some cases this even extends to the sorts of structural influences that are the topic of this chapter. Rink asserts that a 'chromatically rich progression' in the B minor Prélude Op. 28 No. 6 is 'created by fingers successively moving to adjacent keys'.⁷² In a footnote, he explains that 'this technique was much used by Chopin, no doubt arising from his habit of composing at the keyboard', and giving examples of similar movement in the Prélude Op. 28 No. 4, and the Barcarolle Op. 60.⁷³ Of the Berceuse Op. 57, Jean-Jacques Eigeldinger says that 'the ornamented *melos* [...] develops a life of its own and explores musical space through alternately descending and ascending contours [...] Register, dynamics and timbre contribute so directly to the

Debussy) or abandoned completely (as in Ligeti): the music is still clearly in dialogue with tonal functional norms, which makes it a special, uniquely complex, case.

⁶⁹ John Rink, *Chopin: The Piano Concertos* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 8.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 9, 11.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 10; Jean-Jacques Eigeldinger, 'Placing Chopin: Reflections on a Compositional Aesthetic', in *Chopin Studies 2*, ed. John Rink and Jim Samson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 114–8.

⁷² John Rink, 'The (F)utility of Performance Analysis', in *Artistic Practice as Research in Music: Theory, Criticism, Practice*, ed. Mine Doğantan-Dack (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2015), 139.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, n. 19.

compositional process that the Berceuse can be seen as an early embodiment of Debussy's aesthetic'.⁷⁴ Moreover, of the Berceuse Op. 57, Barcarolle Op. 60, and the Nocturne Op. 62 No. 1 he says 'Chopin's style approaches that of musical symbolism/impressionism', noting the elements of 'purely pianistic writing'.⁷⁵ In these pieces, especially the Variations and Berceuse, the right hand outlines highly patterned surfaces, rather than melodies as such. As such, the dissonances they create are inexplicable in harmonic terms: they are simply the result of a collision between the left hand's harmonic outline and the right hand's process. The materialist impulse of the right hand overlays, indeed overrides, any harmonic logic present in the left hand.

Interestingly, Eigeldinger retreats from the full materialist resonances of his interpretations: in discussing the Préludes in E minor and B \flat major, Op. 28 Nos. 4 and 21, he attributes their extraordinary chromaticism to Chopin's relentless following of the logic of contrapuntal lines, rather than hearing Chopin's fingers feeling their way along his keyboard in their creeping descents. It is particularly significant, because in these examples—to which one might add bars 184–7 from the Ballade in A minor/F major and bars 215–6 from the Ballade in F minor—the materialist impulse has transcended the passing dissonances of decorative right-hand figuration, such as in the Barcarolle and Berceuse, and instead directs the harmonic progression itself. The linear drive creates not local dissonances, but extraordinary (if short-lived) chromatic wanderings that disrupt the otherwise clear harmonic plan of the pieces. In this way,

⁷⁴ Eigeldinger, 'Placing Chopin', 119.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 114.

Example 3.7: *Creeping chromaticism in Chopin's Préludes in E minor (bars 13–17) and in B \flat major (bars 13–16), op. 28 nos. 4 and 21*

one might hear a concentrated form of the technique employed by Schubert in his *Andantino*.

The reasoning behind Eigeldinger's reluctance to fully accept the implications of his interpretation is worth exploring, insofar as it raises a tension that this chapter hopes to resolve. Eigeldinger focuses on the parallels between Chopin's sound-world and that of Debussy, who admired Chopin greatly.⁷⁶ He subordinates this parallel, however, to an extended consideration of the importance of Bach in Chopin's compositional style. Thus, while he is happy to provisionally accept a materialist aesthetics of sound in terms that are relevant to the discussion pursued in this chapter—claiming, for instance, that during the climax of the Prelude in B \flat Major Op. 28 No. 21 'the shape of the figuration prevails over the actual motivic substance'—he nevertheless prioritizes the reverence both Debussy and Chopin had for Bach, noting

⁷⁶ 'I loved Chopin almost as soon as I began to love music, and I have continued to do so!', quoted in *ibid.*, 135.

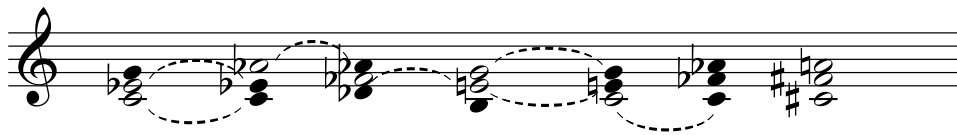
in particular Debussy's admiration for Bach's 'mastery of melodic contour and shape'.⁷⁷ Granted, on the one hand, this is a more sensuous Bach than perhaps is ordinarily invoked, and Eigeldinger writes about the Bachian 'arabesque'—free, winding melodic lines—which he hears reflected in the compositions of both Chopin and Debussy; on the other hand, it could be interpreted as attempting to tame their sensuality, by anchoring it to the solid idealist pedigree of the great contrapuntalist. Either way, he is at pains to point out that, unlike Debussy, Chopin was critical of compositions that only made play with pure sonorities, at the expense of musical logic.⁷⁸ Thus, rather than the sonic decadence of Debussy's Bachian heritage, Eigeldinger stresses that Chopin's compositions are always governed by the 'fundamentals of musical logic', and most importantly guided by 'his belief in the supremacy of linear counterpoint', inherited from his study of the Old Masters (especially, of course, Bach himself).⁷⁹ Chopin's Bach is being used to two ends: as the *fons et origo* of the arabesque's sensuous materiality, and as the supreme vicar of music's eternal and abstract laws. Eigeldinger never resolves this tension: how precisely Chopin's music could be governed by the 'fundamentals of music logic', and yet give priority to 'the shape of the figuration [...] over the actual motivic substance' remains unclear. I have already presented one solution in outline: voice-leading, being based on the proximity of adjacent notes in (non-tonal) pitch space can be viewed from a materialist perspective. A more detailed inspection of the dialectical interaction of these two opposing concerns—the ideal existence of music as concept, and the material life of music in its sounding—is the topic of this chapter: it is at the very heart of Schubert's Andantino.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 126–9.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 125.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 124.

DVLE:	1	2	3	1	2	3
AVLE:	1	2	3	1	2	3



Transformation:	L	N	RP	L	N	?
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Figure 3.7: *Neo-Riemannian Reduction, bars 85–102 (reprinted)*

3.4.2.3: A Material Schubert in a Dialectical Materialist World

In light of the discussion above, the same creeping chromatic motion that suggested a neo-Riemannian reading for the central section of the Andantino can now suggest an even more material interpretation. Recalling the reduction given above as Fig. 3.7, it is easy to appreciate the physicality of the moves from one chord to the next. Imagining playing these chords at the keyboard, the link between voice-leading smoothness and physical displacement comes into focus. It was noted above that the DVLE and AVLE were identical, that is, that voice-leading movement between chords was always parallel. Therefore, the RP transformation, with a voice-leading efficiency of three, necessitates in a movement of the whole hand, as does the final movement back onto F# minor. Those harmonic movements that were heard as particularly distant, in other words, are enacted through movement between physically distant places, further solidifying the link between the concept of voice-leading and materiality. This is not always the case: it is notable that the voice-leading in this movement has such a straightforward relationship with the physical movements needed to perform it.

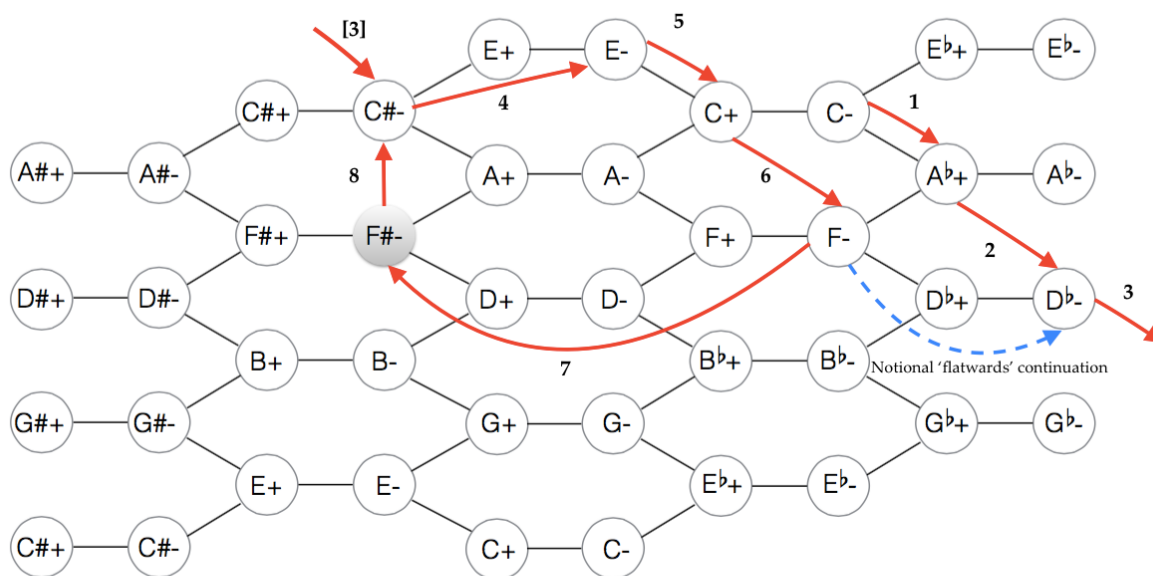
Naturally, the progressions shown above are not present on the musical surface in the way depicted by the graph, and so the physical displacement of the hand described here does not take place in the same way during a performance of the

Andantino. Nevertheless, the materiality of these harmonic moves is composed out on the harmonic surface, albeit with greater subtlety than implied in that figure. The two largest harmonic leaps in the section—between C# minor and E minor, and between F minor and F# minor, each with a VLE of three—are matched on the musical surface through enormous registral shifts, at bar 94 in both hands and in bar 103 in the left hand. In other words, the notional material displacements that occur at the background level are carried forward into the foreground, marked by pronounced breaks in the music's surface. Again, this is not necessarily a commonplace: tellingly, Schubert is emphasising distant modulations with huge physical displacements.

Furthermore, while it is true that the progressions outlined in Fig. 3.7 do not move as baldly as the graph suggests, each progression does happen in exactly the fashion shown, albeit stretched in time. That is to say, the movement of voices shown in the reduction does actually occur: they are the goal pitches of the progressions. The melody of the phrase in C minor beginning at bar 85 moves from C to G, and the harmonic transition onto A \flat is heralded by both hands moving from G to A \flat . The same thing happens in the subsequent bar: the highest voice remains on a static A \flat , while the left hand works its way upwards, the C on the final semiquaver of bar 90 and the E \flat on the first semiquaver of bar 91 moving to the D \flat and F \flat at the second semiquaver of bar 91. The situation is identical at bars 98–100. The harmonic plan of this central section as shown in the neo-Riemannian reduction, then, is really played out physically on the surface of the movement, albeit stretched in both time and register.

The final transition, between F minor and F# minor (itself giving way to C# minor, the modal dominant of the whole movement) is a focal point for examining these concerns: understanding this harmonic shift will open a vista onto the interaction not only between the material and ideal levels in the central section, but also the relationship between the central section and the rest of the movement, and the relationship of Schubert's tonal language to its normative discursive parameters.

Like the semitone shift between F# and G that begins the section, the move from F to F# was portrayed as a feat of transposition in the voice-leading reduction of Fig.



Transformations:
 L: P: R:
 Figure 3.9: LPR Map of bars 85–107 (reprinted)

3.7, with no discernible tonal function, and no hexatonic transformation to provide an alternative explanation. However, this passage can now be situated within the total harmonic strategy of the passage: observing its possible mapping across the LPR helix, a credible interpretation emerges. Moving from F minor to F# minor (and thence to C# minor) on the LPR helix involves an enormous displacement of harmonic distance, not to mention a wholesale reversal of the harmonic flow and a sudden jump into the sharp/dominant region from the flat/subdominant region that has been in play since bar 73 (see Fig. 3.9, step 7). While it is incontrovertible that this is what happens—the rest of the movement remaining resolutely within F# minor—once again, an examination of other possibilities for mapping this move onto the helix give a more intuitive reading. Importantly, it is one that chimes with how this harmonic shift is heard, at least at first.

As the alternative arrows at this point in Fig. 3.9 show, continuing to hear the harmonic shifts in flats—that is, reaching not C# minor, but D \flat minor—provides much smoother motion across the LPR map. Not only this, but such an interpretation chimes

with the intuitive effects of this passage: it was noted above that despite reaching F# minor at bar 103, marked out by the reintroduction of the three-sharp key signature abandoned at bar 85, there is no sense of tonic arrival, no sense that the music has arrived 'home'. The clear analytical explanation is that F# minor feels remote because of the manner of its introduction—the bald parallel motion in semitones between F minor and F# minor is inevitably felt as a lurch. Moreover, after such a prolonged exploration of the flat/subdominant region, it is much more easily heard as G♭ minor instead—that is, in the form of neo-Riemannian theory used here, one that respects enharmonic difference due to the overriding tonal framework, *not* the tonic, but a different key altogether. Whereas a similar enharmonic discrepancy at bars 91–2 gave way to an audible wrench as the ear was forced to accept the new sharp identity of the key, here the exact opposite takes place. Thereafter, far from being a confirmation of the sharpwards leap at bar 103, the notated C# minor is accepted as a more stable arriving-point (although by no means having the weight or security of a 'tonic'), since it can be heard as D♭ minor, and as such a continuation of the subdominant procession across harmonic space by more straightforward means than the somewhat alarming semitone shift from F minor.

Of course, it is not a confirmation, since there is no continuing flat/subdominant presence: the music really has shifted sharpwards. Hence the extremely prolonged tonicization process C# receives: first, it is immediately reinforced by another neo-Riemannian progression at bars 111–16 (L–LRP–L–*SLIDE*, shown in Fig. 3.11), which efficiently confirms C# minor during only a few bars, all the while unambiguously situated on the sharp/dominant side of the helix:

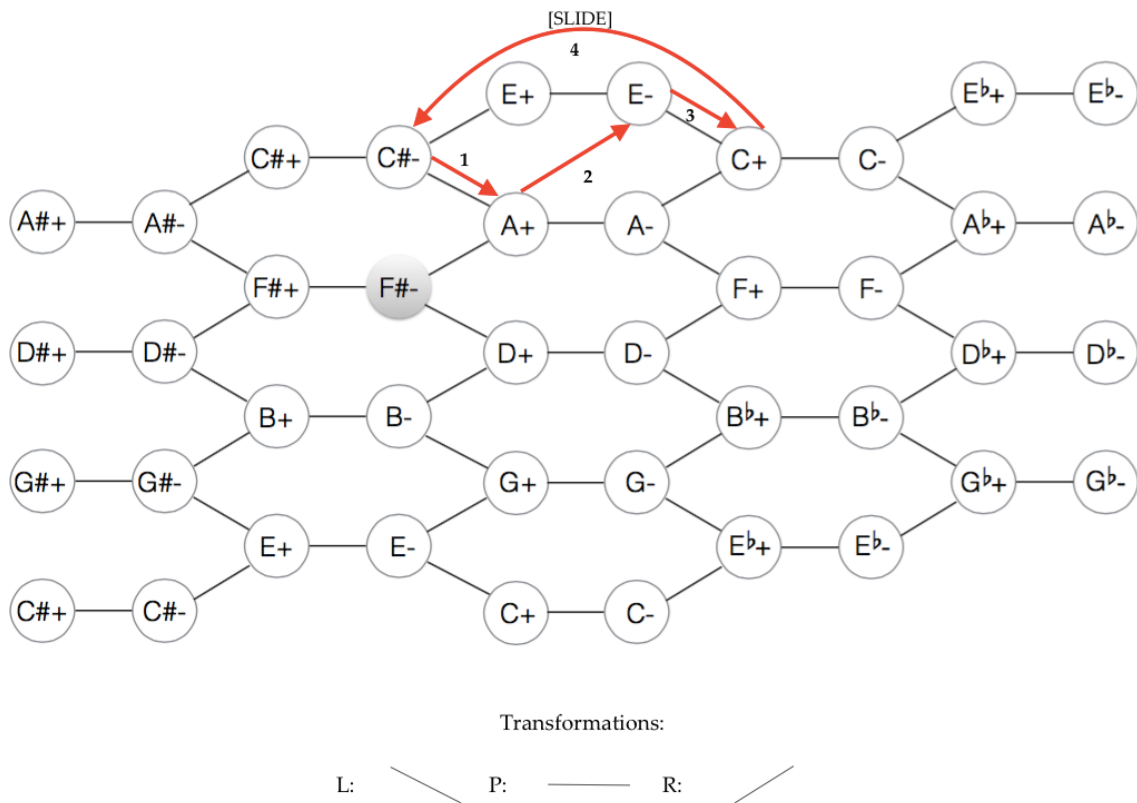


Figure 3.11: Confirmation of C# minor as new tonic area between bars 111–16

This is followed by an extended recitative, literally hammering home the new tonal area with eight-note *ffz* chords (e.g. bars 122, 124, 128 etc.), drawing out a long authentic cadence in the new tonic. All of this serves the purpose of convincing the ear that we really have returned to C# minor, not D \flat . But then, when cadential closure does eventually arrive, is not in C# minor at all, but its major parallel. What is more, after only two phrases confirming this key area, containing next to no melodic content, the bass line begins a descent C#-B \flat -A \flat -G#, transforming C# major from a tonic to a dominant seventh, in order to slickly return the music to the global tonic, F# minor, and the opening theme. The new key, after so much effort, only served as a brief waystation on the way to the tonic: the key that was *really* being confirmed in this process was F# minor, the tonic, all along.

This is obviously significant within the context of the whole movement: it has already been shown that the fundamental background level replicates the action of the foreground, constantly elaborating the tonic by means of rocking back and forth

across the dominant. The extra level of detail given by neo-Riemannian analysis adds some historical context: given what Webster has called Schubert's 'aversion to the dominant', that C# major at first turns out to be a primary modulatory goal of this movement might at first seem odd. However, not only is the dominant abandoned in favour of the tonic almost immediately, it has now been demonstrated that the status of this dominant is extremely unstable: its preparation is such that it is more readily heard as its enharmonic equivalent, D \flat .

Furthermore, the turbulent middle section can be understood on this scale as a giant pre-cadential excrescence, performing the same function as the forcefully dissonant subdominant chords at bars 13, 27, and so forth. Just as they took the music far enough away from consonant stability to enhance the effectiveness of the (by now rhetorically etiolated) V-I motion, so does this central section spin out a path into the extreme subdominant region of tonal space, in order to engineer a convincing return to the tonic. It was noted that the central section did not respond to Schenkerian techniques since it was not contrapuntally constructed, instead being at bottom a single melodic voice. Here too there is a similarity with the dialectics of the outer sections: just as those chords were only melodic elaborations of the underlying tonic harmony, i $\frac{6}{4}$ functioning as a subdominant 'colour' all the better to define the tonic, so this section has no harmonic or contrapuntal identity of its own, being simply a single monophonic line spinning off into subdominant space, once again to reinforce the tonic.

These parallels amount to more than just a pleasing symmetry between the small and large scales (although it does offer a different perspective on the relationship between the sections than previous criticism has offered, one that maintains their sense of contrast while offering a meaningful relationship between them). The symmetry only arises as a function of the fact that at every level, as shown in the two dialectical analyses and the way they interact with one another, structural weight, particularly with regards to the construction of tonal identity, is shifted from the background level of normative discursive practice to the foreground: the material

realization of that background. In the outer sections, Schubert rebelled against a Beethovenian harmonic teleology by etiolating the tonic-dominant relationship; it was left to a collection of nuanced contrapuntal, registral, and metric devices to illustrate a convincing tonal narrative. Here, the rebellion is more profound: by abandoning fifth-relationships altogether, and instead constructing a musical argument based on voice-leading alone, Schubert rejects the usual means of articulating a conceptual framework for the section (and, by extension, the whole movement), something which, as was noted earlier, Suzannah Clark argued was indispensable in instrumental music. All of the rhetorical weight is instead placed onto the semitonal motion of individual voices, indelibly linked to the physical act of playing the piano. And yet, paradoxically—or rather, dialectically—the construction of the music is such that this very motion nevertheless contributes to a conceptual framework, the same one that undergirds the rest of the piece: an exploration of tonality (or tonic-ness) as a continuous opening-out, a flowering of ideal background into material foreground.

Thus, to return to the possible criticisms invited by the abstraction of any analytical methodology, especially one as esoteric as the ones used here, the unbreakable link between this species of para-tonal neo-Riemannian theory and the physicality of the fine details of piano performance give an answer: no matter how close one gets to the notes on the page, even down to the individual demisemi-quaver chromatic shifts, one is simultaneously drawing closer to the ideal content of the piece, since far from being oppositional, here ideal and material, background and foreground, construct and mutually reinforce one another. Despite the critical consensus previously reached on this movement (and on Schubertian tonality generally), the *Andantino* can be understood at every level as the continuous working-out of tonic-ness; far from being totally divorced from the ideal level of tonal practice, it is a piece that is continuously conversant with tonal norms, albeit in such radical fashion as to call into question the status of those norms. The productive interaction of ideal and material in the *Andantino* constructs the piece as something that is clearly legible within the discourse in which it is situated, and yet it

fundamentally alters not only the power structure of discourse over discursive subject, but goes some way to unsettling, even changing, the meaning of that discourse itself. As the conclusion and the following chapter will show, this is a model for the construction of not only a musical interpretative subject, but historical subjects up against the (Beethovenian) norms of his, and arguably our, time.

3.5: Conclusion—Dialectics All the Way Down

How does all of this relate to the reception history of Schubert's compositions outlined at the start of this chapter, especially the highly politicized gendered constructions of Schubert's music, and by extension, his person? The debate was framed as a question of legibility, of interaction with surrounding culture and society. The foregoing analyses have shown that Schubert works freely within the Beethovenian tradition: always slightly askance, not only toying with, but subverting, the discursive norms in which he is situated. This attitude, and especially his avoidance of goal-directed motion with its ever-present risk (especially in the central section) of descending into incomprehensibility, recalls *écriture féminine*.⁸⁰ Certain passages of Hélène Cixous's seminal article chime not only with the aesthetic experience of Schubert's movement, but the common musicological reflex to reject or suppress it:

Time and again I, too, have felt so full of luminous torrents that I could burst—burst with forms much more beautiful than those which are put up in frames and sold for a stinking fortune. [...] Who, surprised and horrified by the fantastic tumult of her drives (for she was made to believe that a well-adjusted normal woman has a... divine composure), hasn't accused herself of being a monster? Who, feeling a funny desire stirring inside her (to sing, to write, to dare to speak, in short, to bring out something new), hasn't thought she was sick?⁸¹

⁸⁰ Hélène Cixous, 'The Laugh of the Medusa', trans. Keith Cohen and Paula Cohen, *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* Vol. 1 No. 4 (Summer, 1976): 875–93.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 876.

Indeed, Cixous's characterization of feminine writing bears a strong resemblance—down to the choice of imagery—to the cosmological allusions of Tovey and Cohn, taken up in the first dialectic of this chapter:

If there is a 'propriety of woman', it is paradoxically her capacity to deappropriate unselfishly: body without end, without appendage, without principal 'parts'. If she is a whole, it's a whole composed of parts that are wholes, not simple partial objects but a moving, limitlessly changing ensemble, a cosmos tirelessly traversed by Eros, an immense astral space not organized around any one sun that's any more of a star than the others.⁸²

Certainly, this argument moves along the same lines as Susan McClary's analysis of the construction of subjectivity in Schubert's 'Unfinished' Symphony, especially in the way it casts the prevalence of, and resistance to, the oppositional structuring of tonality in gendered terms. Cixous comments on this, too:

'Far more extensively and repressively than is ever suspected or admitted, writing has been run by a libidinal and cultural—hence political, typically masculine—economy; [...] this is a locus where the repression of women has been perpetuated, over and over, more or less consciously; [...] this locus has grossly exaggerated all the signs of sexual opposition (and not sexual difference), where woman has never her turn to speak'.⁸³

Nevertheless, important distinctions remain between my approach and McClary's. As I pointed out above, McClary's approach is still decidedly oppositional: she casts Schubert's harmonic choices as wholesale rejections of tonal norms:

The second movement of the "Unfinished" appears to drift freely through enharmonic and oblique modulations, rather than establishing a clear tonic and pursuing a dynamic sequence of modulations [...] In this movement, Schubert pushes the formal conventions of tonality to the limits of comprehensibility. Instead of choosing secondary keys that reinforce the boundaries of his tonic triad, Schubert utilizes every pitch of the

⁸² Ibid., 889.

⁸³ Ibid., 879.

chromatic scale as the pivot for at least one common-tone deflection. [...] On some level, centered key identity almost ceases to matter, as Schubert frames chromatic mutation and wandering as sensually gratifying.⁸⁴

As a consequence, her approach to subjectivity is to focus on the creation of Selfhood, giving rise to a highly individualistic model of subjective freedom:

What is remarkable about this movement is that Schubert conceives of and executes a musical narrative that does not enact the more standard model in which a self strives to define identity through the consolidation of ego boundaries. Instead, each of several moments within the opening theme becomes a pretext for deflection and exploration [...] Schubert's opening section [...] invites us to forgo the security of a centred, stable tonality and, instead, to experience—and even *enjoy*—a flexible sense of self.⁸⁵

It is no surprise, then, that this approach re-introduces the consumer-capitalist sense of prefabricated subjectivity that was criticized in Chapter Two: 'identities are easily shed, exchanged, fused, and reestablished'.⁸⁶

By contrast, my approach has been to focus—in a traditionally Marxist style that will be expanded in the next chapter—on the relationship between the nascent subjectivity and the culture in which it is situated. Thus I do not see in Schubert's music an opportunity to construct a personal subjectivity free from the constraints of cultural discourse; rather, I see a way of interacting meaningfully with a discourse in such a way as to allow a subjectivity to exist emancipated within it, by engaging in a dialectical exchange that alters both discourse and subject. As a result, I am less interested in what Schubert's music says about his gender or sexuality as identities, or even his relationship with gender and sex as processes of self-creation, and more interested in his music as a locus of interacting with culture and history in their entirety: it shows the creation not of a feminine man, or a homosexual, or even a

⁸⁴ McClary, 'Constructions of Subjectivity in Schubert's Music', 223.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 215.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 223.

postmodern fantasy of an ungendered, unsexualized being free from all political constraint, but rather the very *process* of the construction of subjectivity itself.

Therefore, by invoking Cixous and *écriture féminine*, I am not claiming that early (and contemporary!) critics are correct, and that Schubert composes in a fundamentally 'female' way, but rather that certain communicative acts are limited by the structure of discourse; historically, this limitation has been gendered. Following Cixous, we might say that when Schubert—or anyone—is speaking for themselves, precisely through the act of escaping the oppressive phallogocentric norms they mark themselves as female. Despite this, what is truly valuable about Schubert's musical language and its escape from phallogocentrism is not its resultant 'femininity'. Rather, as with *écriture féminine*, Schubert's musical language can be emancipatory because it confronts us with the reality of the situation: namely that these inherited norms are constructed, and can therefore be superseded. This focus on the structure of discourse and its relationship to subjectivity naturally includes the possibility of freedom, but rather than maintaining a solipsistic, individualist perspective, it tackles the question of freedom in a total sense. Returning to the Lacanian framework of Part I (which is also the framework in which Cixous's theories were conceived), 'Othered' writing intimates the existence of the Real by escaping the Symbolic. In this way, the discursive limitations—gendered or otherwise—in which subjects are constituted begin to efface themselves: although on the material level it is a particular situation of 'Otherness', such as femininity, that provides access to the outside of normative phallogocentrism, that access itself results in the erasure of the gendered positions that first gave rise to it. As discursive limitations are more clearly revealed for what they are—necessary, but negotiable—progressive escapes are enabled, greater freedoms, available to more people: in short, a discursive revolution. This is a constant balancing act between material pragmatism, in which it is feminine-coded artefacts that will tend to escape phallogocentric norms (and vice-versa: escapees will be coded feminine), and the ideal restructuring to which that process leads, in which gendered codes cease

to contain meaning, and everything is revealed as a constant communicative negotiation.

This is, of course, another materialist dialectics, and when cast in these terms it demonstrates an affinity with the Adornian and Heideggerian quality of negation explored in Part I. Emancipatory writing is Othered not only because it emerges from a position of disempowerment (which would be to remain at the level McClary conceives of Schubert's writing), but also because it inhabits an 'impossible' position with regards to discourse, always just outside the limits of what exists within language:

It is impossible to define a feminine practice of writing, and this is an impossibility that will remain, for this practice can never be theorized, enclosed, coded—which doesn't mean that it doesn't exist. But it will always surpass the discourse that regulates the phallogocentric system; it does and will take place in areas other than those subordinated to philosophico-theoretical domination. It will be conceived of only by subjects who are breakers of automatisms, by peripheral figures that no authority can ever subjugate.⁸⁷

The subjugating authority here is both political authority that keeps feminized figures—like Schubert—repressed, but also the authority of the Symbolic: the failure of that authority, then, is not only a political change at the material level, but also an ontological revolution at the ideal one.

To ground this in musicological terms, I conclude by outlining what the foregoing analyses imply for the historical and analytical reception of Schubert's music. All the Schubert scholarship outlined at the start of this chapter has in common a broadly oppositional view of Schubert's relations to (Beethovenian) tonal practice. Whether critical or laudatory, the consensus was that Schubert eschews through ignorance, or escapes through genius, the historical burden of Beethovenian musical structure. As a result, the analytical tools developed to study his music 'on its own

⁸⁷ Cixous, *The Laugh of the Medusa*, 883.

terms'—such as early instances of Richard Cohn's hexatonic and neo-Riemannian theories—were designed specifically to dispense with traditional tonal theory.

In contrast, the dialectical understanding advanced here corrects this impression in two ways. First, it goes some way to showing how Schubert's compositional practice *confirms* tonal norms, even if it does so in highly irregular ways. The starting point for the analyses given above was, at the most basic level, the question 'in what way can this piece be said to be in F# minor?'. Although this might seem a simple question, it accurately situates Schubert's *oeuvre* historically: despite its mysteries and novelties, it is unarguably situated within the tonal canon. Written in the tonal age, and left ringing in the ears of people that heard tonally, it must be understood against that backdrop; to put it another way, the 'tonal system' mobilized here is no longer merely a music-theoretical one, but a humanist-historical one—a testament to, and a way of understanding, real humans and the cultural relics they left behind. The approach to musical artefacts taken here, then, is a characteristically Adornian one which has as its aim, in Alastair Williams's words, 'to release their *objectified subjectivity*'.⁸⁸

Second, the way in which the analyses above allow us to hear Schubert within tonal norms alters, or at least finesses, our understanding of those norms themselves. That is, rather than the critically orthodox method of letting Beethovenian practice affect the way we hear Schubert, here—in true dialectical fashion—Schubert changes the way we understand Beethovenian (and, more generally, tonal) norms. It does this insofar as it emphasizes the way tonality is itself dialectical. On the one hand, it is a negotiation between the controlling *idea* of a key centre, and the way that idea defines and is defined by individual *gestures* at the music's surface. The analyses here draw attention to the way that process occurs through time, and especially to the way those two dialectical poles are always interacting, even when one is undermining, rather

⁸⁸ Alastair Williams, 'Torn Halves: Structure and Subjectivity in Analysis', *Music Analysis* Vol. 17 No. 3 (October, 1998), 281.

than supporting, the other. On the other hand, it is a historical dialectic, as each progressive composition, when taken as an intervention in tonal musical discourse, goes on to refine and redefine precisely what tonality 'is'. The feminist undercurrent of the second dialectic especially demonstrates how this is true of the Andantino, in its extension of the concept of tonality beyond the reach of Beethovenian tonic/dominant polarity.

Finally, the way all of this is achieved in this movement specifically is significant. In highlighting the relationship between the ideal and the material by shifting greater and greater weight onto voice-leading, phrase structure, and other foreground concerns, this movement draws attention to the fact that music *in general* is a materialist dialectic: an ongoing negotiation between the conceptual and the performative. This will be the focus of Part III. It will have been noted that the musical materialism investigated in this chapter does not take the term to its possible limits: although the concept of music as a performative act has been invoked in the consideration of the physical aspects of composition for the piano, the rich literature on an entirely performative ontology of music has not been given full play. Part III will continue to pursue a dialectical materialist understanding of art music into considerations of music being brought into the material world—that is, being performed. As bridge to that undertaking, however, the political ramifications of a dialectical understanding of music in that very same material world must be addressed; this is the focus of the next chapter.

Chapter Four: The Need for Idealism

4.1: From Music to Politics

The previous chapter outlined a dialectical approach to tonality, one that not only introduced an expanded notion of what tonality was, but also sounded an emancipatory note in its promise to liberate Schubert from both the masculinist tropes of Beethovenian musical norms, and essentialist stereotypes of New Musicological politicking. Nevertheless, the results are decidedly limited: this chapter will expand upon the political undercurrent of Chapter Three by exploring the ways in which a dialectical materialist approach to music theory interacts with larger questions of subjectivity and freedom in philosophy, and especially gender politics. In so doing, the discussion will move beyond a narrow focus on tonality, and onto broader disciplinary questions. As a consequence, however, a limit will be reached in terms of what musicology can usefully achieve in the world of ‘politics’; out of this, nevertheless, will emerge a more distinctive understanding of what might constitute, by contrast, a musicological *ethics*. Discussion begins, however, by resuming the exploration of a dialectical approach to tonality, introduced in the previous chapter.

The most recent call for a dialectical understanding of tonality has come from J. P. E. Harper-Scott, in a revisionist reading of twentieth-century tonality and post-tonality.¹ In weighing up hexatonicism’s impact on the loosening of tonality in the twentieth century, he sounds a cautionary note: ‘while analysis of twentieth-century tonality should not simply seek to reduce individual

¹ J.P.E. Harper-Scott, ‘Tonality 1900–1950: Concept and Practice’, ed. Felix Wörner, Ullrich Scheideler, and Philip Rupprecht (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 2012), *Music Analysis* Vol. 33 No. 3 (2014): 388–405.

musical processes to an orthodox Schenkerian background, it would be equally—or actually more—false to proclaim too quickly the success of strategies of resistance to tonality'.² He argues that while chromatic features, such as hexatonic organization, undeniably came to prominence in the twentieth century, they must nevertheless be read against the backdrop of orthodox tonality, not least because twentieth-century listeners (and, presumably, composers of quasi-tonal music) continued to be enculturated into hearing tonally. Harper-Scott states: 'hexatonic analysis, like pitch-class set analysis, does an excellent job of explaining how the music comes to have the pitches it does in a technical sense, but understanding requires further steps'.³ In Harper-Scott's view, tonality cannot simply be overcome in the early twentieth century—at least not conceptually. Tonality, and by extension tonal music theory and analytical techniques, represents the historical baggage that any piece in dialogue, however distant, with tonality carries with it. Thus, performing a Schenkerian analysis on a piece of Prokofiev (as he does) does not seek to neutralize the para-tonal aspects of the work; it rather demonstrates that those aspects are effective, at least in part, due to their relationship with tonality, and the distance they have travelled from its centre. This way of thinking can be easily recast in the terms of the preceding chapter. Hexatonic theory can explain (as it did in the analysis of the second movement of Schubert's Piano Sonata in D. 959) the material elements of a musical composition: why certain notes are there rather than others. To understand the meaning of those notes over a longer range is a question of the ideal level, where tonal theory can usefully be employed, since it is in tonal theory that

² Ibid., 393.

³ Ibid., 397.

broader narratives that give musical events meaning—dissonance, tension, resolution, teleology in general—are found.⁴

Harper-Scott offers a Marxist reading, comparing the long reach of tonality first to that of capitalism, and then to imperialism (which are of course intertwined, perhaps even coextensive).⁵ Commenting on a passage of *Harmonielehre* in which Schoenberg argues that ‘vagrant chords’ in tonal music are not extraneous to tonality, but rather emerge from ‘inbreeding among the laws of that system’, Harper-Scott writes:

Substitute ‘crises’ for ‘vagrant chords’ and ‘ideology’ for ‘inbreeding’ in this paragraph, and this might be Marx arguing for the inevitable collapse of capitalism under the weight of its own internal contradictions. But what Schoenberg and Marx failed to foresee was the resilient capacity of tonality (or capitalism) to fold its contradictions back into itself as a source of strength, to use the emancipation of dissonance (or the collapse of a financial system) as a means of generating an inexhaustible range of more complex and appealing tonal novelties (or the re-enrichment of the capitalist class).⁶

And commenting on a hexatonic analysis of Prokofiev’s *Peter and the Wolf*, he writes:

Substituting an imperial metaphor for Cohn’s bourgeois-garden one, we might note the interesting coincidence in the nineteenth century of a development in European tonal harmony (the embrace of new chromatic possibilities for the symmetrical division of the octave) and European politics (the rapid growth of Empire). Both tonal and political empires grew in this period to become more

⁴ This is not to suggest, necessarily, that tonal theory is the only method of interrogating this ideal level of musical understanding. Rather, I argue—along with Harper-Scott—both that it is incorrect to assert or imply that tonal theory has *no* bearing on music (including post-tonal music), and that it is *doubly* incorrect if this carries with it the implication that there is no relevant ideal element at all. Clearly, it might be profitable in some pieces to focus on timbre or rhythm (for example) at the expense of tonality: this need not carry with it the implication that any putative consideration of tonality is irrelevant.

⁵ See Domenico Losurdo, *Liberalism: A Counter-History* (London and New York: Verso, 2011).

⁶ Harper-Scott, ‘*Tonality 1900–1950*’, 392.

various, less monoglot, more flavoured by spice from the colonies. Musical pieces continue to start and end in the tonic and to have subdominant and dominant functions, but chords I, IV and V (Great Britain, France and Germany, in terms of the political metaphor) may have their own hexatonic colonies [...]. The imperial centre of tonality could therefore always assure total control over these spaces at the same time that it allowed music to move quite freely through them all.⁷

He sums up: 'if [...] hexatonicism is considered not a hegemonic challenge to tonality, but simply a pursuit of colourful novelty, it would seem additionally to create another historic and cultural parallel with capitalism's configuration of public and aesthetic space in terms of commodified novelties'.⁸

It is worth quoting Harper-Scott at length here, because of the extent to which his ideas resonate with the current project. First, and most importantly, in refusing to understand twentieth-century tonality as *wholly* informed by either orthodoxy or novelty, he argues for a dialectical reading of tonality and post-tonality/atonality's historical interaction. Indeed he argues explicitly for the sort of negative dialectics advocated in Part I:

Both Cohn's *Tonnetz* (and more generally his hexatonic reading) and my Schenkerian graph are distortions of the opening of *Peter and the Wolf* which fail to properly acknowledge the dialectical tension in the music—and specifically a *negative dialectics* in Adorno's sense, since these two positions mediate each other forever, refusing to form a synthesis. It is the nature of modernist tonal music to move perpetually between the poles of integration and disintegration and to settle in each case on an individual accommodation which is more or less 'conservative' or 'radical'.⁹

Second, the specific socio-political arena of Harper-Scott's dialectic—the ideology of capitalism—is likewise clearly germane. For example, he invites the

⁷ *Ibid.*, 398–9.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 399.

⁹ *Ibid.*

same expansion of Adorno's theories of the culture industry that was implied (with reference to postmodern music and musicology) in Chapter One: given the similarity, in both aims and methods, between practices of post-tonality and capitalism, 'the question of twentieth-century tonality's place in the Adornian struggle between the culture industry and modernism would therefore reopen in interesting ways'.¹⁰

As in his earlier book, *The Quilting Points of Musical Modernism*, Harper-Scott interrogates the compositional choices of twentieth-century composers against the backdrop of ideology, in such a way as to align musical conservatism, i.e. the rejection of the 'freedoms' allowed by atonality, with parallel rejections of the freedoms offered by political movements such as communism—political movements advocated by Harper-Scott himself.¹¹ However, the nature of this parallel, between the analysis of tonal music and the workings of capitalism, is not straightforward. If the vital core of Harper-Scott's critique is to be preserved, it is essential to understand the ways in which this parallel exceeds mere similarity; it would be a mistake, that is, to believe that Harper-Scott is merely pointing out a likeness between politico-economic structures and the tonal system.

Nevertheless, it would equally be wrong to see in his analyses the suggestion that the overthrow of tonality (as well as, or perhaps even rather than, capitalism) can be a means to real political liberation. Harper-Scott's work focuses on a particular historical phenomenon—the navigation of tonality in the twentieth century—but it masks an engagement with a more foundational question over how to approach music at all. It will be shown that revolutionary *thinking* with regard to tonality (and more generally to music's ontology, and the role of music theory) necessitates a revolutionary philosophy generally.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ J. P. E. Harper-Scott, *The Quilting Points of Musical Modernism: Revolution, Reaction, and William Walton* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

That philosophy, the materialist dialectic, stands in the same relation to music theory as it does to political theory: they are thus theoretical cousins, flowing from the same source.

It is the first task of this chapter, then, to situate Harper-Scott's critique within a broader theoretical framework. This will leave his specific historical critique (of twentieth century responses to the alternatives to tonality) intact, but it will open the way to its extension in other directions. I will argue that the dialectic of tonality that he proposes is rooted in the more profound dialectical tension outlined in the previous chapter: that between the material and the ideal levels of music, the operative dialectic of art music itself. In this way, the debate will be shifted away from analysis and history, and back towards music's ontology. It is my contention that the parallel Harper-Scott draws between the functioning of tonality and the functioning of twentieth and twenty-first century capitalism is significant because it points to their common ancestor: the dialectical interaction of materiality and idealism.

Harper-Scott is not unaware of this necessary philosophical underpinning, and references to the ontology of art music run like threads throughout his work. Nevertheless, as yet no attempt has been made to render this putative ontology explicit; the rest of the thesis will do just that, and so provide an indelible link between the realms of music and musical analysis, and that of philosophy, politics, and ethics.

4.2: Dialectical Tonality: A Revolutionary

Justification

The first question Georg Lukács poses himself in *History and Class Consciousness* gives his first chapter its name: 'What is orthodox Marxism?'. Going some way towards answering it, Lukács begins the chapter with a thought experiment:

Let us assume for the sake of argument that recent research had disproved once and for all every one of Marx's individual theses. Even if this were to be proved, every serious 'orthodox' Marxist would still be able to accept all such modern findings without reservation and hence dismiss all of Marx's thesis *in toto*—without having to renounce his orthodoxy for a single moment. Orthodox Marxism, therefore, does not imply the uncritical acceptance of the results of Marx's investigations [...] On the contrary, orthodoxy refers exclusively to *method*.¹²

This insight provides the first opportunity to put Harper-Scott's Marxist call (and my own) for a dialectical tonality into a theoretical and historical context. From a Marxist perspective, all of Harper-Scott's assertions—and similar assertions made in this thesis—on the culture industry, simplicity, hexatonicism, and so on, could be overturned, and yet a possible site of resistance would remain insofar as it crystallized a particular method for thinking about music (and the world in general): dialectical materialism. That is to say, the political and ethical core of this thesis is not contained in its attitude to various social topics—gender, sexuality, class (although of course it is concerned with these things)—but rather in its methodology: it is this methodology that, as I will demonstrate, makes political revolution possible—

¹²Georg Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness: Studies in Marxist Dialectics* (Pontypool: The Merlin Press, 1971), 1.

as well as informing, naturally, my 'surface' political opinions on gendered and economic relations.

At root, dialectical materialism is the theoretical development of the Marxian ideal of unity of theory and practice, and thus it is the opposite of political dogmatism. As stated in the Introduction, concerns are routinely voiced that any research into the ethics of musicology might lapse into dogmatic moralizing, a set of demands as to how musicology should be practised. This chapter's explanation of the methodology I propose is an attempt to allay those fears. If dogmatism obtains when 'what is to be done' is determined in the abstract, as a theoretical ideal which must be put into practice by others 'on the ground', then the materialist dialectic takes the opposite approach. Marxian dialectical materialism rejects the separation of theory and practice, instead affirming their inextricability: social change must begin from, and use the materials of, the current social situation. This way of thinking, however, extends far beyond the realm of social justice and politics; indeed, its application to political and economic theory only springs from its richer heritage in Marx's rejection of the German Idealist system, a system premised on a similar separation of the ideal realm and the material. Dialectical materialism is a fully fledged philosophical worldview, with implications for all the topics raised thus far: the formation of subjects, their relationship with their objects, and their interaction with the world around them.

Under Marx's system, Hegelianism, Platonism and Christianity are rejected, since they all—to differing degrees and in different ways—see the material world as an imperfect shadow, an incomplete fragment, or a troublesome obstacle to an ideal or 'Absolute' plain. By contrast, Marx stands these philosophies on their head, asserting that 'the first premise of all human

history is, of course, the existence of living human individuals'.¹³ Thus, he can claim that

In direct contrast to German philosophy which descends from heaven to earth, here we ascend from earth to heaven. That is to say, we do not set out from what men say, imagine, conceive, nor from men as narrated, thought of, imagined, conceived, in order to arrive at men in the flesh. We set out from real, active men, and on the basis of their real life-process we demonstrate the development of the ideological reflexes and echoes of this life-process. [...] Morality, religion, metaphysics, all the rest of ideology and their corresponding forms of consciousness, thus no longer retain the semblance of independence.¹⁴

Material reality, then, is neither a shadow nor an effect of the ideal structure of the world, but rather directly partakes in that structure. By centring the notion of contemplation not on an abstracted idea of 'the world as it really is', but rather on the real humans doing the contemplation (much as Heidegger would do in the twentieth century), Marx forcefully links the act of philosophy—and, in so doing, the ideal level itself—with material reality:

The production of ideas, of conceptions, of consciousness, is at first directly interwoven with the material activity and the material intercourse of men, the language of real life. Conceiving, thinking, the mental intercourse of men, appear at this stage as the direct efflux of their material behaviour. The same applies to mental production as expressed in the language of politics, laws, morality, religion, metaphysics, etc., of a people. Men are the producers of their conceptions, ideas, etc.—real, active men, as they are conditioned by a definite development of their productive forces and of the intercourse corresponding to

¹³ Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The German Ideology*, Part I: Feuerbach: Opposition of the Materialist and Idealist Outlooks, trans. W. Lough, Marxist Internet Archive (unpaginated) <<https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1845/german-ideology/ch01.htm>> (accessed 17 August 2017).

¹⁴ Ibid.

these, up to its furthest forms. Consciousness can never be anything else than conscious existence, and the existence of men is their actual life-process.¹⁵

Several parallels with musicology can be drawn at this point. It might be argued that the anti-analytical edge of New Musicology was Marxist in spirit, since it took as its primary concern the embeddedness of music in human culture; as a result, it shifted the disciplinary focus from an unrealized and unrealizable background, to the 'really occurring music'. What is more, the formalist musicology that it reacted against owed a great deal of its conceptual underpinning to German Idealism rejected by Marx himself. From the sacralisation of the transcendent and ultimately inarticulate musical 'work' (and, as a consequence, the depreciation of music's performed existence in favour of its conceptual 'essence'), to the historical idealist belief that the Austro-German tonal canon of 'Absolute' music would gradually progress towards something worthy of the name (in the Hegelian understanding of the term), 'Old' Musicology was a truly nineteenth-century discipline—even into the late twentieth century. New Musicology, by re-injecting the material concerns of the real humans caught up in the act of 'musicking', as Christopher Small called it, performed a necessary and long-overdue service.¹⁶

I contend, however, that this broadly anti-analytical stance is at some remove from Marxian ideals, since its proud expulsion of any ideal content goes against the grain of Marxist philosophy, which is grounded not in a *rejection* of idealism, but rather its dialectical mediation with the material. While a dialectical approach is not a disparagement of those materialist approaches either, there are nevertheless pragmatic or realpolitikal reasons why advocating for it must take the form of a 'defence of idealism' at the present time. In the current disciplinary (and broader political/educational) climate,

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Christopher Small, *Musicking: The Meanings of Performing and Listening* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1998).

after the postmodern turn and consequent criticism of theoretical complexity outlined in Part I, instituting a dialectical approach to the study of music necessitates the passionate advocacy of analytical techniques alongside the (now well established) hermeneutic and ethnographic approaches. Moreover, I will show that far from betraying the spirit of New Musicology, the dialectical approach (including its complex theoretical-ideal component) can ultimately fulfil the political and philosophical project that lay at its heart.

To this end, the dialectical approach advanced in the previous chapter will now be cast in these Marxist terms, in order to demonstrate the relation between the social world that concerns a truly critical musicology, and the theoretical efforts I have claimed are equally indispensable. As a result, by the end of the chapter, the contribution of the ‘ideal’ level of writing about music—including analysis—to broader efforts at social justice should be clearer.

Karl Korsch and Georg Lukács give persuasive reasons for the importance of the ideal realm—that is to say, of theoretical systems. Korsch notes that a full understanding of culture recognises the way ideology has repercussions on the material world: ‘it is essential for modern dialectical materialism to grasp philosophies and other ideological systems in theory as realities, and to treat them in practice as such’.¹⁷ In other words, material events do not exist in a vacuum: they come about because of, and are interpreted through, the lens of a structuring ideology. Lukács describes the effect of the ideal upon the material level by critiquing a simple understanding of ‘facts’. Once again, his point is that things do not occur in isolation from one another, but rather are conditioned by and understood in light of a subtle network of ideal context: ‘facts’ are contingent. As he puts it, ‘in order to progress from these “facts” to facts in the true meaning of the word it is necessary to perceive their historical conditioning as such and to abandon the point of view that

¹⁷ Karl Korsch, *Marxism and Philosophy*, trans. Fred Halliday (London and New York: Verso, 2013), 72.

would see them as immediately given: they must themselves be subjected to a historical and dialectical examination'.¹⁸

He writes of these facts having an inner core, a kind of real essence or meaning beyond and distinct from their appearance in the world: 'if the facts are to be understood, this distinction between their real existence and their inner core must be grasped clearly and precisely [...] Thus we must detach the phenomena from the form in which they are immediately given and discover the intervening links which connect them to their core, their essence'.¹⁹ This is an elusive passage, but substituting 'facts' for 'notes' is a useful exercise. It gives an understanding of music that parallels Dilthey's distinction between 'explaining' and 'understanding', drawn on by Harper-Scott in his call for a dialectical understanding of tonality:

Verstehen (understanding), [...] is the interpretative work of history, and *Erklären* (explaining), [...] is the descriptive work of science [...]. Hexatonic analysis, like pitch-class set theory, does an excellent job of explaining how music comes to have the pitches it does in a technical sense, but understanding requires further steps.²⁰

Thus, one can know what something *is* in purely material terms, but to understand what it *means* necessitates recourse to a broader philosophical frame of reference, one that exceeds the self-contained materiality of the situation at hand. Notes (or 'facts') have a history, one that is not necessarily discernible from their material existence (for example, their appearance in a piece of music). They carry that history with them, but it is a conceptual effort to grasp it, to trace the lineage of those notes' significance through history and culture; nevertheless, it is one that *changes* their meaning *in material reality*. It is possible to explain the presence of certain notes in a score with reference to the

¹⁸ Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness*, 7.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, 8.

²⁰ Harper-Scott, 'Tonality 1900–1950', 397.

disposition of the keyboard, the necessities of voice-leading, as was done initially in the analysis of the central section of Schubert's Andantino; as will be discussed later in this chapter, musical 'facts' can even owe their material specificity to the exigencies of different hand-shapes, or political restrictions on what it is acceptable for different people to play. But, following Dilthey, to *understand* these notes, what they *mean* once they are written down, has little to do with those material concerns, and everything to do with the cultural and musical context into which they are inserted.

The difficulty arises precisely because of the breadth of that context—that material culture—and the consequent undecideability of what that meaning might be. Is the material culture of Schubert's Andantino his own personal subjectivity, his own understanding of what he was composing (however one might access that knowledge)? Or is it the relationship between his composition and the musical culture of his own time and place? Or, more broadly still, is it its possible relations with our own musical culture (whoever 'we', as interpreters, are)—that is, any possible musical culture in which his work can be recuperated? Depending on one's perspective, any of those things could be a limiting material factor, determining the way in which the piece can be comprehended, or a framework for ideal understanding, bringing previously illegible elements into legibility. One of music's much-vaunted characteristics is its ability to pass through each of these different contexts: indeed, the ambiguity surrounding what constitutes a musical work (to be examined closely in Chapter Five), the ability of pieces of music to be reproduced and re-interpreted in geographically and historically distant circumstances suggests that this mutability is perhaps the defining feature of music. In which case, a note's 'inner core', to use Lukács's terminology, is that

quality that makes it musical: able to be carried from the historical-material realm into the ideal-musical.²¹

The crucial thing, then, is to understand the ideal component in the dialectical scenario for which it is intended; the confusion above is generated by the fact that, in the case of Schubert's music and the analysis of the previous chapter, there are multiple dialectical relationships occurring simultaneously. It might be helpful, therefore, to outline these dialectical relationships in the more familiar Hegelian framework, to clarify the role of the ideal in its structuring of the material (and vice-versa). Understood this way, normative (Beethovenian) tonality functions as the ideal system in which Schubert's subjective materiality—including the particular physicality of his chromaticism—exists, the one dialectically mediating the other. As this conceptual understanding of Schubert's tonal language emerges, it is sublated to a higher dialectical level, functioning as an (ideal) antithesis to the putative thesis of the (material) status quo, however it might be worded: 'tonality functions in such-and-such a way' or/and therefore 'Schubert's music doesn't make tonal sense', or even 'the Andantino is unanalysable'. This dialectical interaction, between received notions of tonality and Schubert's (indeed, any composer's) idiosyncratic version of it, produces an expanded sense of tonality, one that makes productive use of the antinomies between Schubert's language

²¹ It will not have escaped notice, of course, that this type of thinking parallels the foundational principles of poststructuralist thought very closely. The Lukácsian 'inner core', when considered from a poststructural musical perspective, can be thought of as the 'textuality' of a musical note: that quality which allows a piece of music (or any text) to be read and re-read, without consideration for the (theoretically 'dead') author—or in a broader sense, its material origin. It is ironic, therefore, that so much New Musicology pays lip service to poststructuralism and postmodernism, only to betray its aims—in this instance, in its refusal to acknowledge one of the foundational principles of music-as-text, which is its ability to transcend its own authorship. A truly poststructuralist understanding of music (as well as a truly Marxian one) would not jettison so bluntly music's ideal edge: on the contrary, it would give it the central role it so clearly merits. Just as in Part I, this chapter is ultimately sympathetic to the broad aims of poststructuralism, but highly critical of the inconsistent way in which it has been absorbed into the musicological academy, by and large.

and conventions of tonal sense-making. This is what the previous chapter set out to achieve. However, this itself might then be sublated, going on to function as an (ideal) antithesis to some other thesis, for example a hard-and-fast distinction between tonality and atonality. As Harper-Scott demonstrates, a mediation such as this gives rise to a more nuanced understanding of the way tonality and para-tonality/atonality interact in early twentieth-century repertoire.

While this separation of the dialectical processes is heuristically useful, it is problematic since in a Hegelian context the sequence of dialectical relationships would be understood as a historical process: Schubert's material intervention would be taken as a historical event, kickstarting a revolution in tonality (after which tonality would *as a matter of fact* change its meaning), ultimately ending with the blurring of tonality into atonality in the early twentieth century. This rather broad history—in which tonality is gradually materially destabilised until it is eventually overcome by Schoenberg—is misleading and of limited use. Rather, in keeping with the negative dialectics offered here, it is essential to realise that these processes are not only happening simultaneously, but also without resolution: Schubert's musical language and the inherited norms of tonality are kept in perpetual tension, and the meaning of the piece, indeed the power of tonality generally, resides in the conflict between its ideal call and its material deviations. Or to put it another way, the conflict between Schubert and society is written into the music: any attempt to resolve that conflict by expanding the notion of tonality in a historical sense—invoking, for example, the gradual 'emancipation of dissonance', or the disintegration of long-range tonal structures, such that the tension was no longer audible—would only sap the piece of its critical, not to mention its aesthetic, power. Or to put it bluntly, the negative quality of the dialectic of tonality is why the piece still sounds shocking today, even after Schoenberg.

On this understanding, it is not music theory and analysis, but a purely materialistic understanding of music—one that cuts itself off entirely from music theory—that is guilty of overemphasizing music's autonomy. Because music theory connects individual pieces to musical and cultural history, far from pretending to autonomy, it forces those works to be understood against the backdrop of an enormous context, as well as allowing those individual works, in dialectical fashion, to contribute to and alter that context themselves. By contrast, to focus solely on the material relations of a piece of music is to assume that all the information needed to comprehend a musical work is already apparent in the situation in which it originates, or in which it is encountered; in Lukács's terms, it takes music as a 'fact' which is 'immediately given'—divorced entirely from 'historical and dialectical examination'. In this sense, Lukács's description of the process of examination as revealing an 'inner core' is misleading: the most significant result of subjecting music to theoretical or analytical examination is that, far from retreating inwards, it takes it outside of itself, into a broader humanistic context.

It is this that gives dialectical materialism its potential for revolutionary change, and justifies Harper-Scott's aligning it with broader politico-economic themes. He argues for the continued use of Schenkerian techniques because, he believes, Schenkerian theory captures the nuances of how tonality functions—the way it affects and appears to listeners—and he believes that tonal socialization is an inescapable fact of contemporary musical culture. But within this expanded Marxian framework, it is additionally possible to dismiss transcendent conceptions of tonality (which of course include Schenker's own personal metaphysics) as the sort of 'mystified' Hegelianism that Marx strongly critiqued.²² By contrast, the Marxist approach of Lukács sees in the ideal realm nothing other than the sedimented relations of humanity; he writes:

²² 'I criticized the mystificatory side of the Hegelian dialectic nearly thirty years ago, at a time when it was still the fashion'. He goes on to say, however, 'the mystification which the

For Hegel, the process of thinking, which he even transforms into an independent subject, under the name of 'the Idea', is the creator of the real world, and the real world is only the external appearance of the idea. With me the reverse is true: the ideal is nothing but the material world reflected in the mind of man, and translated into forms of thought.²³

This has revolutionary potential because 'Marx [...] dissolves the rigid, unhistorical, natural appearance of social institutions; [he] reveals their historical origins and shows therefore that *they are subject to history in every respect including historical decline*'.²⁴ Thus while tonal theory presents the form of the musical culture within which individual pieces of tonal music can be understood, that theory is precisely valuable because it enshrines *not* natural tonal laws, but rather a set of human relationships. Understanding pieces of music struggling with or against that theory is, therefore, not an abstract, but a very real human drama. It is, however, a drama which exceeds tonality, encapsulating an entire approach to understanding Western Art Music. Before the full political implications of this position can be explained, it is necessary to expand the discussion beyond tonal theory.

4.3: Towards a Musical Materialist Dialectics: Beyond Tonality

At this juncture, it is necessary to address the elephant in the room: tonality is not in itself oppressive, and so its overthrow cannot be emancipatory.

dialectic suffers in Hegel's hands by no means prevents him from being the first to present its general forms of motion in a comprehensive and conscious manner'. The same could be said of Schenker, and the dialectic of tonality. From the afterword to the second edition of *Das Kapital* (1873), in Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol.1, trans. Ben Fowkes (London: Penguin Classics, 1990), 102–3.

²³ Ibid., 102.

²⁴ Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness*, 47 (emphasis added).

Nevertheless, as an ideal structuration of human musical culture, it enshrines a power dynamic, both acting as a gatekeeper for what can and cannot be legible, and determining the ways in which that music it allows to pass is legible. Both of these facets can be seen in the Schubert scholarship examined in the previous chapter: music that does not live up to the Beethovenian norms of tonality is illegible, classed as an aesthetic and intellectual failure. And in those cases in which Schubert's music is intelligible against those norms, his partial deviance from them marks him out in traditionally gendered ways: it is taken as evidence of an inner 'femininity', or as clues to his repressed homosexuality.

Thus what must occur is the overthrow of tonality. Not, however, in the sense of its absolute disavowal—refusing to countenance it as a useful theoretical yardstick, in favour of a supposedly more 'democratic' hexatonicism, or indeed by refusing to theorize at all—but rather by demystifying it. This profoundly changes the ethical work to be undertaken. No longer is it a question of illustrating changing valuations of Schubert's (previously deviant) sexual/gender identity—that is, expanding the range of acceptable gender expressions and sexualities to include Schubert's—by means of a parallel effort to demonstrate the acceptability of his tonal language; rather, it is a question of highlighting the limitations of those very categories, showing that there is something in music, and in human being, that transcends those boundaries. In this process of dialectical sublation, the conflict between Beethovenian/Schubertian harmony is shown to be limiting, and a higher level in which the two can be comprehended is revealed.

It is now clear that this analysis transcends those limits too. The dialectical understanding is not restricted to Beethoven and Schubert, nor indeed only to harmony and tonality. Rather, it is a way of understanding music generally, as something with an ideal component as well as a material one: pieces of music are entities shaped by the world in which they were composed

and in which they appear, but which have also shaped and continue to shape those worlds themselves.

This argument has a crucial political element. As explored in Part I, the notion that everything is reducible to simple materiality—that the world is a fundamentally *unstructured* soup, related only by a multifaceted network between things—is the overriding postmodern ideology that makes the violence of late capitalism thinkable. With the revolutionary Marxist bent of this chapter in mind, we can add that it also makes it unavoidable: without the ability to conceive of a radically different world, it is impossible to bring one into being. What is necessary is an ideal revolution, hand-in-hand with a political one. Indeed, Karl Korsch's point in *Marxism and Philosophy* is precisely that any attempted material revolution, in the absence of a worked-out revolution in thought, is doomed. He explains that a total reconceptualization of the world was seen as a necessary component of real political action even by Hegel (with whom Marx famously disagreed on several other points): 'it is quite clear that he was not talking of [...] a nice, quiet process that takes place in the pure realm of the study and far away from the crude realm of real struggles. [... Hegel] regarded a "revolution in the form of thought" as an objective component of the total social process of a real revolution'.²⁵

While Hegel's 'revolution in the form of thought' might still bear the marks of an unmediated idealism, Marx's interest in theory stems from its crucial interaction with real humans—one that goes far beyond pointing out the real-world results of theoretical superstructure. He says, 'a negro is a negro. He only becomes a slave in certain circumstances. A cotton-spinning jenny is a machine for spinning cotton. Only in certain circumstances does it become capital. Torn from those circumstances it is no more capital than gold is money

²⁵ Korsch, *Marxism and Philosophy*, 41.

or sugar the price of sugar'.²⁶ Thus, the revolutionary content of Marx's thought is not its zealous indignation at individual cases of subjective oppression—although of course those injustices are the *prompt* for revolution—and as a consequence it does not imply the need simply to agitate against those oppressions. Rather, its revolutionary kernel is his analysis of the way these individual cases of oppression relate to the ideal structures of power: the way they flow *necessarily* from those structures, and therefore, that any revolution must be concerned as much with unsettling that ideal level as it is with those individual cases. The Marxist materialist dialectic, in sum, is *formally revolutionary*. It contains the capacity for change in its very conceptual structure, since that structure understands the world as constant interactive movement: between ideal and material, thought and practice, society and individual, language and word, power and the disempowered.

This in turn fundamentally alters the nature of ethics; indeed, it causes ethics to wither away completely. Contemporary musicology is caught in a situation that is difficult to resolve: however correct one might believe New Musicologists to be about racism, sexism, and homophobia in music history and music historiography, it is difficult to imagine a way to justify these critiques without lapsing into moralizing. It is likewise difficult to imagine a way to correct these faulty practices without falling into coercion—that is, by forcing people to practice musicology in a certain 'ethical' way. By framing issues of social justice in strictly materialist terms, New Musicology operates solely from an individualist perspective—ultimately, creating an irreconcilable conflict precisely between the 'social' aspect it attempts to theorize, and the putative 'individual' it is trying to liberate.

²⁶ Marx, *Wage Labour and Capital*, cited in Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness*, 13. Also available at Marxist Internet Archive: <<https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1847/wage-labour/ch05.htm>> (accessed 17 August 2017).

It is crucial to recognize that this quandary is not separable from the situation of capitalist oppression New Musicology critiques, but rather is itself a direct result of it. Lukács points out how capitalism constitutes the individual in precisely this self-contradictory way: ‘the bourgeoisie endowed the individual with an unprecedented importance, but at the same time that same individuality was annihilated by the economic conditions to which it was subjected, by the reification created by commodity production’.²⁷ That is to say, the division of labour meant that humans were only valued insofar as they formed part of a larger social machine, but the simultaneous alienation of that labour power from the workers meant that although they formed part of that social machine, they retained no control over it. Despite this, the ideological centre of gravity under a liberal-capitalist philosophy is this same individual: ‘bourgeois thought judges social phenomena consciously or unconsciously, naïvely or subtly, consistently from the standpoint of the individual’.²⁸ This creates a problem for ethics, since one’s relationship to society is abstracted: one encounters society as an Other, towards which one has a relationship of obligation, but no opportunity of control. Lukács notes that ‘as the world becomes mechanized its subjects, man, necessarily becomes mechanized too and so this ethics likewise remains abstract. Confronted by the totality of man in isolation from the world it remains merely normative and fails to be truly active in its creation of objects. It is only prescriptive and imperative in character’.²⁹ That is to say, the theological character of moral law stems from the profound disconnect—i.e. the undialectical relationship—between ideal structure (‘society’) and material living (‘the individual’): morality is encountered as an Other because individual people are alienated from the

²⁷ Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness*, 62.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 28.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 38.

society that gives rise to it, unaware that they form part of both that society and those morals.

It is for this reason that Alain Badiou renounces the term 'ethics'; likewise, Marx famously renounced 'philosophy' in the final of his Theses on Feuerbach.³⁰ Instead, rather than the abstracted and authoritarian models of philosophy and ethics, Marx and Badiou prefer to think in terms of science—not advancing moral injunctions, but simply attempting to understand the world in its complexity. As Hegel concluded, philosophy is nothing but 'its own epoch comprehended in thought', or as is stated in *Communist Manifesto*, 'the theoretical conclusions of the communists [...] are only general expressions of the real relations of an existing class struggle, of a historical moment that is going on before our eyes'.³¹ The dialectical interaction of material and ideal, then, does away with the abstraction of theological morals, replacing them with ontological investigations: no demands are made, except the demand to come to terms with the world as it is—both in its material and ideal terms. In place of an abstract *theology*, a materially grounded *ontology* comes to the fore.

³⁰ 'The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point is to change it', Karl Marx, *Theses on Feuerbach*, Marxist Internet Archive <<https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1845/theses/theses.htm>> (accessed 19 August 2017). Badiou states that contemporary ethics 'amounts to a genuine nihilism, a threatening denial of thought itself', and 'a severe symptom of renunciation of the one thing that distinguishes the human species from the predatory living organism that it also is: the capacity to enter into the composition and becoming of some eternal truths' (Alain Badiou, *Ethics: An Essay on the Understanding of Evil*, trans. Peter Hallward (London and New York: Verso, 2012), 3, 90). The resonance with the Heideggerian model of being human outlined in Chapter 2 should be clear. Likewise, Badiou's concept of truth(s) is peculiar to him: far from being 'something that is verifiable' in the classic sense of the word, Badiou's concept of truth is closely related to Lacan's concept of the Real (see note 48, below): 'a truth-process is heterogeneous to the instituted knowledges of the situation. Or—to use an expression of Lacan's—that it punches a 'hole [*trouée*]' in these knowledges' (ibid., 43). Put simply, Badiou's 'truth' is (or at least relies on) the fact that the material condition of reality is not all there is: there is something beyond materiality (what he calls 'multiplicity'), and it is humankind's access to this—through the same ideal processes described in this thesis—that defines us. For a full working-out of Badiou's theories, see his *Being and Event* trans. Oliver Feltham (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), and *Logics of Worlds: Being and Event II*, trans. Alberto Toscano (London: Bloomsbury, 2013).

³¹ Quoted in Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness*, 43 and 45–6, n. 16 respectively.

All of this is to say that complex theoretical investigation and social engagement are not mutually exclusive; indeed the latter is not possible without the former. Indeed, Lukács critiques a type of bourgeois thought in which ‘history becomes fossilized in a *formalism* incapable of comprehending that the real nature of socio-historical institutions is that they consist of *relations between men*’.³² That a consideration of socio-historical institutions could still be formalist raises the possibility of a major flaw in an anti-analytical project: although its drive to understand music within a social context was an attempt to move away from one type of formalism, it has fallen into another type. Precisely by enshrining certain socio-historical institutions—performance practices, gender relations, political and philosophical contexts, even hermeneutic ‘windows’—it has forgotten that one of the valuable features of music, surely, is that it transcends all of these things, that it operates across and in spite of them. Or to put it another way, if there is a valid Marxist objection to the ossification of social-historical institutions into material ‘facts’, then that certainly extends to considering pieces of music as similarly rigid ossifications. Rather than understanding music (merely) as sedimenting particular material social configurations, a truly Marxist approach sees it as encoding human relations more generally, a key component of which is the possibility of ideal revolution as outlined above.

In sum, I argue that music theory has been unfairly criticized for its ‘dehumanizing’ tendencies. In this radically dialectical view, what is most human about humans is their excess over their immediate material circumstances; thus, music theory might be valuable precisely *because* it peels musical works away from those same circumstances. In this instance, then, it might be better to consider music theory as ‘dematerializing’, and to see in that tendency a source of strength, rather than a fatal weakness. To illustrate the

³² *Ibid.*, 48 (emphasis original).

way such an approach works in reality, I return to a consideration of gender in music, in order to demonstrate the differences between a purely materialist and a dialectical approach to the issue. By examining various critiques of musical misogyny, I will explore the role a dialectical materialist approach to music can play in the intersection of music, politics, and ethics.

4.4: Musical Misogyny and ‘Performing Freedom’

There is a growing literature that reads certain musical works against the material situation of women in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Europe. In common with a broader trend to recognize music’s embodied and embodying characteristics, some writers have examined music as a record of women’s bodies.³³ More relevant for the purposes of this thesis are those investigations that include an account of the oppressive discourse that structured women’s bodies, and by extension, women’s music, such as Sean M. Parr, ‘Dance and the Female Singer in Second Empire Opera’, and Bonnie Gordon, ‘Talking Back: The Female Voice in *Il Ballo della Ingrate*’.³⁴ Both of these articles explore the tension between the oppression of women in their societies, and the contemporaneous elevation of women (and women’s voices, and bodies) in opera; indeed, this tension runs through the core operatic repertory, given the objectifying and violently misogynistic nature of its plots.³⁵ As Parr says, ‘the female singers of these arias were certainly objectified in a problematic manner,

³³ See for example: Melina Esse, ‘Rossini’s noisy bodies’, *Cambridge Opera Journal* Vol. 21 No. 1 (March 2009): 27–64; Heather Hadlock, ‘Sonorous Bodies: Women and the Glass Harmonica’, *Journal of the American Musical Society* Vol. 53 No. 3 (Autumn, 2000): 507–542.

³⁴ Sean M. Parr, ‘Dance and the Female Singer in Second Empire Opera’, *19th-Century Music* Vol. 36 No. 2 (Fall, 2012): 101–121; Bonnie Gordon, ‘Talking Back: The Female Voice in *Il Ballo della Ingrate*’, *Cambridge Opera Journal* Vol. 11 No. 1 (March, 1999): 1–30.

³⁵ The most forceful account of this aspect of operatic history is Catherine Clément, *Opera: The Undoing of Women*, trans. Betsy Wing (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999).

but they were also “envoiced” wielders of a compelling musical power’.³⁶ This tension is never resolved, nor do the authors seek to resolve it; nevertheless, the question of how musical power and political powerlessness interact, and whether one can make up for the other, is an important one in a discussion of musicological ethics, and I will seek to answer it below.

The question of music’s power in politically oppressive discourse has been the subject of a number of studies examined below, although I will show that the stringently materialist perspective assumed by the authors concerned fatally weakens their arguments. For example, James Davies has recorded how a musical annual given as a present to a girl named Julia is fraught with social and political implication at every level: ‘by placing themselves in the vicinity of these objects, by gift-wrapping themselves, by hoarding presents, [girls like Julia] prepared socially for being handed over themselves. Such views align neatly with histories of the milieu that position the family piano at the heart of period ideas of female sociability. Musical annuals [...] were obvious accessories to Julia’s “girling”’.³⁷ If one agrees with this reading—and Davies provides ample evidence to support it—then such annuals become highly suspicious objects, and deserve to be resisted along with the patriarchal oppression they not only symbolize, but enact. However, this is not an attitude advocated, nor even a possibility explored, by Davies.

Patriarchal values were expressed in even more generalized musical categories during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Suzanne Aspden has demonstrated that the galant style was received as feminine in Bach’s time, not least because of its easy, pleasurable simplicity, in contrast to the ‘masculinity’ of rigorous counterpoint.³⁸ This characterization is especially

³⁶ Parr, ‘Dance and the Female Singer’, 104.

³⁷ James Davies, ‘Julia’s Gift: The Social Life of Scores, c.1830’, *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* Vol. 131 No. 2 (2006): 297.

³⁸ Suzanne Aspden, ‘Bach and the Feminized Galant’, *Understanding Bach* Vol. 5 (2010): 9–22.

relevant to this thesis since Aspden explicitly invokes the relative cognitive effort required to understand both styles in her examination of their gendering: she quotes J. J. Quantz, 'another firm supporter of the galant, [who] had qualms about the fashionable rejection of the musically difficult, asking whether "counterpoint" should "be blamed if amateurs do not have a taste for it because of their lack of understanding?"'.³⁹ Likewise, Matthew Head has pointed out that eighteenth-century audiences were more aware than contemporary ones of the feminine overtones of certain genres such as the minuet and the siciliano, in a way that exceeds mere characterization and extends towards ideology: 'the underlying charge of effeminacy [...] cannot be so easily dismissed as rhetorical. Rather, it expresses a belief that music is a gendered discourse. [...] Hiller implicates the effeminate minuet in a transgression of symphonic unity and seriousness. The charge of effeminacy is thus tied to the negative valuation of the minuet'.⁴⁰

How should we treat such music, in this case? It is surely impractical to shun, as sexist tools of the patriarchy, not only albums of Victoriana but also the dance movements of most eighteenth-century symphonies. Nevertheless, Head forcefully rejects what might seem the obvious solution: ignoring the gendered aspects of these works in favour of more 'neutral' analyses. He notices 'the gap separating the concern of eighteenth-century theorists for both the character and form of specific types of piece, and the modern scholarly preoccupation with eighteenth-century concepts of musical form alone'.⁴¹ Reading this difference itself in gendered terms, he goes on to propose that 'this preference for form over character, for the quantitative over the qualitative, for objectification over subjective issues of character and expression, alerts us to

³⁹ Ibid., 14.

⁴⁰ Matthew Head, 'Like Beauty Spots on the Face of a Man: Gender in 18th-Century Discourse on Genre', *The Journal of Musicology* Vol. 12 No. 3 (Summer, 1995): 144.

⁴¹ Ibid., 154.

the possible masculine bias of the discourse', observing that 'this bias is made conspicuous in the attempt to transcend and erase the issue of musical character and the questions of gender it raises', since 'we are invited to accept the paradoxical assertions that objectivity is intrinsically masculine and yet transcends the worldly discursive framework of gender through which it is articulated and comes into being'.⁴² He concludes that 'this claim to transcendence does not represent a genuine attempt to erase the masculine origins of the category of objectivity, but, on the contrary, to elevate the category of the masculine to the realm of the transcendent'.⁴³ That is, Head alleges that attempting to distance ourselves from music's sexist past by refusing to engage in discussions of its character in favour of focussing on its supposedly absolute features *is itself a sexist act*.

That being the case, the question bears repeating, with added urgency: what is to be done with such pieces? I argue, below, that the solution lies in breaking the very binary that Head does not unsettle: surely the answer lies in rejecting the link between quantitative vs qualitative criticism (or form vs character) and the masculine/feminine binary, rather than adhering to those sexist labels, and concomitantly (if understandably) discarding the 'masculinized' one. Masculinity is inherently oppressive, especially to women, and must be resisted; the same is *not* true of form. Indeed, if one of Head's implicit questions is 'why don't we spend more time considering the "character" of such pieces as they might have been thought of at the time?', then the rampant sexism his research uncovers provides a compelling answer. It is my task, then, to overcome the unmitigated materialism that has characterised the work in this area so far, by rejecting the idea that music is *only* an inscription of the body, and *only* a record of its own history. That is to say, I reject Suzanne Cusick's claim that 'the history of musical practices is

⁴² Ibid., 154–5.

⁴³ Ibid., 155.

inextricable from the history of the body', and I reject Davies's claim that 'outside Julia's boudoir, her piano stool or dressing-room drawer, [the music annual] is culturally useless'.⁴⁴ If music is ever to be free of misogyny, it is vital to find a way of understanding it as something that *is* extricable from brutalized bodies, and as something culturally useful beyond rooms that could only be locked and opened by men.

The two examples examined below are different, insofar as they outline possibilities for resisting the oppressive gendered narratives foisted upon female performers and feminized repertoire: both authors attempt to demonstrate the way in which the disciplinary element of the music they are analysing is undercut. In so doing, they imply those pieces of music have an 'ethical' future—these pieces can be performed 'with a clear conscious' due to their material failure. Nevertheless, by relying on the same reduction of music to either a record of a body, or a narrowly circumscribed history consisting in the circumstances surrounding their original composition—a perspective I gather under the term 'materialism'—I argue that the resistance they purport to uncover is merely illusory, and that the strategies they outline simply 'perform freedom', rather than actually achieve it. Based on the ontology of music developed thus far, I will suggest that the pieces fail not because of the destabilization of their material elements, but because of the radical disjunction between those material elements and the piece's ideal existence. This will simultaneously open the possibility of real emancipatory potential in music, while radically circumscribing the limits of the practical political power in musicology. However, in preparation for that musicological analysis, it is necessary first to understand the philosophical foundation upon which most of

⁴⁴ Suzanne G. Cusick, 'On Musical Performances of Gender and Sex', in Barkin and Hammesley (eds.), *Audible Traces: Gender, Identity and Music* (Zürich: Carciofoli, 1999), 40; Davies, 'Julia's Gift', 305.

the gender-critical musicology cited here rests: the work of Judith Butler and Michel Foucault.

4.4.1: Judith Butler: Materialist After All

It was noted above that, contrary to what might be assumed from a (New) Musicological perspective, considerations of social institutions can nevertheless be locked into an objectifying formalism. This is the starting point of Judith Butler's investigations into the philosophy of sex and gender. She notes that the political emancipation of women fundamentally relies on the dismantling of the formal, man-made distinction between genders: it must refuse to tolerate any ontological distinction between 'men' and 'women'. It follows, in her analysis, that an insurmountable contradiction is created when 'woman' is taken to be the 'subject of feminism': if the political safety of 'women' can ultimately only come about through the demonstration that the formal category of 'woman' is invalid, then centring the entire project on that formal category dooms it from the start. To put it bluntly, Butlerian feminism is not designed to protect women, but rather to prove that such an ontological category as 'woman' does not exist.⁴⁵ Thence proceeds her complex and lengthy metaphysical analysis personhood and subjectivity: in effect, it is necessary, in this new formulation, to uncover a brand new theory of human subjectivity and sexuality, one which reveals the traditionally foundational categories of sex and gender to be fictitious.

Butler's thesis is thoroughly idealist: the improvement of a certain section of humanity's material lives can only be effected through an engagement with their ideal existence—in this instance, by demonstrating that any distinction between 'men' and 'women' is merely a material manifestation

⁴⁵ Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble* (New York: Routledge Classics, 1999), 1–46.

of (patriarchal, heterosexist) power, not supported at an ontological level. But—drawing on a poststructuralist, specifically Foucauldian, philosophical heritage—the negative approach she takes to ontology leaves her practical conclusions with no teeth. Since, along with Foucault, she is mistrustful of ontological fundamentals, such as stable ideas of personhood—seeing in them the entrenchment of ideal power structures at the material level—she proposes a purely performative idea of subjectivity. Gender and sexuality, indeed all forms of subjective expression, are ‘doings’ which precede, rather than follow, a doer: in other words, the person is created by the performance, not vice-versa. Taking the Heideggerian understanding of Being-as-void to its ultimate extreme, her ontology is not so much apophatic as unapologetically nihilist: paradoxically, she engages the ideal level of human existence only to destroy it utterly. In Butler’s ontology, there is no stable ideal existence from which to mount a defence to material oppressions, there are only endless material performances that reveal ideal oppressions to be fictive constructions.

As some critics note, this might be an abnegation of responsibility to women’s material suffering. Martha Nussbaum criticizes this approach as, effectively, fiddling while Rome burns: a ‘virtually complete turning from the material side of life, toward a type of verbal and symbolic politics that makes only the flimsiest of connections with the real situation of real women’.⁴⁶ She continues:

Butlerian feminism is in many ways easier than the old feminism. It tells scores of talented young women that they need not work on changing the law, or feeding the hungry, or assailing power through theory harnessed to material politics. They can do politics in safety of their campuses, remaining on the

⁴⁶ Martha Nussbaum, ‘The Professor of Parody’, *The New Republic* (February 1999), available online: <<http://faculty.georgetown.edu/irvinem/theory/Nussbaum-Butler-Critique-NR-2-99.pdf>> (accessed 18 August 2017), 11.

symbolic level, making subversive gestures at power through speech and gesture.⁴⁷

Nussbaum's critique is somewhat disingenuous: nothing in Butler's work either explicitly or implicitly suggests that changing the law or feeding the hungry are in any way to be disparaged. Rather, Butler is making the valuable point—one with which the present project is in sympathy—that changing the law and feeding the hungry will be only minimally effective in the long-term without a simultaneous revolution in thought. What is more, Nussbaum spends the majority of her article criticizing not the substance of Butler's arguments, but the difficulty of its language, something which suggests she objects not necessarily to philosophy that is undialectical, but rather to philosophy that is *hard*.

Despite these flaws, her critique does uncover a valuable point. Butler's stance is not so much idealist as it is anti-materialist: following Foucault, she denies the body as a valid site of identity, instead seeing it primarily as a locus for power struggles to play out, and therefore only secondarily a potential site of resistance against them. This resistance is necessarily partial and contingent: her mistrust of a stable material identity is matched by a typically poststructuralist disdain for grand narratives. In other words, the possibility that a subject might *perform* some 'authentic' identity—based, for example, on an idea of common humanity between 'men' and 'women', 'gays' and 'straights' (terms which, of course, would lose all meaning under this regime)—is hamstrung. Instead, one is only able to be *performative*: to manipulate the always-already determined social pressures (the ideal structures of power) in a way that undermines their ontological stability, but not their permanence. For this reason, Butler has been accused of essentializing, rather than problematizing, narratives of sex and gender. In a performative regime, one is

⁴⁷ Ibid., 13.

always playing with ideas such as ‘men’, ‘lesbian’, or ‘femme’, but never transcending them.⁴⁸

One might reasonably assert, then, that Butler’s incredibly negative mobilization of idealism makes her *more* materialist than not. Without a stable ideal framework with which to interact, performative theories of gender remain forever trapped at the material level, free enough to wander at will between identities, but never free enough to renounce them entirely.⁴⁹ Freedom can only ever be performed, it can never be obtained. I argue that this nihilism is at work in much feminist musicology, undermining any attempt to reveal resistance to misogynistic material structuration, by remaining within the material realm, rather than critiquing it from without.

⁴⁸ This is very much the practical implication of Žižek’s critique of Butler in ‘Holding the Place’, in Butler, Laclau, and Žižek, *Contingency, Hegemony, and Universality: Contemporary Dialogues on the Left* (London and New York: Verso, 2000), 308–329. Butler ‘conceives of state power in the Foucauldian mode [...] as an agent of control and regulation, inclusion and exclusion’ such that ‘resistance to power is then, of course, located in the marginal spheres of those who are excluded or half-excluded from the official power network’ (313). This overlooks, however, the fact that ‘state power itself is split from within and relies on its own obscene spectral underside’ — that is, structures of power in fact *rely* on resistive excesses, supplements, ‘others’, against which to define themselves: parody reinforces normative power, rather than dismantling it (ibid.). Žižek ascribes this misunderstanding to a failure to think properly dialectically, especially about the nature of the Lacanian Real (in this thesis, closely aligned with the ideal, as opposed to the material, something which I align with the Lacanian ‘Symbolic’), which functions in an exactly parallel manner: the Real is ‘not in the simple empirical excess of “society” over symbolic schemata [...] but in the resistant kernel *within* the symbolic process itself. [...] The Real is neither pre-social nor a social effect—the point is, rather, that the Social itself is *constituted* by the exclusion of some traumatic Real’ (ibid., 311). Far from casting out the Real (or the ‘ideal’ of human ontology), it must be recognized as internal to the symbolic process of everyday life, and confronted as a dialectical paradox; by contrast, suppressing or excluding the Real is in fact the vital manoeuvre for full inscription in the Symbolic order—precisely the framework of identities constituted by social power that Butler wishes to cast off.

⁴⁹ Nussbaum’s criticism that Butler does not have a coherent ethical framework—that she suffers from ‘the absence of a normative framework’ (Nussbaum, ‘Professor of Parody’, 9)—is exactly a criticism of the lack of ideal structuration. As we have seen, however, the type of ideal framework advocated in this thesis implies, in all likelihood, a totally different conception of ‘ethics’ from that envisaged by Nussbaum.

4.4.2: Musical Foucauldians

Matthew Head has extensively studied music written for women in eighteenth-century Germany, and clearly lays out his case for a materialist view of music: 'for the historian, the challenge of "music as a cultural practice" is to situate the new stories music is heard to tell within a specific material world inhabited by musicians and listeners who themselves produced those stories through performance and interpretation'.⁵⁰ This view is confirmed as he questions the use of score-based approaches (those most closely aligned with ideal approaches to music, such as analysis), favouring instead a conception of music as a performative act: 'if music encodes discourses of race, gender, sexuality, and class, how are such codes (re)constituted through performance and listening? If music is a cultural practice, then is it consistent with this premise to read its content from the score, like a story from a book?'.⁵¹

Certainly, a reflection of women's material situation is apparent in a great deal of music in this period. Since 'men enjoyed the freedom of playing both their own instruments and those, such as the keyboard, to which the fair sex was officially restricted', music for women was marked in order to confirm it as merely 'a segment in a masculine universe of possibilities'.⁵² This was most obviously achieved by an emphasis on simplicity, in order to 'deprofessionalize' female music-making, 'to tether it to ideals of female character, and to inscribe women's primary roles within the patriarchal family as wife, mother, and daughter'.⁵³

⁵⁰ Matthew Head, 'If the Pretty Little Hand Won't Stretch: Music for the Fair Sex in Eighteenth-Century Germany', *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, Vol. 52 No. 2 (Summer 1999), 205.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² *Ibid.*, 209.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 210.

The easiness of music for ladies emerges as a prominent thread in these works, the term easy indicating here keys without many sharps and flats, melody-centred styles, and avoidance of both figuration (however easily it might fall under the hands) and thick, reinforced textures.⁵⁴

Considerations of the physical (material) form of women themselves also leave their mark on this music. In the preface to one collection there is written:

With due consideration for the sensitive eyes and small hands of the fair sex, I have written the middle voice that is worked into the texture, in small notes, so that you [the fair sex] may more easily distinguish the notes that are to be sung from those that are only for the clavier, and also so that you will be able to determine more readily which notes you can leave out, if the pretty little hand won't stretch, and you would rather only play the vocal line [with the right hand]. This also applies to the small notes in the bass, so that you can find the real bass line more easily, because I was truly worried about envious [*neidische*], red, and squinting eyes. Gentlemen, on the other hand, often have hands that can reach three or four notes beyond the octave.⁵⁵

Thus a misogynistic fantasy about women's technical and intellectual abilities limits the very choice of pitches that can be written into a score: once again, the parallels with the musical materialism found in Schubert's *Andantino* is apparent.

In situations such as these, a scepticism of score-based approaches is understandable. After all, how can one justify an approach that seems to imply that understanding of a piece springs from—that the meaning of a piece is contained in—the 'purely musical' information notated on the page, when there is so much evidence that the ideal content was inflected and limited by material concerns? Others have gone further in demonstrating ways in which that notated information is prompted by decidedly unmusical concerns.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 214.

⁵⁵ Quoted in *ibid.*, 221.

Samuel Breene has analysed Mozart's Violin Sonata in B \flat K. 454, written for and premiered by Regina Strinasacchi, by 'focusing on the embodied gestures through which Mozart challenged the prevailing status of the violin sonata as a kind of domestic music by establishing a convincing role for a female virtuoso in the emerging public sphere'.⁵⁶ Having discussed contemporary cultural expectations for female musicians, and speculating that 'given her training at the Pieta, it is hard to believe that Strinasacchi's performance would sacrifice the sonic dimensions of performance so fully for appearance's sake', Breene embarks upon a gestural analysis of the sonata. In doing this, he attempts to understand various moments of the sonata not from a score-based perspective, but from an 'embodied' one, in order to portray a kind of negotiation between the public's expectations for sonata performances on the one hand, and female performers on the other.

He point out that while the sonata's opening may be shocking, with 'a gesture that requires considerable force from both players', followed by 'another sweeping gesture in bar three [...] a particularly muscular gesture for the violinist', this is moderated by the way the movement continues: 'with a female virtuoso occupying the main role, it is therefore no surprise that the remainder of the first movement follows the expressive devices of operatic staging'.⁵⁷ Breene's analysis is full of references to traditional conceptions of musical femininity, seemingly indicating that the sonata is made possible only through negotiation with the expectations would have formed around Strinasacchi's (perceived, sexed) body:

⁵⁶ Samuel Breene, 'Mozart's Violin Sonatas and the Gestures of Embodiment: The Subjectivities of Performance Practice' (PhD diss., Duke University, 2007), 223.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 244–5.

Since Regina Strinasacchi was trained as a singer as well as a violinist, she may have found it quite easy to transfer this light buffa style into the appropriate instrumental technique.⁵⁸

Chromatic motion is a common Mozartean technique for portraying the fickleness of female characters in his operas [...] It is certainly possible that the Viennese audience would have understood this development—especially the expressive persona that emerges with the urgent violin melody (m. 73ff)—as a subtle reinforcement of gender categories.⁵⁹

The violinist then transforms the birdcall into an expressive octave leap, a gesture of vocality representing human nature—also, perhaps, meant to establish a subtle connection between feminine sensibility and the natural world.⁶⁰

The sonata emerges as a collection of embodied gestures, not so much an autonomous musical work as a script for the behaviour of Regina Strinasacchi in her performance (and I use that word with its full Butlerian resonance) as a female eighteenth-century virtuoso. Breene asserts that his study is intended ‘to counteract the avoidance of the physical in the vast majority of Mozart scholarship’, and claims that ‘gestural analysis [...] provides compelling answers about the formation of musical subjectivities and the way that performers within different cultures have instrumentalized their bodies—in a positive sense—to explore what it means to be human’.⁶¹

This, then, is a double claim: that the gestural, embodied mode of analysis strikes closer to the heart of what the music ‘is’—since, presumably, it takes greater account of the details of its (historical) production—and that, as a consequence, it more successfully achieves one of the historically valued aims of music: exploring the nature of humanity through the construction of musical

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 246.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 246–7.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 248.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 223.

subjectivities. But this is an extremely problematic claim, especially in the gendered context in which it is made. Surely it is vital, from any reasonably progressive perspective, to recognize that such a performance is *not* an accurate representation of humanity, but a distorted, truncated, and abused humanity, forced through an oppressive prism of cartoon gender stereotypes; and, therefore, that it would be unfortunate (even unmusical) to consider a Mozart violin sonata as if it were only a script for performing a stunted caricature of ‘acceptable’ femininity, a musically encoded etiquette manual.

To consider the counterfactual, if in fact this gestural encoding really ‘is’ what the music ‘is’, then surely it is not a music worth taking any part in. If Mozart’s Sonata for Piano and Violin K. 454 is understood most truthfully to be a constrictive network of tropes that aim to feminize the musical subject in such a way as to make her presentable on the concert platform, what possible use would it serve us today? Surely it is an ethical imperative *not* to perform these pieces of music today, due to the potentially deleterious gender policing they enact. That would be the *ethical* response—or would it simply be oppressive moralizing? Here is the crucial difficulty in contemporary critical musicology.

That such music should not be played, of course, is not a claim that many would make; even Susan McClary, in her infamous reading of Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony never suggested that it should be shunned due to its encoding of male (sexual) violence. One might very well ask, in that case, why not? There seems to be an implicit sense in which these pieces of music are valuable above and beyond their gendered readings, that they can be understood outside the constraints they may have made—on Strinasacchi’s body, or any other body, male or female. Nevertheless, precisely how they might be understood in a different way, and why they can continue to be valuable above and beyond their material effects, is not answered in any of these formulation; an answer will be advanced below.

Matthew Head attempts a preliminary response, although his suggestions suffer the same shortcomings as found in Butler's advocacy for performative subversion. Anticipating the questions posed above, Head urges us to 'resist valuation' of these pieces. Introducing his claim in favour of these works, he begins by reminding the reader that music for and by women has routinely been depreciated—there is, in other words, nothing progressive about condescending attitudes to feminized music-making: 'from the present vantage point, in which systems of valuation surrounding female music-making and female composers have been scrutinized, the self-evidence of negative judgments of musical quality is no longer clear'.⁶² This is an important point: as the previous chapter showed, music which falls outside of aesthetic norms might be read as creatively transcending those norms, rather than failing to live up to them. It is all too easy to uncritically dismiss unfamiliar music, ostensibly on the basis of detached aesthetic considerations, while really falling prey to sexist stereotypes. While this is an important point to bear in mind, it is not the last word on the subject: it is not possible to *prohibit* negative valuations of music for women *because* it is music for women. It is possible, in other words, that some of the music is simply 'bad' music—that it cannot escape the limitations of its original (oppressive) use, that it has no 'musical' value above the pedagogical/manipulative uses for which it was originally intended. As in the case of Schubert in the previous chapter, music that succeeds does so despite its material situation, not because of it.

It is thus possible to critically evaluate Head's claims about the possibility of resistive approaches to repressive music. The strategies he proposes all centre on unsettling the disciplinary force of the music's attempted material constraints on women's bodies. In a Butlerian vein, he acknowledges the fictiveness of the material injunctions these pieces attempt as a potential

⁶² Head, 'If the Pretty Little Hand Won't Stretch', 245.

loophole: 'the authority of both implicit and explicit disciplinary rhetorics is troubled by the fact that such injunctions are rhetorical, textual events'.⁶³ Furthermore the scores, as mixed media—combining words, music, and illustrations by several different authors and editors—could be self-contradictory: 'does the repertory reveal contradictions that may have undermined its effectiveness as a disciplinary instrument?'.⁶⁴ These are both Derridean strategies of deconstruction, resting on the possibility that a musical text might undermine itself, and that, once pulled apart, one might construct a subjectivity in the resultant gaps. While it is a valid strategy in some ways, it has two major flaws. First, it is still subject to the same critiques levelled at Judith Butler's strategy, above: while it gives a temporary respite from the authority of the ideal power structures that seek to control, it does nothing to challenge their ontological primacy—only their material effectiveness. Second, while it adequately highlights the ways in which these musical texts might fail as disciplinary instruments, it does nothing to support Head's claim that they might *succeed* as pieces of music. This is not least because he does not explicitly provide any framework for the successful evaluation of music; an idea of what such a framework might be, however, can be gleaned from Head's second level of resistance—the performance of resistance.

He notes that 'in the case of music for the fair sex, each and every condescension and prescription about women making music inscribed in the text is vulnerable to negation in performance'.⁶⁵ Music's status as a performed art, constantly open to unscripted intervention, allows it to escape the disciplinary realm for which it was envisioned and enter another one in its place. For example, Head explores the possibility that 'a skilful performance, with varied repetitions of notated melody in a strophic song or varied reprises

⁶³ Ibid., 227.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 228.

of movements possessing binary repeats, would leave the imputed lack of art in a trail of dust and transcend the compulsory easiness'.⁶⁶ Not only can a skilful performer ornament and improve a simplistic piece, but examples are given of music that, while extolling the beauty of female simplicity, does not live up to this standard musically. Head draws attention to the first of J. F. Reichardt's *Gesänge fürs schöne Geschlecht*, where 'the musical setting of the imputed artlessness (mm. 17–18) is paradoxically artful: leaps of an octave, sixth, and seventh put the agility of the voice on show at the song's climax'.⁶⁷

The philosophical problem at the heart of this issue is most noticeable in Head's discussion of Reichardt's *VI Concerts pour le Clavecin à l'usage du beaux Sexe*—not because it is implausible, but for precisely the opposite reason. Head persuasively argues that dialogue with the (public) concerto genre undermines, on the level of fantasy, the imposed privacy of female music-making. In theory this fantastical escapism could be realized, since the availability of string parts made the performance of these works as chamber concertos a possibility, undermining female domesticity on a material level too.⁶⁸ But it is the terms of this possibility that need to be interrogated. The implication seems to be—in Matthew Head's article as well as in Breene's analysis—that these pieces are 'saved' because they encode femininity in potentially liberating ways. Head concludes his article with the acknowledgment that 'these reflexive images [of female music-making] should not be read at face value, [...] for their significance lies not in any sociological truth. On the contrary, they disclose the imaginative, fictive, discursive registers of the volumes in which they are embedded. In so doing, they open possibilities for an assessment of female

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 230.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 230–1.

music-making that establishes critical distance from, and thereby resists, official disciplinary rhetoric'.⁶⁹

The evidence that Head marshals for these pieces' defence does not support the conclusions that he draws. One might reasonably wonder, for example, whether a heavily ornamented version of a piece of domestic music really counts as a performance of that work—especially given the fact that such pieces were composed explicitly (as Head reminds us) for their simplicity, and the disciplinary social function that simplicity performed. Likewise, given that disciplinary music was predicated on ease and domesticity, perhaps it is simply the case that pieces like Reichardt's *Gesänge* with its tricky intervals, or his *VI Concerts* with optional chamber orchestra, simply failed in their disciplinary mechanisms: it is in this sense that they should not be read at face value. Head argues that, in the overcoming of these fictive oppressive narratives, another discourse emerges in which to understand the site of resistance. Surely Head's point is that the discourse in which they can be understood is bigger than the disciplinary discourse for which they were intended: there is an *excess* in the pieces over and above the material situation of their origin. They can be understood in ways apart from the ways in which they were intended. That is, these resistive pieces of music are not valuable because they fail as tools of domination, but rather because they succeed at something else.

And therefore the formulation inferred above must be reversed: these pieces—Reichardt's *Concerts*, Mozart's Violin Sonata K. 454—are not still viable pieces of music because they can resist materialist tropes; they can resist materialist tropes because (and as long as) they are still, over and above this, pieces of music. The gendered tropes that make up their materialist existence inscribe them in a Symbolic order that is oppressive, and which would otherwise render them of limited value in a world governed—hopefully—by a

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 247.

different order, one predicated on equality. But these pieces continue to have meaning in the contemporary world because, continuing the Lacanian reading, the traumatic kernel of the Real is at their heart, continuously undermining the stability of meaning not on a practical level, but on an ontological one. The resistive element does not emerge, in Butlerian fashion, from the margins of the pieces' Symbolic existence (ornaments, variations, orchestrations, parodies, or critically deviant performance); rather, the possibility of resistance is there at the very heart of the works—if it really is music, it carries the Real/ideal with it, and that alone is enough to render the Symbolic oppression powerless.

Puzzlingly, this is not a state of affairs Head is totally ignorant of: he draws his readers' attention to the engraving that forms the frontpiece to Reichardt's concertos—a woman seated at, but turning away from, a keyboard. He analyses it thus: 'her face—heaven-turned, transfixed, inspired—taps into Renaissance and Baroque representations of religious conversion and ecstasy. As an allegory of music in the domestic sphere, the engraving promises an escape from the dysphoria of that sphere'.⁷⁰ It is precisely that outward gaze, her separatist gesture, that defines the promise of music. It is an image of transcendence. What is musical about these pieces is not the way they are linked to their materiality, but how they provide emancipation from it. One might (provocatively) claim, then, that the musical element of these pieces is that very element that the composer did not intend: the excess that turned a script to control female bodies into something that has nothing to do with them. In this way, the narrative of autonomy and conceptuality that music theory and analysis advances is reimagined as fundamentally emancipatory, since it is a refusal of the material realm which, along with its stories of humanity, brings oppression, limitation and violence.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 233.

Zygmunt Bauman writes that ‘there is a genuine emancipatory chance in postmodernity [...] in bringing to its conclusion the “disembedding” work of modernity, through focusing on the right to choose one’s identity as the sole universality of the citizen/human’.⁷¹ This is the vital work done by Head and Breene—revealing the overly embedded nature of this music’s material existence. But, as Bauman goes on to clarify, full emancipatory potential rests on those material conditions’ transcendence, and an existence instead within a decidedly freer discourse: ‘the modern theorizing of human essence and human rights erred on the side of leaving too much, rather than too little, of the “encumbered” or “embedded” element in its idea of the human’.⁷² This can be read as a rejoinder—or at least a supplement—to polemics, from Joseph Kerman’s onwards, that argued against music theory and analysis because it reflected too little of the material reality of individual humans: women, people of colour, queer individuals. The importance of the work that laid bare those material realities cannot be denied; nevertheless, it is essential that such work is understood as only part of a greater dialectical movement, which is concerned with challenging, and ultimately transcending, those very material circumstances themselves. It should now be clear that such a challenge cannot be posed from within the bounded confines of those same material circumstances, and instead must be taken up outside them.

The dogmatic didacticism that was feared by the interlocutors described in the Introduction to this thesis comes about as a natural consequence of an overreliance on the material level of music and musical performance: the feminizing gestures of a Mozart violin sonata, the domesticating belittlement of keyboard music ‘for the fair sex’, considered from an ‘ethical’ perspective can only demand censorship or scorn—what else can one do, when faced with such horrors, other than ban them? The real freedom advocated here comes

⁷¹ Zygmunt Bauman, *Postmodernity and its Discontents* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1997), 33.

⁷² *Ibid.*

from subordinating these material concerns to another sign—can these pieces of music be considered another way? How can these material repressions be rendered irrelevant? The feminist critiques of these pieces are not thus silenced, but advanced; the misogynistic constrictions of this repertoire are not ignored, but shown to be fictive, and, more importantly, superable. However, this freedom only comes about with the ontological realization that these pieces are, in some way, something other than the sedimentation of their material and sociological histories, that on the ideal level they aspire to some level of autonomy—understood strictly in Bauman’s terms as a humanity divested of the myriad othernesses that individualize, and thus separate us. Dogmas die, therefore, when music is recognized as an arena that does not require them, but only requires us to look it in the eye, and see it for what it is. And in order to do this, the vital theoretical, ideal, conceptual, philosophical element of music must be acknowledged. This is not an abnegation of our critical or political duties, but a prerequisite for them.

4.5: Conclusion: Politics and/or Ethics

The question of ethics has been radically altered in the preceding examinations of Schubert’s music and the materialist musicology of gender. If there was initial anxiety over what form an ‘ethics of musicology’ might take—a fear, effectively, of my positing as eternal truths what could only be personal political opinions—I have attempted to overcome it by using a different model of ethics. By linking a dialectical materialist understanding of music to the political and social realms of economics and identity, I have shown that such an approach ‘short circuits’ the ethical question, by rendering specific ethical demands irrelevant. The communist literature I used to build my case is useful, since it demands *not* the overthrow of a specific set of oppressive material

circumstances (in favour of, say, a different set of material circumstances) but rather the freedom from being constrained by materiality wholesale. Part of the Marxist project is to show—in sympathy with the Heideggerian worldview introduced in Part I—that humans are not simply cogs in a (political, economic, social) machine, but rather creatures of thought and mind, with tendencies to autonomy and absolute freedom. The Marxist recipe for freedom is not, therefore, a pragmatic negotiation between the ideals of freedom and the practical reality of socialization, but rather a universal recognition that humans are defined precisely by this intersection—an agglomeration of fully autonomous consciousnesses, thrown into contingency and co-dependence through their very existence. The only demand that is made, from a Marxist viewpoint, is that this reality be confronted; the rest follows. For this reason, it is not particularly helpful to think of the Marx's work and that of his followers as primarily economic; rather, economics is one of the arenas in which the failure to grasp the truth of humankind's ontology is felt most keenly, as injustice, inequality, and suffering. Nevertheless, what is needed is not simply a material intervention in the economic system, but instead a wholesale 'revolution in the form of thought', as Hegel and Korsch put it, from which economic liberty would follow.

Likewise, as Butler showed, equality of the sexes and the freedom to express gender and sexuality cannot flow from simple material demands for specific protected groups. Indeed, doing this is counterproductive, since real emancipation comes from realizing that gender and sexuality are limiting terms in what should be universal human freedom: destroying the very concepts of gender and sexuality should be the aim of a truly emancipatory feminist and queer politics, since only by removing those material limitations entirely can humankind be free of them. Again, the ethical question is not one of how to treat particular people, or which laws to pass. The ethical core is ontological: the ethical act is to recognize the ontological truth of the situation—

that humans are forced into a material existence that sexes them arbitrarily; that despite this they are all equally human at an ideal level—and attempt to live up to it. Once this is accomplished, question of ‘ethics’ as is commonly understood falls by the wayside: a world in which these ontological truths are recognized is always-already one without the material constraints of sexism, racism, classism... Moreover, such a world could only come about through the sort of ideal re-structuration advocated for here, and in the supporting literature; anything else might be construed as ‘performing resistance’.

This leaves music and musicology in a peculiar—and peculiarly limited—space. On the one hand, music is valuable precisely because it grants access to this dialectical relationship. I have shown how music’s ontology has a special relationship with human ontology: that, conceived as a form of thought made sensible, it mirrors closely the subject-formation of human selfhood in a broadly poststructuralist (or Heideggerian) manner. Likewise, music has a specific kind of ‘textuality’ that taps into important qualities of the human condition: it is simultaneously a sedimentation of the material conditions of its creation, an agent to influence the material conditions of its reproduction (e.g. in performance), and something that radically dissociates from both of those things, striving for a semi-autonomy made possible due its status not only as the reification of a particular humanity (i.e. the humans that create and re-create it) but as a reification of humanity in general—humanity conceived of as consciousness made sensible. Thus, engaging in activities that are similarly dematerializing—such as analysis or music theory—can be radically humanist, since, as has been roundly demonstrated, the ideal level to which such activities seek access are as fundamental to the human condition as qualities of embodiment, sociality, or history.

On the other hand, these several claims in tandem—that a revolution at the ideal level is necessary for emancipation at the material level, that music exists dialectically as both ideal and material, that music analysis gives access

to the ideal level of music—might suggest that music analysis holds the key to political emancipation. It was noted that the materialist examination of music used in the oppression of women, and concomitant attempts at materialist resistance, are incongruent with the way both oppression and music are structured; I claimed that it was essential to understand such pieces as music first and foremost, and only incidentally (or opportunistically) as tools for oppression. Am I therefore claiming that the historic oppression of women can be repaired, and the contemporary oppression of women overcome, simply by ignoring its material existence—by approaching it only at the ideal level? Are Head, and Breene, and McClary wasting their time, or worse unintentionally complicit in sexism, by conducting their materialist readings? To take it to its logical conclusion: can the rape culture allegedly encoded in the recapitulation of the first movement of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony be effectively resisted by Schenkerian analysis?

To suggest as much would be as fatuous as it is insulting, both to the victims of gendered violence in all its forms and for those who campaign against it (including Head, Breene, and McClary); any analogous claims of overcoming racism, homophobia, or classism by—effectively—ignoring them would likewise be ridiculous. While it is true that music is valuable because it taps into a concept of humanity in which people are not distinguished by their material differences, but rather coexist in a relationship with Being (to use Heideggerian terminology)—that is, it is a prompt to recognizing the fundamental equality of humanity on an ontological level—if music analysis was necessary to 'prove' that women are equal to men, one could be forgiven for losing all hope. Where then does this leave my claim about the importance of engagement with the ideal level of music, and about the link between the suppression of ideal concerns and late-capitalist violence in its various instantiations? A conflict has emerged: on the one hand, there is the obvious reality that sexism (for example) was and is rife in Western Art Music, that it is

manifested in various forms—the disparagement and erasure of female music-making (both composers and performers), or the encoding of misogynistic tropes in musical and musicological discourse—and therefore must be acknowledged, criticised, and resisted. On the other hand, the analysis presented above suggests that only by formally overcoming the structuring principles that authorize that oppression can the battle definitively be won.

There are two facets to this conflict. First, there is the situation of music theory and analysis in isolation. As Part I showed, it is not *a priori* problematic to engage with these idealist aspects of Art Music, despite the historical baggage they bring. Indeed, to do so is to make an ontological claim about Art Music, one which seems to resolve some lingering problems of New Musicology and poststructuralism, especially concerning the formation of subjectivity. Furthermore, the wholesale exclusion of idealism in favour of an entirely materialist worldview, one in which people and objects are understood only in terms of their concrete relationships, is a hallmark of advanced capitalist oppression, and should be resisted. Second, there is the structure of the apparent conflict itself. The materialist work examined above is essential for the apperception and practical refusal of the oppressions imposed by exclusionary regimes; that is to say, it is a functional process of combatting really-existing injustice with real-world solutions. The idealist approach I have outlined, by contrast, is characterized by its hortative quality: it engages with the world as a condition of possibility, giving not practicable solutions to real-world problems, but rather an indication of the Real of the situation—what would always-already exist if the dialectic were to reach a conclusion (something which, given the negative structure of the dialectic, is necessarily impossible: the world might therefore be given as a condition of *impossibility*).

It is possible, then, to draw a distinction between these two approaches. The first, rooted in advocacy, and immediate social change, is political. It confronts the world as it finds it, ontically, and improves it. It is the second

approach, which always implies a relationship with ontology, that I cautiously term ethics: it does not moralize, nor does it agitate. It is a statement of what the world *is*, and thus the demand it makes is not a moral one, but a logical one: why act contrary to the nature of things? It acts as a guiding principle, constantly dissatisfied with the world as it is, pointing the way to the next movement. In musicological terms, this translates to fairly straightforward behaviour: the vital political work of critical musicology continues, highlighting the injustices that persist in music's material existence, but never giving over entirely to materiality, secure in the knowledge that music is always in excess over its material determination, and that in its overdetermination lies a truth, not necessarily about music or politics *per se*, but about human ontology and epistemology. Music theory cannot ameliorate rape culture, or contemporary slavery, or the exploitative production of surplus value: that is the work of politics, in all its possible forms (including branches of musicology). It can, however, intimate what exists at the permanently deferred conclusion of that process, and even, however ephemerally and faintly, bring it into being when it is transacted.

A continuous negotiation is therefore required: between politics and ethics, between the material work of music's embeddedness and the ideal realization of its potential for total disembedding. Or, in short, another materialist dialectic.

PART III: To Be in Time

Chapter Five: To Be in Time— Repetition, Temporality and the Musical Work

5.1: Preamble

This thesis began with a simple question: ‘what is the point of writing about music?’. Throughout, it has been principally concerned with demonstrating that to write about music is to construct music as something with an ideal component, best accessed through a particular type of theoretical writing; it has further been suggested that considering music in this way is politically necessary in the climate of late capitalism, and that positions adopted by a certain strain of postmodern musicology opposed to this sort of musicological engagement are—contrary to their emancipatory claims—philosophically of a piece with repressive political and socio-economic mechanisms.

Nevertheless, Part II demonstrated the way in which music’s ideal existence was inextricable from its material realization, and proposed, as a way of understanding music, a materialist dialectic. Given that music’s ideal existence and its material realization can no longer be viewed as antagonistic opposites, but rather two poles of a larger totality, it is necessary to consider the material existence of music in greater detail. It is essential to engage with the burgeoning field of Performance Studies at this juncture, since it too has its roots in the oppositional binary music as conceptual *vs* music as material. After a brief overview of the general structure of the Performance Studies field, focus will rest on the implicit ontology of music proposed by scholars of musical performance, especially the work of Nicholas Cook, and the concomitant claims they make about the way in which music can or should be written about. In the end, by filling in certain lacunae in the ontology of music in performance,

it will be demonstrated that the dialectical method advocated in this thesis for the understanding of music can exist harmoniously with the claims of Performance Studies scholars, albeit only from within an expanded critical framework. It will be shown, in short, that if the ethnographic and philosophical principles advocated by Performance Studies are applied consistently, a notion of 'Western Art Music' emerges that does not fall prey to the over-idealized formalism that characterized musicology until the mid-century, but nevertheless reserves as crucial the act of thinking about it, and writing about it.

5.2: Introduction

John Rink has provided a useful overview of the different research directions within the music and performance field.¹ The main division he points to is between *prescriptive* and *descriptive* modes of musicological engagement with musical performance. Descriptive modes mainly study performance after-the-fact, for example through recordings or observations of live performances; prescriptive modes begin by forming an interpretation with the score as its basis, and are usually concerned with determining ways of projecting it in performance.²

Both of these approaches are, at bottom, textualist. Prescriptive scholarship's textuality is obvious: it treats the score as an instructive text, whose meaning is entrusted to performers to convey to an audience, an undertaking that certain scholars believe should be conducted under the guidance of music analysis.³ Although such an

¹ John Rink, 'Analysis and (or?) Performance', in John Rink (ed.) *Musical Performance: A Guide to Understanding* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), esp. 35–9. Among the 'foundational' texts that he draws upon are Wallace Berry, *Musical Structure and Performance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989); Jonathan Dunsby, *Performing Music: Shared Concerns* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995); and Janet Schmalfeldt, 'On the relation of analysis to performance: Beethoven's Bagatelles Op. 126, Nos. 2 and 5', *Journal of Music Theory*, 29 (Spring, 1985): 1–31.

² *Ibid.*, 37.

³ Robert S. Hatten notes Edward T. Cone, Wallace Berry, Eugene Narmour, Heinrich Schenker, and Arnold Schoenberg as exponents of a prescriptive approach to performance. In 'Performance and Analysis—Or Synthesis: Theorizing Gesture, Topics, and Tropes in Chopin's F-Minor Ballade', *Indiana Theory Review* Vol. 28 No. 1/2 (Spring–Fall, 2010), 47.

approach is now dated, there is a tranche of recent work that, despite avoiding the outright didacticism of Wallace Berry (for example), nevertheless retains a sense that performance is, in Robert Hatten's explanation of prescriptivism, the 'realization of a work'.⁴ For instance, Rink endorses the idea that 'more rigorous analytical study can assist performers in solving conceptual or technical problems';⁵ Hatten himself, although moving away from the macrostructural concerns of Schenker and Narmour towards the significance of smaller performative gestures, nevertheless ends up making very direct suggestions about the performance of the repertoire he studies: 'I recommend that the Chopin theme be played with the downbeat orientation at the half-bar in m. 8, only beginning to shift to the first part of the measure with the cadence to *A*♭ in m. 12, and only confirmed with the downbeat initiation of the consequent phrase in m. 13'.⁶

Descriptive performance study, on the other hand, merely expands the scope of what is considered a 'text' to include, for example, spontaneous *rubato* in performance, gesture and bodily movement, or the clothing of the performers. That is, it is another form of analysis, albeit one not restricted to a notated score, instead taking in the gamut of audiovisual elements that constitute a performance. The fundamental identity is discernible in that both disciplines almost always rely on a reification of the music they examine: for traditional analysis this is the score, for performance analysis this could be a recording, a spectrograph, or even an account or a memory of a particular performance.⁷

There is, however, an entirely different flavour of musical performance studies, one which eschews textuality, and instead attempts a radical ontological re-engineering of the whole musicological enterprise. In recent years there have been

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Rink, 'Analysis and (or?) Performance', 39.

⁶ Hatten, 'Performance and Analysis', 58.

⁷ Arguably, this final form of reification is what Carolyn Abbate made use of in her 'analysis' of her own performance and that of Ben Heppner's in her famous critique of idealist music theory, 'Music—Drastic or Gnostic?', *Critical Inquiry* 30 (2004): 505–36.

several authors who have questioned the primacy of musical texts, by any definition, and who instead maintain that the *act* of performance is primary. Linda Dusman writes that ‘performance [is] a temporary community in which composers, performers, and audience members are all active participants, with an audience’s hearing of a work as the final step in its creation. In other words, music does not exist until it is heard in performance’.⁸ John Rink, despite his earlier interventions on the subject, posits the following:

Is it not the case—as I believe—that everything the performer does and thinks in the heat of action, coupled with what those observing and listening to the performer do and think in response to her (or his) actions, constitute not only ‘the performance’ but also, potentially, ‘the music itself’? In other words, when we go, say, to the Royal Festival Hall to hear Mitsuko Uchida’s Schoenberg or Marin Alsop’s Beethoven, ‘the music’ we encounter is not limited to notes on the page made into sounds in the air: rather, ‘the music’ is potentially defined by our entire experience of what is happening, encompassing everything that hits our senses. To the extent that this is true, an immediate problem arises: analyzing the individual components as well as the sum total of that ‘music’ becomes all but impossible.⁹

In other words, the question is no longer about the relationship between the text and the performance, but the much more fundamental question of whether music has *any* existence at all outside of performance. Provocatively attacking the idea that musical performances merely transmit meaning, such philosophies instead claim that meaning is created in performance, and is absent outside of it.

By far the most vocal, thorough, and prolonged engagement with this challenging new ontology of music has been Nicholas Cook, culminating in the publication of a major monograph on the subject, collecting together nearly fifteen

⁸ Linda Dusman, ‘Unheard of: Music as Performance and the Reception of the New’, *Perspectives of New Music* Vol. 32 No. 2 (Summer, 1994), 131.

⁹ John Rink, ‘Response’, *Music Theory Online* Vol. 22 No. 2 (June, 2016), unpaginated (paragraph 3).

years of research.¹⁰ For this reason, the remainder of the chapter will largely—although not exclusively—focus on his work; a theory that proposes nothing short of a revolution in the way we do musicology merits the closest scrutiny. I admit to disagreeing with large elements of Cook’s project; however, in the pages that follow I hope to clarify his work, identify what I consider to be flaws in his argument, and, by modifying certain elements of his stronger proposals, arrive at an ontology of music that preserves the spirit of his argument while remaining true to my own.

5.3: Nicholas Cook and ‘Music as Performance’

I term the collection of theories and proposals which emphasise the primacy of performance in the consideration of music, largely centred on the work of Nicholas Cook and a handful of others, ‘Music as Performance’, after the title of Cook’s own monograph. Music as Performance (‘MAP’) is characterized by a suspicion of the musical work, and a greater emphasis on the ethnography of musical performance; in many ways, it is a development of the ‘New Musicology’. This connection is pointed out by Cook himself, who notes that certain criticisms of the work-concept emerged from the late twentieth-century critique of unity (the same movement as described in Chapter One): ‘Some theorists, like Alan Street and Kevin Korsyn, engaged more fundamentally with the critique of the autonomous musical work mounted in the 1990s by the (then) “New” musicology (which, by the way, could be characterized as an ethnomusicological approach to the study of Western music[)]’.¹¹ In common with other descriptive modes, it takes issue with the ontological assumption that a piece of music’s essence resides in the score to such a great extent that it becomes the job of analysts to tell performers how to play their instruments: ‘the approach to performance epitomized by Wallace Berry understood the score, or perhaps more

¹⁰ Nicholas Cook, *Beyond the Score: Music as Performance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

¹¹ Nicholas Cook, ‘Revisiting the Future’ *Intégral* Vol. 14/15 (2000/2001), 16.

precisely the structure embodied in the score, to be the locus of musical meaning. [...] Analytical understanding was assumed to be the foundation of articulate performance, and the result was to place the theorist in a position of authority'.¹² Going a step further, Nicholas Cook and Richard Pettengill ask: 'after all, what is music if not performance, real-time collective practice that brings people together as players and listeners, choreographs social relationships, and expresses or constructs individual and group identities? [...] Take away the act, take away the performance, and you take away the music'.¹³

This claim has not met with universal approval. Robert Hatten, for example, suggests that the reason theoretical engagement with music is routinely disparaged is that a large portion of the work done by theorists purposefully engages with elements of musical composition that do not, could not, and perhaps even *should not* be transmitted in performance:

Part of the answer may lie in what it is that many of us as theorists do—we inquire into the structure of a work, trying to determine how it came to be in terms of compositional systems that may or may not be entirely audible (as in the case of some twentieth-century music) or that may or may not be suitable for projection to an audience (as in the case of a hidden fugue entry meant for the enjoyment of the performer who, during the Baroque, would be savouring the fugue at a keyboard without any audience at all!).¹⁴

The idea that music exists solely for public performance, and that all features of compositional significance are by definition audible—which is at least strongly implied by MAP's ontological claims—is thus shown to be historically untenable.

¹² Nicholas Cook, 'Introduction: Refocusing Theory', *Music Theory Online* Vol. 18 No. 1 (April, 2012), unpaginated (paragraph 8). The specific example of Berry's performance scholarship aside, the idea that all analysts hold the ontological belief that the 'music' 'resides' exclusively in the score—originally and most famously voiced by Joseph Kerman—has been rebuffed many times, perhaps most notably in Kofi Agawu's belated response to Kerman: Agawu, 'How We Got Out of Analysis, and How to Get Back In', *Music Analysis* Vol. 23 No. 2–3 (July–October, 2004): 267–86.

¹³ Nicholas Cook and Richard Pettengill, 'Introduction', in *Taking it to the Bridge: Music as Performance*, edited by Nicholas Cook and Richard Pettengill (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2013), 1.

¹⁴ Hatten, 'Performance and Analysis', 45.

Daphne Leong, meanwhile, points out the variety of media in which music is commonly accepted to exist:

Music is not only 'music as performance'. It exists in states that are not, literally, performed: in the composer's mind, in a performer's imagination, in a listener's memory; in a score, as grooves on a wax cylinder, as data in an mp3. Change from one state to another is a *transformation*, changing the thing, which retains some common identity, from its mode in one domain to that in another.¹⁵

Nevertheless, the shift proposed by Cook and others could be interpreted more as a shift of priorities, rather than a wholesale rejection of the idea that possibilities outside performance actually exist. Indeed, many performance scholars would argue that private performance to oneself, and mediated performances—such as via a CD recording—still constitute performances in the broader sense of the term. In other words, there could be an ethical element to the debate: MAP could be seen as an injunction—this is how we *ought to think* of music, at least most of the time.¹⁶ The clearest break with the traditional musicology, then, is not debates about which medium music is disseminated in, but rather the ethnographic perspective from which such dissemination is viewed.¹⁷ And this is represented by what is, upon closer inspection, the boldest claim in Cook and Pettengill's formulation: namely that music primarily 'choreographs social relationships, and expresses or constructs individual and group identities'.¹⁸

¹⁵ Daphne Leong, 'Analysis and Performance, or *wissen, können, kennen*', *Music Theory Online* Vol. 22 No. 2 (June, 2016), unpaginated (paragraph 5).

¹⁶ This perspective, however, opens the question of authority. This strand of musical performance studies is regularly cited as rejecting traditional musicological hierarchy, by radically circumscribing the authority of the (supposedly elitist) arena of analysis. However, if the creation of meaning is transposed from the score (interpreted *via* the analyst) to the performance (interpreted *via* the performer), has the authority not simply shifted to a different arena? Moreover, if such a wide variety of musical experiences can be included under the umbrella term 'performance', including a silent performance to oneself—a conceptual act not so far removed from music analysis—is the situation as radically different as Cook *et al* might claim? This will be developed below.

¹⁷ This of course chimes with Cook's famous earlier claim: 'We are All (Ethno)musicologists Now', in *The New (Ethno)musicologies*, ed. Henry Stobart (Lanham MD: Scarecrow Press, 2008), 48–70.

¹⁸ See note 13, above.

As earlier chapters have already shown, there is a reason to be suspicious of a view of music that reduces it down to such baldly materialist, even utilitarian ends: is there nothing to value about music apart from what it does in the so-called 'real' world? But I separately contest the notion that music has the sort of power over social relationships Cook and Pettengill ascribe it. Social relationships in the context of musical performances are proximately coordinated by, for example, the clothes people choose to wear (consider the way audiences dress at Glyndebourne Opera—that is, almost exclusively in black tie—and, by contrast, at a pub gig); the way they respond to the music (do they even listen all the time?); the way they move in response to the music (if indeed they do at all); the way they interact with the performers on stage (if there is a stage); the way the performers interact with each other (is there a leader? Is there a score?); and the way people talk about the music afterwards: are there official reviewers? How is their opinion treated in comparison with ordinary audience members? Perhaps most importantly, how are we to include all the elements of performance I have just described—clothing, movement, atmosphere, and socialization—in this post-performance discussion: should they be seen as integral, or merely incidental, to 'the musical performance'?

In other words, it would be more accurate to say that *social relationships are engineered and expressed in the discourse around musical performance*. To say that musical performances choreograph social relationships is to erase this distinction in a twofold manner. First, it could well be claimed that MAP's approach in fact includes all of that discourse within the realm of 'musical performance'. Rink, for instance, has asserted that 'everything the performer does and thinks in the heat of action, coupled with what those observing and listening to the performer do and think in response to her (or his) actions, constitute not only "the performance" but also, potentially, "the music itself"'.¹⁹ However, this perspective erases the exceptionalism of the musical performance. In this instance, the analysis of a musical event would be qualitatively

¹⁹ See note 9, above.

identical to an analysis of the social interrelations in, say, the office environment, or the family. There is a difference, of course, since the situation is different, but the point remains: musical performances are only differentiated from any other social event by the fact that they create a certain set of behavioural expectations. Under this regime, the difference between a musical performance and a board meeting is only as pronounced as the difference between a board meeting and a Sunday lunch.

Analysing certain situations from the perspective of performance is an attractive idea, and Cook hints at the provocative angles it might entail: 'seen in such terms, the rituals and paraphernalia of medieval courts might be seen as performances of kingship, or punk culture as the performance of an oppositional identity'.²⁰ But when applied to musical situations, musicology becomes a sub-discipline of sociology: what is particular to the musical situation is not accounted for in and of itself. This is not necessarily a reason to reject the approach: there may be very good reasons to promote such a radical erasure of disciplinary lines, but it is certainly something with serious enough ramifications to merit extended and sceptical treatment, rather than being accepted as a *fait accompli*, as is implied by the tone of Cook and his collaborators.

Second, there is a great risk that such scholarship becomes recursive. It was noted above that one of the important elements structuring the social relationships in musical performance is the extent to which non-musical elements are included within the discourse of 'the performance itself'. For example, is there an assumption—as there is in the longstanding tradition of Western Art Music performances—that a transcendent musical object forms the real focus of the musical performance, to which end any awareness of fellow audience members or any non-musical activity should be minimized? Or is there the contrary assumption, of a largely social happening in which the focus is more explicitly on the generation of a temporary community, who

²⁰ Nicholas Cook, 'Music as Performance', in *The Cultural Study of Music: A Critical Introduction*, edited by Martin Clayton, Trevor Herbert, and Richard Middleton (Abingdon and New York: 2012), 185.

might talk, dance, sing along, drink, and eat together, as at a popular music concert? Which of these assumptions are in force may structure several other non-musical elements to a very great extent: the clothing of the performers, the clothing of the audience, the interaction between the two, and so forth. Considering, however, that this question is itself what differentiated Music as Performance scholarship from its predecessors, the question of what constitutes musical performance is endlessly begged. That is to say, if as all non-musical elements are considered part of musical performance *a priori*, and yet one of these elements is itself the fact that non-musical elements are *not* considered part of musical performance, philosophical nonsense ensues.

Of course, it is entirely possible that MAP scholars do not believe that a focus on a transcendent musical object is a useful way of thinking about Western Art Music, and that supposedly 'non-musical' elements *do* form a part of Classical concerts to the same extent as they do in popular music concert. The unilateral application of this assumption, however, leads to hypocrisy, especially with regards to the allegedly ethnographic slant of their work: while Music as Performance scholarship resists any idea of treating music as a transcendent object, how can it account for the fact that the performance style of so much Art Music attempts to convey the exact opposite? The self-defeating nature of this situation is evident in an article by Philip Auslander on the importance of musicians' 'personae' in the reception of their performances. He notes that 'even self-effacing musicians, such as the relatively anonymous members of a symphony orchestra or the invisible players in a Broadway pit band, perform musical personae. *In these two instances, the musicians' very obscurity is a defining characteristic of the personae they perform in those discursive domains*'.²¹ However hard performance scholars attempt to focus on the activity of those performers, the performers themselves are trying equally hard to frustrate those attempts, and direct

²¹ Philip Auslander, 'Musical Personae', *The Drama Review* Vol. 50 No. 1 (Spring, 2006), 102 (emphasis added).

attention towards the musical object those same scholars are engaged in denying. Cook also undermines himself, seemingly unknowingly, in a similarly fundamental way when discussing a performance of the pianist Arturo Benedetti Michelangeli:

One can see the construction of his persona taking place in real time in some of his filmed performances [in] his elaborate preparations before he begins playing. He wipes the keyboard up and down with his handkerchief and then mops his cheeks. He puts his handkerchief down, and then clasps his hands together with the washing-like motion traditionally associated with clergymen and the best butlers. [...] His elaborate preparations heighten anticipation of the performance to follow. But they also have a ritualistic quality, aligning the playing of [Chopin's Mazurka] op. 33, no. 4 with the performance of some religious office, and presenting the pianist as the celebrant, as the representative of a higher power.²²

It could not be clearer: the prose is shot through with references to the transcendent, and the effortful—the task at hand, to bring something from the beyond into the present moment, is clearly arduous and worthy of the greatest care and attention. And the physical circumstances of performance—the pianist wearing dark clothes, the lowered lights of the auditorium with the pianoforte as the sole focus, the audience silent—all point toward the same thing: the performance is a performance of autonomy. If we really are all ethnomusicologists now, should our first task not be to take that ethnographic information into account, and try to understand this music the way it is intended to be understood—as striving, hopefully however hopelessly, for some kind of autonomy?

Furthermore, this once again raises the question of authority. As noted above, one of the ostensible benefits of the MAP approach is that it limits the authority of (retrogressive, illiberal, elitist) music analysis, supposedly putting it back into the public domain. Ignoring the fact that access to live musical performance is no less

²² Nicholas Cook, 'Bridging the Unbridgeable? Empirical Musicology and Interdisciplinary Performance Studies', in *Taking it to the Bridge: Music as Performance*, edited by Nicholas Cook and Richard Pettengill (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2013), 72–3.

socially and economically circumscribed than access to music-theoretical education, I have already pointed out that in most cases this disciplinary shift merely transposes the authority to the person of the performer, and so the longed-for democracy remains tantalizingly out of reach. In some cases Cook, Pettengill and Auslander go even further, by implicitly denying the authority of those performers who so clearly attempt to frame their performances in terms of a transcendent musical object. In fact, it is they who are legislating what constitutes the bounds and foci of musical performance, and as a consequence the 'correct' way to interpret them. By doing so, their stance is no less authoritarian, no less narrow, than the formalist analysts whom they attempt to supplant.

This chapter, then, concludes the work of this thesis by continuing the case for a conceptual understanding of Western Art Music even in the act of musical performance, in light of the evidence presented above that there is, at the very least, an ethnographic case for doing so. A radical re-orienting of the philosophical underpinnings of MAP is necessary to overcome the naked self-contradictions that currently lie at its heart; it is hoped that, once accomplished, the perspective advocated here can cohere with the spirit of Cook's work and that of his colleagues.

5.4: Performance and the Musical Work

What is missing from the MAP approach is a prolonged consideration of the nature of the musical work; the paradigm shift that MAP scholars are attempting to bring about is one away from the idea of a stable musical work at all. Given the emphasis on social interaction between individual performers, those performers and the audience, and all of these participants and their surroundings, exactly *what* is being performed loses some of its significance.²³ As I have already shown, the idea that

²³ Of course, in light of the work of Chapters Two and Four, this itself can be seen as a stereotypically neoliberal move, since the emphasis is here placed on the circulation of performance commodities, all of which are ontologically equal (even negligible), and only valuable insofar as they are capable of being exchanged in order to regulate social identities.

musical works give rise to performance has been rejected. In its place, a vague sense has emerged that the musical work is the performance considered in its totality; one might say, then, that the performance gives rise to the musical work. In other words, there is a move from a spatial, textual model to a decidedly temporal one: the work is the entire span of time from the beginning of the performance to the end, incorporating everything that takes place within the 'performance arena'.²⁴

This is not, however, the only position within MAP. Cook has also written on the ontology of the musical work, proposing a formulation that cuts across this understanding. As one might expect, his first move is to reject the concept of the transcendental work, one existing outside its sounding instantiations. However, he argues that under the performance studies paradigm 'a given performance of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, for example, will acquire its meaning from its relation to the horizon of expectations established by other performances [...] there is no ontological distinction among the different modes of a work's existence, its different instantiations, because there is no original'.²⁵ This, too, is a temporal conceptualization of music, albeit—as a much broader, historical sweep—a radically different one. Instead of being concerned with the temporality within the work, the focus turns to the creation of that work through time, among and between performances, whereby these different performances relate to one another, influencing each other's creation and reception over time. As Cook puts it, 'instead of a single work located "vertically" in relation to its performances, then, we have an unlimited number of instantiations, all on the same "horizontal" plane'.²⁶

This creates a philosophical dilemma since the two types of temporality undermine one another. In the first case, the musical performance—and by implication, the musical work—is the totality of a local temporality; in the second,

²⁴ Delimiting the geographic bounds of this performance arena is problematic; indeed, the difficulties in doing so will lead to the eventual rejection of this perspective, below.

²⁵ Cook, 'Music as Performance', 187.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 187.

such local temporalities can never be total, since they represent merely partial appearances of something greater. This appearance, of course, is explicitly *not* an ‘appearing’ of some Platonic Idea, which would be to reinscribe the authoritarian, ‘vertical’ notion of the work-concept. The feel, rather, is transhistorical—each new appearance adds something to the identity of the work. As Cook says, ‘the work does not exist “above” the field of its instantiations, but rather encompasses it—which, of course, is why the Ninth Symphony is still evolving’.²⁷ As it happens, this metaphor is itself problematic, because rather than pointing to a (supposedly unidirectional) historical progress, the notion of a work ‘encompassing’ different performances implies something multidirectional, existing in a different dimension to the onward march of history in which those individual performances are located. In any case, there is a direct conflict with the first model of MAP, since included in all the extramusical elements that constitute a performance is a discursive element, dealing with that performance’s relationship with previous ‘performances’. And this, paradoxically, must already rely on some kind of work-concept—how else to decide what constitutes previous performances, and what constitutes not-performances? The whole question predictably centres on identity and authority: in what does the musical work consist, and what materials have the authority to define it?

Unfortunately, the way Cook negotiates it raises further questions. He quotes approvingly Lawrence Rosenwald’s statement that the piece’s identity is ‘something existing in the relation between its notation and the field of its performances’.²⁸ His own comments on that relation, however, do not clarify its nature. Writing about the scores of Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony, he notes that ‘while these historically privileged texts have a particular significance and authority within the field encompassed by the Ninth Symphony, they do not exhaust the work’s identity [...] Beethoven’s text (whatever that means) has an obviously privileged role and yet

²⁷ Ibid., 188.

²⁸ Ibid.

relates horizontally [...] to the symphony's other instantiations'.²⁹ The two halves of this comment contradict one another. First, Cook's comment constructs the musical text as an unknown, and potentially unknowable quantity through the parenthesis 'whatever that means': this automatically calls into question the possibility of relying on notation for musicological (or performative) authority. More significantly, however, by claiming that the score occupies the same horizontal plane as the symphony's other instantiations, Cook *structurally* eradicates the possibility of relying on a score. He is therefore simultaneously claiming that the work derives its singular identity in some way from the score—it plays an 'obviously privileged role' in the construction of the work—but since it is on the same horizontal plane, in effect becoming just another 'performance' of the work, it is unclear *how* it derives its 'particular significance and authority'.

The picture that emerges from the MAP paradigm, therefore, is of an assemblage of parts—the score, additions to the notated score (such as ornaments or rubato), the behaviour of the performers, the behaviour of the audience, and the surrounding discourse—all of which might be considered vital to musical performance, depending on one's point of view. One might ask, in this case, which combination of these parts ensures the identity of the work? There are three possible answers, all of which correspond to the different attitudes outlined above:

1. There is some essential part of the set that must be present in some way at all times to ensure the piece's identity. This corresponds not only to the traditional work-concept, but also to a formulation in which the score has a 'privileged' role in defining performances. This is a basic textualist formulation—the 'text' does not have to be the score, although this has been the default throughout the common practice era of Western Art Music. Note, however, that this is incompatible with the idea that the score (or whatever 'text' is used as foundational) exists on the same plane as the other performative instantiations:

²⁹ Ibid., 187–8.

however incomplete the text may be without its supplements, as the carrier of the set's identity, it is ontologically of a different nature.

2. No part of the set is essential; the set evolves through time, with various elements coming and going. The piece's identity is given as the evolution of that set over time. This corresponds to the idea that the score and all its other performative instantiations exist on the same horizontal plane. In the absence of any authoritative characteristic, there are no limits on what features may and may not be replaced. This is obviously problematic, since taken to its logical extreme it is impossible to distinguish between a successful performance of a piece, and an unsuccessful one (say, one with a great many mistakes). In fact at the basic ontological level, it is impossible to distinguish between a performance of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony and a performance of his Eighth, or a performance of any Beethoven symphony and the dull roar of street noise. Of course, as we know, meaning arises out of language, and so it is perfectly possible for a community of speakers (musicians) to assert a distinction between good and bad performances, or a performance of one piece and another. However, without any firm logic behind it, this distinction will always be arbitrary, and following Foucault would almost certainly reflect the will of an authoritarian power: a panel of expert judges determining the best performance at a competition, or a lone expert excluding a newly discovered work from the canon because it 'just doesn't feel like a Brahms sonata'.
3. Every part of the set is essential; all aspects, both musical and non-musical, must be replicated in their entirety to guarantee the identity of the piece across performances. Although this formulation is not explicitly invoked in MAP discourse, it is implicit in the idea of the musical work being the sum total of all performed aspects—the first facet of MAP explored above. Again, in the absence of any work-concept to fall back on, the only way to guarantee that two performances are performances of the same 'work' (apart from by obeying

declaration of a powerful body) is if the two are ontologically identical. This is obviously problematic since it is impossible.

From this theoretical model, two things should become immediately apparent: on the one hand, even if the second and third models represent the implicit constructions advocated by the two halves of the MAP paradigm, it is a distortion of their explicit views. While the first model has a long historical pedigree, no-one has, to my knowledge, proposed either that any collection of noises and behaviours could be considered a performance of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, or that only one specific collection can be considered one. That being said, such views are present within the musicological community: for example certain avant-garde works put no limits on what may take place in performance, corresponding to the second model, and a hardline approach towards Historically Informed Performance obviously has the third model as an ideal backdrop.³⁰ On the other hand, there are instances—in jazz music, for example—where the first and second categories blend into one another. In the tradition of jazz standards, *some* element of the original chart should be appreciable by a knowledgeable audience, but precisely what that element is remains unfixed, and can change from performance to performance.

Despite these pragmatic nuances, and the fact that MAP scholars might not express their views quite as baldly as the three models laid out above, it is nevertheless

³⁰ In fact Dorottya Fabian aligns these two perspectives with modernist and postmodernist approaches to the score, and argues that both can be found within the Historically Informed Performance movement (Dorottya Fabian, *A Musicology of Performance: Theory and Method Based on Bach's Solos for Violin* (UK: Open Book Publishers, 2015). <http://dx.doi.org/10.11647/OBP.0064>. In other words, an absolute commitment to reproducing the historical text as accurately as possible is a classically modernist obsession with perfection, control, and stability. On the other hand, the realization that such stability is impossible, leading to a total rejection of the score as a 'work', and instead feeling liberated to play with alterations, interpolations and adaptations is identifiably postmodern. The political issues surrounding modernist authoritarianism versus postmodern relativism have already been discussed in this thesis; the dialectical conception of performance offered below, therefore, can be seen as part of the dialectical mediation of modernist and postmodernist politics offered in Part II. And furthermore, it should be apparent how both of these attitudes to the score—modernist and postmodernist—are clearly identifiable in the different strands of Performance Studies in music.

true that those models represent the logical limits when declaring that a performance has some kind of stable identity (at least within the internal logic of current MAP discourse). That a piece might have a stable identity is clearly important to Cook and his colleagues—the discourse around Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony is different from that around a composition by La Monte Young or George Gershwin; however, as has now been demonstrated, this cannot be reconciled with his idea that a musical work (just another way of saying a piece’s stable identity) ‘encompasses’, in a non-authoritarian way, disparate performances, especially while any stable text (be it written or otherwise) takes a merely optional (‘horizontal’) part in the work’s formation.

From this view another curious paradox emerges. One of the strongest criticisms of the old score-based models of musicological engagement—formalist analysis in particular—was that it encouraged the treatment of music as completely self-contained, cut off from social, historical, and political issues. It can now be seen that MAP runs the risk of falling into a similar sort of hermeticism. For it is when a piece of music is equated with its sounding, when it is reduced to the moment of its performance, that it truly becomes cut off from the wider world. Without the possibility of being incorporated in a context of other performances, and no distinction between the discourse of performance and the metadiscourse of the musical work, there is no hope of historical or political narrative. If the New Musicology’s most enduring gift was to show that pieces of music exceeded themselves—that Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony was as much what people wrote about it, and how composers composed after it, as it was its own notated score—then this marks a backward step: without any clear sense of how a piece of music might exist outside of its sounding, all of the aims of New Musicology fail before they begin. It may be a different species of autonomy, but it is autonomy nevertheless.

It should be pointed out now that, in the same chapter on musical performance that he lays out his idea of purely ‘horizontal’ relations between musical performances (of any kind), Cook notes with approbation that ‘the fantastical idea that there might

be such a thing as music, rather than simply acts of making and receiving it, is arguably the premise of the Western “art” tradition’.³¹ How this bold ontological statement fits in with his other claims is unclear; I will attempt to bridge the conceptual gap. The problem, I contend, is repetition and difference—namely, how to secure the identity of something as a ‘repetition’ that is nevertheless fractured by difference. To reach towards an answer, it will be useful to turn to the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze.

5.5 Repetition and Difference in Mahler’s Symphony

No. 5, ii

Cook’s ‘horizontal plane’ has Deleuzian overtones: the rejection of the stemma, the tree, in favour of a network of equal relations bears a striking resemblance to Deleuze’s rhizomatic forms. Equally, the idea that musical performances are not performances of an original idea, but rather constitute it, recalls Deleuze’s polemic against repetition within a concept: ‘repetition is not only defined in relation to the absolute identity of the concept; it must, in a certain manner, itself represent this identical concept [...] Repetition is not content with multiplying instances of the same concept; it puts the concept outside itself and causes it to exist in so many instances *hic et nunc*’.³² In other words, Deleuze advocates the same idea of a difference without an original. As influential as Deleuze’s rhizomes have already been within performance studies, several nuances of his thought remain unexamined. This chapter will incorporate these finer details in order to fill the lacunae in the ‘Music as Performance’ paradigm, illustrating the process through an analysis of the second movement of Mahler’s Fifth Symphony. In the end, it will become clear that it is not music’s temporality, but

³¹ Cook, ‘Music as Performance’, 188.

³² Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton (London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2014), 357.

human temporality—the temporality of consciousness itself—that grounds the ‘repetitions without an original’ of musical performance.

Michael Gallope has already examined what a Deleuzian work-concept might look like, framing it principally against a Platonist metaphysics, which is thoroughly Ideal, and Goehr’s genealogy of the work-concept, which is historical, empirical, and therefore material. He posits that Deleuze’s philosophy is such a radical extension of materialism that it eventually loops back around and regains some of the Ideal qualities of Platonism:

Deleuze’s philosophical orientation is *so* empirical, it is, in a way, *purely empirical*; it is *so* specific to experience [that] it actually exalts the empirical to a new realm of purity. This has the paradoxical result of evacuating the located specificity of experience altogether, purifying living things down to their very materiality—a life—an unsituated, ahistorical becoming. For Deleuze, this is the only way to think the immediacy of life to Being: by rendering life so radically contingent that it can no longer be said to relate to any stable identity.³³

In other words, the very foundation of existence—what Heidegger would call Being—is not a transcendent principle as Plato might have it, ‘outside’ of the subject or object, but rather interior to it, immanent to its very finest detail: this will become very significant later on in this chapter. Understanding something in purely its own terms, peering into its very materiality, reveals the ‘ground’ of being—what being ‘is’ before it is specified as a person, in a place, doing something. It is looking at life in such exhaustive details that it becomes *bare* life, being such that it becomes *bare* being: that which is common to everything, before it becomes differentiated. Deleuze calls this the ‘virtual’: ‘the virtual is the *presupposed* ground of these endless differentiations. So, the virtual is really potentiality itself, the *absolute* potential of all life, insofar as this creative “fuel” is nothing less than “an abstract and potential multiplicity”’.³⁴

³³ Michael Gallope, ‘Is there a Deleuzian Musical Work?’, *Perspectives of New Music* Vol. 46 No. 2 (Summer, 2008), 97.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 98.

Gallope insists that recognizing this fundamental truth of existence is absolutely crucial, and one of the principal meanings of art: 'if we are going to find anything like a musical work in Deleuze it will be one that lets us tune in to the virtual, one that helps us escape our sedimented existence in actual, worldly relations'.³⁵ But, precisely because of the nature of Deleuze's virtual (or Heidegger's pure 'Being'), this fundamentally changes the nature of the Ideal which is under investigation: 'for this Deleuzian ontology of transcendental empiricism, there is no specific listening subject, and along with this no specific performer, no specific composer, and really, no specific musical object to speak of'.³⁶ If a Deleuzian analysis is incapable of locating a Platonist musical work—what might be called 'the music itself'—what does it therefore locate? It will be shown that instead it points to an idea of '*music* itself'—distinct from '*the music itself*': music in general, *bare* music.³⁷

The Deleuzian concept of 'sensation' is very useful in this regard, although I think that Gallope misinterprets it in a manner which collapses its highly specific (Deleuzian) meaning into a host of less precise aesthetic concepts. Gallope claims that 'it is not the musical *work itself* that is preserved [...] and it is not the composer or the performance or the musical culture that are preserved, it is the sonorous *sensation itself* that is absolutely preserved. What is sensation for Deleuze? It is what is left of art when you subtract out all subjects, objects, all worldly and actual attributes to art. You are left with nothing but a sensation itself—absolute sensation'.³⁸ This is all well and good as long as 'sensation' is not understood in a vulgar aesthetic sense as something heard, or smelled. It is not, in other words, a retreat into the idea of music outside of thought and language, one that reduces it to pure noise, or even pure vibrations—

³⁵ Ibid., 101.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ It is important to note that 'bare life' without specific subjects, or 'bare music' without any historical specificity, is some sort of pre-social Nirvanic proto-consciousness. This would of course bear very little relation to the Heideggerian metaphysics that have thus far guided the thesis, as well as retaining a distinct neoliberal edge in its utter disregard of sociality/materiality. Rather, it is Being entirely in *excess* of the social: it is the very ground of sociality, insofar as it constitutes a commonality of being shared by all people, before they become fractured by the differences that constitute society.

³⁸ Gallope, 'Is there a Deleuzian musical work?', 104.

what might be termed, that is, 'absolute sensation'. This would necessitate a sensing subject, and a sensed object, which have already been discarded; it would also fail to 'dig in' to the materiality of the musical work in the way advocated by Deleuze, instead accepting that materiality—sonic vibrations, aromatic molecules—as a given. Rather, sensation here is sensation without an object or a subject: in other words the mechanics of sense, that is, very consciousness itself.

Unfortunately, Gallope (and Deleuze, at points) confuses this, and retreats into discussions that heavily imply a vulgarly materialistic conception of 'sense', rather than the more ruthlessly empirical conception required here. For example, he writes: 'we can think the purity of sensation in itself as a directly un-negotiated coupling of matter and nervous systems. [...] A Deleuzian musical work cannot be separated from the aggregate of all nervous systems that have ever and will ever sense it. It is the self-positing, abstract and autonomous unity of sonorous material and sensation that stands immediate to itself'.³⁹ This clearly locates the meaning of 'sensation' in the *conjunction* of sensed object ('matter') and sensing body ('nervous system'). However, as we have seen, the Deleuzian virtual is significant because it is not a conjunction of two formerly separate entities, but rather the understanding of that which entities *already* share: this is particularly significant in music, because it is the argument of this chapter that the sensing body ('consciousness') and the musical work ('music itself') are at the most fundamental level identical.⁴⁰

³⁹ Ibid., 104–5.

⁴⁰ And thus it is easy to see why Gallope's claim that a hypothesized modulation at a pop concert apparently 'spontaneously' eliciting applause is so problematic: 'This is when chills went down the spines of the audience, bringing them into a self-organizing applause machine, blowing through the airwaves like a spontaneous hurricane. This is the moment, we might say, when the audience is not receiving meaning from a musical object or even perceiving a musical object as such, but instead it is the moment when these millions of bodies are affected beyond themselves as subjects, bringing them into assembled sensational motion outside their identity' (ibid., 111). This cannot be 'sensation' as Deleuze would have it, not least because there can be nothing 'immanent' about a semitone modulation, or the response elicited by it: a semitone modulation in a pop song is highly culturally mediated, and elicits a response not because of any intrinsic properties, but rather because of a series of carefully negotiated musical codes. What is required, therefore, is a means of engagement with music that takes account of the cultural mediation that gives music meaning.

The difference is most palpable in the sorts of musicological engagement practiced by Gallope, and the sort advocated (and practiced) above. On the one hand, Gallope recognizes that under this model attention must be paid to the details of musical materiality—advocating, in effect, a form of analysis—saying ‘we cannot simply disregard standard notions of musical form from the outset, and follow our own examples [...] to arrive at a generalized theory of sensation’, since ‘this risks bypassing the specificity of technique, which cannot be *completely* abandoned, or music would never exist at all’.⁴¹ That is to say, his view broadly accords with the objections raised to the ‘Music as Performance’ model above, namely, that without paying some attention to the mechanics of a musical ‘work’, it would be impossible to distinguish a piece of music from its sensory surroundings at all. This leads naturally to the conclusion that some music is more ‘musical’ than others—in other words, that only under certain conditions does music achieve the true function of art that, according to Deleuze, is ‘pass[ing] through the finite in order to rediscover, to restore the infinite’.⁴² However, on the other hand, the language that Gallope uses when applying this Deleuzian philosophy to musicological concerns is unhelpfully vague:

There are some musical works that, due to properties in their actual form, or their manner of composition, produce more sensation than others, and thus contribute to the consolidation and preservation of sensation. More intense musical works typically challenge conservative and traditional practices of composition, *making* sensation by upending old-fashioned musical parameters, like basic song forms, tonality, or the organization of rhythm into regular beats.⁴³

By contrast, the analysis offered below attempts to combine Deleuze’s radical theory of being with a detailed analytical approach to a specific musical work, in order to show concretely how music, in the right circumstances and under the right reading, can lead us back to the ‘virtual’, the ground of being. If this ‘virtual’ music, this ground

⁴¹ Ibid., 111.

⁴² Quoted in *ibid.*, 108.

⁴³ Ibid., 112.

of music's being, is what remains once all differentiation is stripped away, when music is simply pure difference-in-itself, the task is to determine how difference and repetition operates upon the musical surface, observing 'the specificity of technique' in order to learn how this differentiated surface is connected to the undifferentiated pure difference of bare music. To do this I turn to a concrete example of repetition in music, in order to examine how this works in practice.

It is immediately apparent that the second movement of Mahler's Fifth Symphony is fraught with surface repetition. From the pulsing brass figure that opens the movement, to the woodwind accompaniment in the funeral march to which it gives rise, to the final passage which simply passes the dyad A-C across the orchestra, fading away as the movement draws to a close, small-scale repetition is one of the piece's defining features. To focus on such small-scale repetition would be banal: repeated notes are obviously a motivic concern of the movement, and any attempt to draw deeper interpretative sustenance from such thin gruel runs the risk of becoming obtuse. Nevertheless, even such a simple observation suggests a jumping-off point. If one were to conduct a Schenkerian analysis, for example, those repetitions would be erased—the repeated quavers in the funeral march are, analytically speaking, no different from a held minim, and that minim, with its specific pitch, is only interesting insofar as it is related to other pitches, creating a goal-directed hierarchy. Nothing about this is particular to Mahler—repetition of this type would be reduced away in any Schenkerian analysis. It is therefore significant that Deleuze would not term this repetition at all, but rather 'generality': after all, I have just shown that under analysis the duplicated pitches are not repetitions at all, but stand-ins for a held note, an 'exchange'. As Deleuze says, 'exchange is the criterion for generality'—the repeated figure could easily be replaced by held notes, and no analytical distinction would result.⁴⁴ Repetition for Deleuze is something altogether different, something that cannot be represented, and cannot be exchanged. Nevertheless, by raising repetition

⁴⁴ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 1.

to a thematic level, as he does in this movement, it might be argued that Mahler is encouraging an interpretation of these repetitions as significant in themselves. If so, these surface figures will have to be treated as something other than generalities.

Deleuze begins with surface repetitions in his analysis. Drawing inspiration from psychoanalysis, he invites us to ‘take an uncovered or bare repetition [...] such as an obsessional ceremony or a schizophrenic stereotype: the mechanical element in the repetition, the element of action apparently repeated, serves as a cover for a more profound repetition, which is played in another dimension, a secret verticality in which the roles and masks are furnished by the death instinct’.⁴⁵ Leaving aside, temporarily, his final comment on the death instinct, it is clear that Deleuze sees repetition in a much more complex way than we are accustomed to. Surface repetition such as that found in this movement is not to be taken on its own terms, but as a signifier for repetition—a different idea of repetition—on a higher level: ‘We are right to speak of repetition when we find ourselves confronted by identical elements with exactly the same concept. However, we must distinguish between these discrete elements, these repeated objects, and a secret subject, the real subject of repetition, which repeats itself through them’.⁴⁶ Repetition is not several items in a row, but rather a single thing repeating itself, repeatedly asserting itself in its being, causing repeated protuberances on the surface. The repetition is not six, or twelve, or a hundred F minor chords arranged horizontally, in time, but rather one underlying idea—that is, ‘vertical’ to these chords—asserting itself six, twelve, or a hundred times.

Most significantly, this repetition beneath the surface authorizes *difference* on the surface. That is to say, something might be ‘repeating’ even when there are no identical elements on the surface: that which is repeating is beneath the surface, and so may manifest itself differently each time.⁴⁷ Think of a large, irregularly-shaped

⁴⁵ Ibid., 21.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 28.

⁴⁷ It is worth noting that the parallels between Schenkerian theory and the Deleuzian reading of repetition are still noticeable at this stage. The Schenkerian idea of ‘prolongation’ is precisely that of a background entity asserting itself through difference in the foreground: for example, a tonic

object underneath a cover. Pressing different parts of this object up into the cover will cause differently shaped protuberances on the surface: the insistence of the same thing causes external difference, because the underlying object exceeds the dimensions of the surface: it cannot be represented in its entirety. A much closer examination of the Mahler movement is required, in order to show that something similar is at work.

5.6: Formal Analysis of Mahler's Symphony No. 5, ii

Alongside its division into five movements, Mahler's Fifth Symphony is also divided into three parts: the first two movements form Part I, the third movement Scherzo constitutes Part II, and the final two movements—the Adagietto followed *attacca* by the Rondo-Finale—form Part III. The ambiguous relationship between the first two movements has been noted by several commentators. Vera Micznik says that 'while as Mahler indicated, the two movements together form Part One, they are complementary, yet so different in content that it is difficult to understand how they make sense together'.⁴⁸ Seth Monahan points out that 'Mahler called [the second movement] a "*Hauptsatz*" on several occasions, to clarify the merely introductory nature of the symphony's first-movement funeral march', and, citing Tischler's and Adorno's readings as examples, informs us that 'some have imagined [the first movement] to be a kind of "exposition," broken off from the "developmental" [second movement], whose themes it shares'.⁴⁹ The analysis that follows will offer a different reading; while it will not be denied that the second movement is the bigger and more complex of the two—hence historical references to its primacy, and the reason why it

prolongation can be presented through an arpeggiation through the mediant, with two different harmonies both signifying the tonic key. Indeed, as noted in Chapter Three, a Schenkerian conception of tonality implies that every gesture on the musical surface is a way of the tonic expressing itself.

⁴⁸ Vera Micznik, 'Textual and Contextual Analysis: Mahler's 5th Symphony and Scientific Thought', *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music* Vol. 27 No. 1 (June, 1996), 18.

⁴⁹ Seth Monahan, 'Success and Failure in Mahler's Sonata Recapitulations', *Music Theory Spectrum* Vol. 33 No. 1 (Spring, 2011), 45 n. 58.

is the movement chosen for investigation here—it will be shown that, at least at the most profound level, the two movements are equal partners.

Another thorny subject is the extent to which this movement can be read against the norms of sonata form. Adorno clearly thought so, claiming that it ‘is not a scherzo but a full sonata movement’.⁵⁰ On the other hand, commenting on analytical approaches to Mahler’s symphonic movement, Richard Kaplan polemicizes: ‘assigning labels such as “rondo-sonata” and “double variation”, demonstrating conformance—however idiosyncratic—to Schenkerian *Ursätze*, and inferring the operation of various “narrative” strategies [...] carry the risks of trivializing or suppressing, in the name of conformance to a paradigm, precisely those characteristics that make these pieces interesting, unique, and coherent; they have, in short, failed to convey adequately a sense of the way these pieces work’.⁵¹ Noting the propensity for formal excrescence in Mahler’s symphonic writing, he adopts a vivid metaphor that recalls the same Deleuzian thinking alluded to above: ‘Rather like the blind men and the elephant, we simply have found ourselves unable to apprehend these unprecedentedly huge, uncannily heterogeneous objects as coherent music’.⁵² Monahan sums up the situation concisely:

Analysts have long been ambivalent about the role that sonata form should play in our understanding of Gustav Mahler’s music. Although no one has seriously disputed his use of inherited genres (sonata, rondo, minuet/ trio), Mahlerians have typically defaulted to what Mark Evan Bonds calls a ‘generative’ conception of form—one that downplays a composer’s dependence on preformatted plans in favor of what is original, uniquely motivated, or (to use Robert Hatten’s term) ‘strategic’ to the individual work. The result has been a widespread reluctance (whether anxious or merely pragmatic) to bring sonata form into the analytic foreground, at least in a positive or normative sense.⁵³

⁵⁰ Adorno, *Mahler: A Musical Physiognomy*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 10.

⁵¹ Richard Kaplan, ‘Temporal Fusion and Climax in the Symphonies of Mahler’, *The Journal of Musicology* Vol. 14 No. 1 (Spring, 1996), 214.

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ Monahan, ‘Success and Failure in Mahler’s Sonata Recapitulations’, 37.

By contrast, Monahan advocates reading Mahler's sonata-form movements against a normative sonata-form paradigm, namely that enshrined by Hepokoski and Darcy's *Elements of Sonata Theory*.⁵⁴ The flexibility of his approach derives from the fact that, as well as demonstrating when Mahler adheres to the expectations of sonata forms, the model also allows for sonata 'failures', when the normative expectations are not met. In this way, the originality of Mahler's forms is not overwritten or ignored, but rather given narrative significance—Mahler's interaction with normative sonata procedures are freighted with expressive potential, as Monahan explains: 'the ability of a recapitulation to bring certain non-tonic expositional materials into the home key correlates strongly to a movement's expressive outcome, with affirmative or triumphant endings typically coming after a "successful" reprise (whether timely or belated), and tragic endings usually following some kind of "failed" one'.⁵⁵

This seems a wise approach, since it is both in the spirit of Hepokoski's (and, we must assume, Darcy's) original hopes for the Sonata Theory project, and also in keeping with what we know about Mahler's own conception of his formal practices. Hepokoski has written that

the real form [of a piece] exists in *that conceptual dialogue with implicit generic norms*, which exist outside of the material surface of the printed page and its acoustic realization. This means that the construct that we call "sonata form" is more *a set of tools for understanding* (a set of enabling and constraining rules for interpretation) than it is a bottom-line practice that must be minimally satisfied in the workings of any given piece before we grant that piece, for whatever purpose, the label of "sonata".⁵⁶

Thus, the objections to Hepokoski and Darcy's Sonata Theory model—some of which will be dealt with below—notwithstanding, the instantiation of it mobilized here

⁵⁴ James Hepokoski and Warren Darcy, *Elements of Sonata Theory: Norms, Types, and Deformations in the Late-Eighteenth-Century Sonata* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).

⁵⁵ Monahan, 'Success and Failure in Mahler's Sonata Recapitulations', 37.

⁵⁶ James Hepokoski, 'Back and Forth from *Egmont*: Beethoven, Mozart and the Nonresolving Recapitulation', *19th-Century Music* Vol. 25 No. 2–3 (Fall–Spring, 2001–2), 135 (emphasis added).

appears to be flexible enough to avoid any accusations of rigidity, historicism, or anachronism. Moreover, towards the end of his life Mahler wrote about his conscious experimentations with form earlier on:

In earlier years, I used to like to do unusual things in my compositions. Even in outward form, I departed from the beaten track, in the way that a young man likes to dress strikingly, whereas later on one is glad enough to conform outwardly and not to excite notice. One's inner difference from other people is great enough without that! So, at present, I'm quite happy if I can somehow pour my content into the usual formal mould, and I avoid all innovations unless they're absolutely necessary.⁵⁷

It seems clear, then, that Mahler was fully aware of the formal dialogue he was involved in, and indeed consciously rebelled against its perceived norms for expressive effect.

Nevertheless, the analysis offered below will differ from Monahan's in two key respects. First, I will be dealing more explicitly than he with the intimate interrelation between the second movement of the Fifth Symphony and the first; therefore, I cannot agree with his characterization of the second movement as a sonata 'failure', merely introduced (or perhaps hamstrung) by the first movement—I hope to demonstrate that the reality is far more complex than that.⁵⁸ This is in no small part due to the fact that I am relatively unconcerned with questions of narrative expression as they present themselves in the execution of these sonata movements—that is to say, I am not concerned with what these pieces may 'mean' on the surface. This is because of my second major difference with Monahan's project, which is a temporal one. As will become clear, my arguments are situated slightly before his in 'analytical time': while he is concerned with the meaning these *completed* pieces generate in their formal dialogue with history, I am concerned with how these pieces entered the forms in which we find them in the first place. It must be stressed that this is not a historical

⁵⁷ Quoted in Kofi Agawu, 'Tonal Strategy in the First Movement of Mahler's Tenth Symphony', *19th-Century Music* Vol. 9 No. 3 (Spring, 1986), 223 n. 6.

⁵⁸ Monahan, 'Success and Failure in Mahler's Sonata Recapitulations', 45–6.

exercise in trying to understand Mahler's musical choices, rather it is an attempt to demonstrate that Mahler's interrogation of form in the Fifth Symphony was so profound as to constitute *not only* a critique of sonata form, but of form in general, constituting an entire ontology of music. In this way, above and beyond any 'meaning'—such as 'success' or 'failure', 'jubilation' or 'tragedy'—that the second movement may have on the surface, it also has another, deeper meaning, about the nature of art music itself. In this way it is hoped that we will gain not only an insight into one of Mahler's sonata forms, but more than this, an insight into what it is to write about 'sonata forms' at all.

5.6.1: 'Sonata Theory' Analysis

Monahan calls the second movement of the Fifth Symphony 'Mahler's most dysfunctional sonata form': 'fraught with collapses, digressions, and discontinuities, its sonata architecture is taxing to follow at the musical surface and nearly incoherent at the level of musical process'.⁵⁹ He nevertheless offers a Sonata Theory reading, positing it as a 'failed' sonata structure, in line with its rhetorical bent, as Fig. 5.1 demonstrates (development omitted). He hears a tri-rotational form, with the recapitulatory rotation divided into two sub-rotations, terminating in the D-major *Durchbruch* before a short coda: in other words, a catastrophically failed Type 3 Sonata Form. This interpretation serves Monahan's project well, concerned as he is with the narrative implications of successful or failed recapitulations. However, since I contend that Mahler's struggle with (or against) sonata form is even more profound than Monahan believes, I offer a different interpretation below—one that retains Monahan's suspicion that sonata form should be understood as a normative backdrop against which to hear Mahler's music, but which ultimately discards the mould in favour of a different way of hearing the movement.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 45.

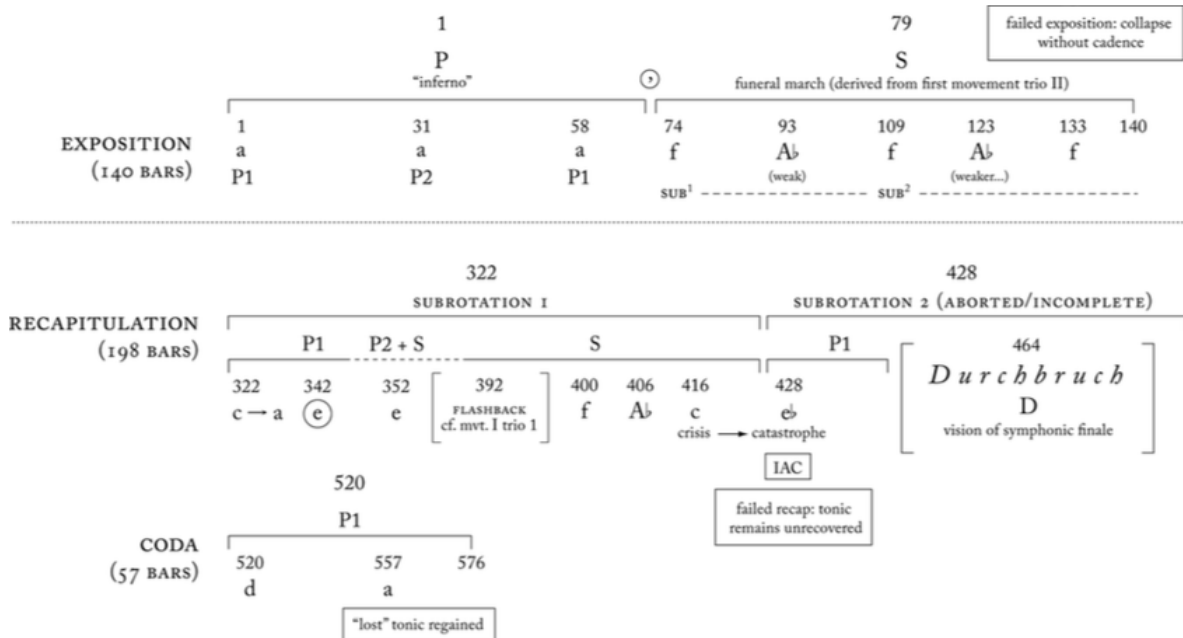


Figure 5.1: Sonata form analysis of Mahler Symphony No. 5, ii (excluding the development). Taken from Monahan, 'Success and Failure in Mahler's Recapitulations', 45 ex. 4

At the most basic level, the movement is structured around two contrasting themes, in A minor and F minor, which fit broadly into either three or four rotations (this ambiguity will be discussed below). A brief Introduction (I: bars 1–8) leads into a Primary Theme, itself divided into two parts. The first part (P¹: bars 9–30) is introduced by a perfect cadence, but a weak one: the harmonic support is displaced from the melodic descent onto weak beats of the bar. We have to wait until bars 30–1 for a Perfect Authentic Cadence, and the firm establishment of A minor, which also serves to introduce the second part of the Primary Theme (P²: bars 31–64). This gives way to a closing zone (C: bars 65–73), which diffuses the enormous rhythmic energy generated by the Introduction and Primary Theme, and leads the music into the key of the Secondary Theme, F minor, via a pivot harmony, F major, after the Medial Caesura at bar 73.

The Secondary Theme (S) runs from bars 74–140, although it too has internal distinctions—S¹ and S²—that are of some analytical significance, giving rise to a rough

Bar/Rehearsal Figure	Theme Zone	Key	Sonata Function	
Opening–8	I	–	R1	
9–30 9 – $\boxed{2}^{-1}$		P ¹		A minor
31–64 $\boxed{2}^{-1}$ – $\boxed{4}^{+10}$		P ²		
64–73 $\boxed{4}^{+11}$ – $\boxed{5}^{-1}$		C		–
74–140 $\boxed{5}$ – $\boxed{9}^{-1}$	S	F minor		
141–145 $\boxed{9}$ – $\boxed{9}^{+4}$	[R]TR (I)	–		
146–176 $\boxed{9}^{+5}$ – $\boxed{11}^{-1}$	I/P ²	A minor–E \flat major	R2	
177–213 $\boxed{11}$ – $\boxed{12}^{-1}$	TR	E \flat minor		
214–253 $\boxed{12}$ – $\boxed{14}^{-1}$	S			
254–265 $\boxed{14}$ – $\boxed{15}^{-1}$	TR (P ¹)	C \flat major		
266–287 $\boxed{15}$ – $\boxed{16}^{+3}$	First Movement S	B major		
288–315 $\boxed{16}^{+4}$ – $\boxed{17}^{+7}$	[R]TR (P ²)	A \flat major		
316–332 $\boxed{18}^{-6}$ – $\boxed{19}^{-4}$	TR (I)	A minor	R3	
333–351 $\boxed{19}^{-3}$ – $\boxed{20}^{-1}$				P ¹
352–399 $\boxed{20}$ – $\boxed{23}^{-1}$	P ² /S	E minor		
400–427 $\boxed{23}$ – $\boxed{24}^{+7}$	S	F minor		
428–463 $\boxed{24}^{+8}$ – $\boxed{27}^{-1}$	P ¹	E \flat minor		
464–519 $\boxed{27}$ – $\boxed{30}^{-1}$	Chorale Breakthrough	D major		R3?/R4?/C?
520–556 $\boxed{30}$ – $\boxed{33}^{-1}$	I/P ¹	D minor		
557–end $\boxed{33}$ – end	P ¹	A minor		

Figure 5.2: Rotational analysis of Mahler Symphony no. 5, ii

ABA'B' structure. S² constitutes bars 78–93, largely in F minor but turning at the last minute to the relative Ab major, and its analogue at bars 109–123; S² runs from bars 94–108, and 124–140. These S² sections are noteworthy for their emphasis of Db major, a potentially significant key within this movement, as will be discussed below. With that in mind, however, it is worth noting now that one of the most striking moments of S¹ itself clearly refers to S² and its flirtations with Db: a sudden slip into Db minor, at bars 117–8, which moves through Db major in order to return to the conventional Ab major/F minor palette of S¹.

The movement continues with a development section, beginning in A minor and comprising a full rotation of variants of the Introduction and P² materials (bars 141–176), followed by a re-working of S in E^b minor (214–253) after a transition (176–213). At this point, however, an intriguing interpolation occurs: C^b major (chord vi of the local tonic), is enharmonically reinterpreted as B major, leading to a rehearing of the Secondary Theme of the *first* movement at bars 266–287. This gives way to a transitional section in A^b major, using P² as its basis, that in turn leads to the third (recapitulatory) rotation.

The third rotation is equally unconventional. A modified version of P² (bars 333–351) begins with the same weak perfect cadence; however, rather than leading towards a consolidation of the tonic A minor, it instead leads to a forceful cadence in the modal dominant, E minor (bars 351–2). At this point, P¹ and S are recapitulated simultaneously: the forceful wave-like accompaniment familiar from P² provides a foundation, while melodic elements from both P¹ and S are woven together on top. The tonal strategy that this implies will be discussed further below; suffice it to say that from this moment on, sonata space begins to thoroughly break down. What occurs next is either an excrescence within the third rotation, or a further fourth rotation, or an extended Coda. At bar 400, the music moves from E minor back into F minor, recapitulating the S² material in its original key (there is therefore a rhetorical continuity at this point, despite the extreme formal/harmonic disjunction). This gives way at bar 428 to a hectic and highly transitional treatment of P¹ material—

significantly, not in the tonic—which leads into the second striking interpolation of the movement: a sudden drop into a bright D major introduces an extended, triumphant chorale-breakthrough (bars 464–519)—the same chorale, in fact, that will feature in the final movement. This builds to a climax at bar 500 (marked ‘Höhepunkt’ in the score). The piece’s energy then dissipates through a transitional section, before a final reworking of the Introductory and P¹ material in D minor (bars 520–556) leads to the conclusion of the movement in a static, almost shocked A minor (bars 557–end).

The structure of the movement is summarized in Fig. 5.2, which shows three clear rotations, and the ambiguous final section. Material derived from P is shaded red, while S material is shaded blue. The two formal interpolations are highlighted in yellow, while the possible final delineations of sonata space are marked by a wavy line. There are several interpretative options, because of the disjunction between tonal and rhetorical strategies: apart from Monahan’s suggestion of a subdivided third rotation giving way to a coda at bar 520, one could consider the end of the simultaneous recapitulation in E minor (a key closely related to the tonic) the end of sonata space. The shift into F minor at bar 400 would mark the beginning of the coda, or a fourth rotation in which P and S are presented in reverse (a significant deformation within Hepokoski and Darcy’s sonata theory: indeed, the idea of any kind of ‘reverse recapitulation’ is rejected by Hepokoski and Darcy, let alone in a fourth rotation). Alternatively, the thematic continuity between bars 352–399 and 400–427—both making use of S material—might lead one to group both within the sonata space. Since F minor is the key in which S originally appears, one could consider this a cyclical gesture, if a highly unconventional one within sonata norms. This would leave a coda beginning in bar 428, into which is inserted a chorale-breakthrough, in order to substitute for the failed tonal closure in the third rotation. This seems to be the most likely interpretation; indeed, it strongly suggests a Sonata-Rondo (Type 4) designation, since the P material recurs in the tonic at the start of all the rotations, and forms the basis of the coda—all hallmarks of a Sonata-Rondo type. Indeed, despite his

reading to the contrary, this appears to be something of which Monahan is conscious, when he comments on 'P1's *rondolike* recurrences'.⁶⁰

Of course, this too would be problematic under a Sonata Theory paradigm, as Paul Wingfield reminds us in his review of Hepokoski and Darcy's *Elements of Sonata Theory*:

Dealing with nineteenth-century first movements, the developments of which are prefaced by a return to the primary theme in the tonic, the authors caution that these should not be mistaken for a Type 4 design (sonata-rondo), because "Type 4 sonatas are historically and generically unavailable for first movements" (p. 351). This immediately raises further awkward questions: how is a composer supposed to know that a particular design is generically prohibited at a given time; what are the historical processes that ultimately allow generic experimentation to take place; and why should a sonata's position within a multi-movement work supersede all parameters of its internal organization?⁶¹

The piece has already technically broken out of 'historically available' forms by making its principal movement the second, rather than the first, but both sides of the argument still stand: while it would be highly unusual for a rhetorically expository movement such as this to mobilize generic markers more closely allied to final movements or lighter-hearted standalone works, by setting in stone what is and is not 'generically prohibited', Hepokoski and Darcy could be accused of precluding the sort of dialectical engagement with form that they claim to be enabling. However, a key aim of this analysis is to show that such debates are, to a large extent, moot: each possible interpretation along conventional Sonata-Theory lines is unsatisfactory in some way; this is precisely what maintains our interest. Weighing up all the available evidence and choosing to hear it as a Type 4 sonata with a P-based coda does not change how the movement sounds, and the effect it has on listeners—it will

⁶⁰ Monahan, 'Success and Failure in Mahler's Sonata Recapitulations', 45 n. 60 (emphasis added).

⁶¹ Paul Wingfield, 'Review: Beyond "Norms and Deformations": Towards a Theory of Sonata Form as Reception History', *Music Analysis* Vol. 27 No. 1 (March, 2008): 148–9.

nevertheless sound like a *strange* Type 4 sonata. As Kaplan pointed out (above), especially in Mahler the music seems to greatly exceed any formal straightjacket into which we put it (while Wingfield and Julian Horton, discussed below, assert that this holds for all music, certainly all music under Sonata Theory). Therefore, to understand this movement fully means understanding the formally divergent aspects of this movement; for this it is necessary to look outside Sonata Theory. The two most pressing unanswered questions deal with the tonal strategy and the formal structure are: First, what is the relationship between A minor and F minor—how are they mediated and what significance does the lack of large-scale resolution have? And, second, what is the significance of the two formal interpolations, a reminiscence of the first movement and a premonition of the last?

5.6.2: Octatonic Contrast, Hexatonic Unity

Neo-Riemannian analysis demonstrates a number of ways in which this movement is structured beyond the rotational form already discussed. As Fig. 5.2 suggests, there is little sense of prevailing local tonic at several moments in the movement, especially during the first rotation. At these moments the music is characterized by an emphasis on diminished harmony, centering above all on A-diminished, or in pitch-class terms [0, 3, 6, 9]. Indeed, this is the first harmony of the movement, and recurs at critical moments, for example the transitions between Primary and Secondary areas, and the bridges between rotations. The diminished seventh chord, however, does not function as a tonally-directed chord in these circumstances (that is, it does not function as a rootless minor ninth substituting for a dominant seventh); rather, it functions as a pivot chord, navigating the gaps between disparate tonal regions.

For example [0, 3, 6, 9] is the basis for the second retransition, leading into the beginning of the I/P space in the third rotation. As Fig. 5.3 shows, the A \flat major that forms the basis for the retransition is transformed by means of semitonal displacement

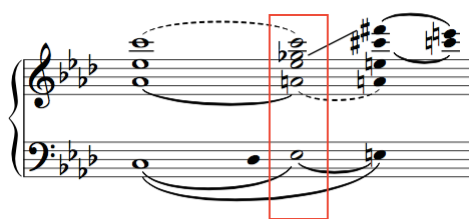


Figure 5.3: Voice-leading reduction of bars 305–334

into a diminished chord on $E\flat$ (in this non-tonal context, identical to a diminished chord on A), which is then further transformed into A minor by way of A major, the striking $F\sharp$ –E appoggiatura revealed as nothing more than a hangover from the $F\sharp/G\flat$ present in the diminished chord.

Richard Cohn’s analyses of advanced tonal music reveal that such gradual shifts of individual voices by semitone are a principal means of moving between tonally distant areas from the mid-nineteenth century onward.⁶² In this movement, the prominent role played by a diminished chord recalls Douthett and Steinbach’s ‘PowerTowers’, whereby three areas of harmonic space are internally unified by parsimonious voice-leading, and externally linked by means of the three possible diminished chords, which act as absent centres.⁶³ Fig. 5.4 extracts their diagram of the ‘PowerTowers’.

As the diagram shows, Douthett and Steinbach are concerned with parsimonious tetrachordal progressions: the chart shows which tetrachords can be generated by altering one semitone at a time from an ordinary diminished chord. For example, beginning at the top right-hand side of the top tower, a chord of $F7$ (F major with an $E\flat$, ordinarily acting as the dominant of $B\flat$) could move parsimoniously to a chord of C diminished 7, and thence to the bottom-right tower, for example to $E\flat$ half-

⁶² See for example Richard Cohn, ‘Introduction to Neo-Riemannian Theory: A Survey and a Historical Perspective’, *Journal of Music Theory* Vol. 42 No. 2 (Autumn, 1998): 167–80; and ‘Maximally Smooth Cycles, Hexatonic Systems, and the Analysis of Late Romantic Triadic Progressions’, *Music Analysis* Vol. 15 No. 1 (March, 1996): 9–40.

⁶³ Jack Douthett and Peter Steinbach, ‘Parsimonious Graphs: A Study in Parsimony, Contextual Transformation, and Modes of Limited Transposition’, *Journal of Music Theory* Vol. 42 No. 2 (Autumn, 1998), 255–6.

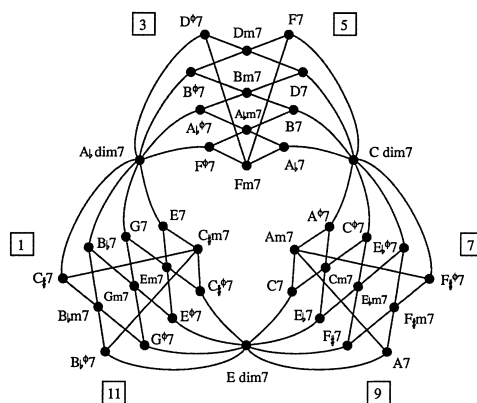


Figure 5.4: 'PowerTowers', taken from Douthett & Steinbach, 'Parsimonious Graphs', 256 Fig. 10

diminished 7 ($E\flat$, $G\flat$, $A\flat$ [$B\flat\flat$], $D\flat$); from this position, further parsimonious movement (movement that only shifts one voice by one semitone) is possible within the bottom tower, for instance, to $F\sharp$ minor 7 ($F\sharp$, A , $C\sharp$, E)—a destination far removed, in tonal terms, from the starting point.

My purposes are different, and so the chart can be radically simplified. Since the harmonic activity within sections of this movement are straightforwardly tonal, I am unconcerned with parsimony outside of the bridging sections; this also means that tetrachordal diminished harmony gives way to simpler triadic tonal harmony. In other words, where Douthett and Steinbach require a complex network of tetrachords, we can make do with a table of possible triads that can be generated from diminished chords (see Fig. 5.5). Several details of Fig. 5.5 must be clarified. First, the diminished chords are given letter-names for ease of identification—this has been done according to the letter name of the lowest pitch-class contained within it (following the usual practice of defining $C = 0$, and therefore the 'lowest' pitch). Thus, the diminished chord that features heavily in this movement has hitherto appeared variously as 'A diminished' and ' $E\flat$ diminished'; in Fig. 5.5 it is labelled C diminished. For the avoidance of doubt it will henceforth be referred to by its pitch-class set classification: $[0, 3, 6, 9]$. Second, for the sake of consistency, major keys are listed on the left, and minor keys on the right. If one is concerned with parsimonious voice-leading only—

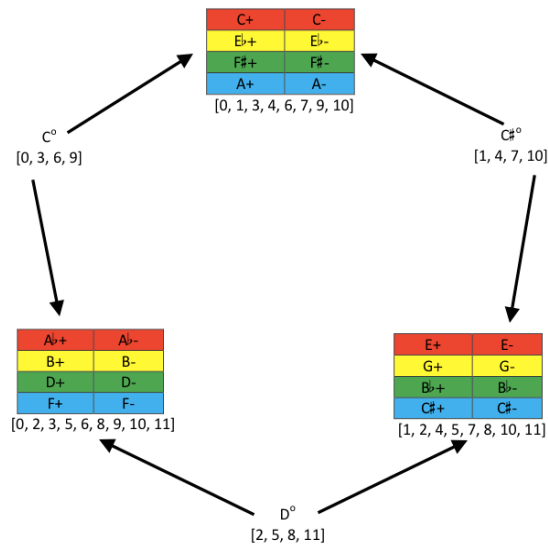


Figure 5.5: *Triads emerging from octatonic space*

that is, movement in which only one voice moves by only one semitone—then the two columns in the top table should be swapped: for example, C diminished moves to C minor before it can move, by raising the $E\flat$ by a semitone, to C major. Nevertheless, my graph brings a more important feature (for the present purposes) to the fore: it is evident in Douthett and Steinbach’s original graph, and even more so in this, that the possible harmonies within the towers/tables are not generated from one diminished chord alone, but rather from the intersection of two diminished chords—an octatonic set. Or, to put it another way, each diminished tetrachord forms part of two distinct octatonic sets: this is how the graph will be used in the forthcoming analysis. The octatonic set that each group of eight triads belongs to is listed, in pitch-class classification, beneath each table.

It is now possible to formulate a theory regarding the harmonic strategies employed in this movement. The diminished chord [0, 3, 6, 9] links together octatonic collections [0, 1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, 10] and [0, 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 11]. It is from these collections that the main harmonic centres of the movement are drawn: significantly, the two principal keys, A minor and F minor, appear in opposing collections. Adding information regarding from which octatonic set the principal tonal areas of the

Bar/Rehearsal Figure	Theme Zone	Key	Octatonic Set
Opening–8	I	–	
9–30 9 – $\boxed{2}^{-1}$	P ¹	A minor	O ₁
31–64 $\boxed{2}^{-1}$ – $\boxed{4}^{+10}$	P ²		
64–73 $\boxed{4}^{+11}$ – $\boxed{5}^{-1}$	C	–	
74–140 $\boxed{5}$ – $\boxed{9}^{-1}$	S	F minor	O ₂
141–145 $\boxed{9}$ – $\boxed{9}^{+4}$	[R]T (I)	–	
146–176 $\boxed{9}^{+5}$ – $\boxed{11}^{-1}$	I/P ²	A minor–E \flat major	
177–213 $\boxed{11}$ – $\boxed{12}^{-1}$	T	E \flat minor	O ₁
214–253 $\boxed{12}$ – $\boxed{14}^{-1}$	S		
254–265 $\boxed{14}$ – $\boxed{15}^{-1}$	T (P ¹)	C \flat major	
266–287 $\boxed{15}$ – $\boxed{16}^{+3}$	First Movement S	B major	O ₂
288–315 $\boxed{16}^{+4}$ – $\boxed{17}^{+7}$	[R]T (P ²)	A \flat major	
316–332 $\boxed{18}^{-6}$ – $\boxed{19}^{-4}$	T (I)	A minor	O ₁
333–351 $\boxed{19}^{-3}$ – $\boxed{20}^{-1}$	P ¹		
352–399 $\boxed{20}$ – $\boxed{23}^{-1}$	P ² /S	E minor	O ₃
400–427 $\boxed{23}$ – $\boxed{24}^{+7}$	S	F minor	O ₂
428–463 $\boxed{24}^{+8}$ – $\boxed{27}^{-1}$	P ¹	E \flat minor	O ₁
464–519 $\boxed{27}$ – $\boxed{30}^{-1}$	Chorale Breakthrough	D major	O ₂
520–556 $\boxed{30}$ – $\boxed{33}^{-1}$	I/P ¹	D minor	
557–end $\boxed{33}$ – end	P ¹	A minor	O ₁

Figure 5.6: Rotational analysis with octatonic information

movement are drawn demonstrates a rough alternation between set one (O_1) [0, 1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, 10] and set two (O_2) [0, 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 11], as shown in Fig. 5.6.

Several features jump out from this composite table. Most obvious is the neat alternation between O_1 and O_2 : what seemed on occasion like outlandish harmonic juxtapositions (for example, the shift from A minor through $E\flat$ major ending up in $E\flat$ minor from bars 146–253) are revealed to have, if not an inner logic, then at least a fundamental harmonic grounding. That this, on the whole, lines up with the thematic alternation of P and S material increases its credibility as a way of listening. Note that this approach does not advocate hearing long range octatonic relationships over hundreds of bars; it merely makes clear that areas that are grouped together rhetorically can be traversed using fairly parsimonious voice-leading—that is, they *sound* close together. Thematic groups that are *meant* to sound in conflict—such as the motivating long-range dissonance of the movement, that between A minor and F minor—are remote even in this chromatic landscape, although they can neatly be bridged by means of a third party, namely a single diminished chord. Thus although this analysis perverts ordinary neo-Riemannian techniques (normally every harmonic movement would be accounted for in voice-leading terms; here only the bridges between larger sections are subjected to that scrutiny), this is entirely intentional: a key feature of this movement is that while this it is internally conversant with tonal *norms*, it fits uncomfortably into tonal *forms*—such as the sonata model offered at the start of this analysis. On the small scale, tonal analysis is sufficient; the neo-Riemannian approach clarifies how tonal ‘modules’ are stitched together across larger distances. It should come as no surprise that in the tonally etiolated world of late Romanticism, when chromaticism was already pushed to breaking point, a different strategy for tonal contrast than simple diatonic distance might be invoked: I propose that this octatonic scheme forms precisely that strategy.

Returning to the Deleuzian interpretative framework that undergirds this analysis, it is possible to appreciate a further richness to this movement’s strategy of repetition and difference. At this stage, it is not possible to see anything definitively,

but the rough outline of the Deleuzian *spirit* of this analysis is coming into focus: if the overarching concept behind this formulation of repetition is hidden unity that gives rise to difference in such a way as to force its way into unique forms, parallels with Mahler's movement are emerging. The sonata theory analysis revealed a spirit of unity that nevertheless remained unnamable: a rondolike form that relies on a sonatalike thematic structure caused a movement whose excrescence prevented it from being subsumed under an easy label—a 'generality'. Peering into the chromatic harmony, another thread holds it together: an octatonic alteration stitched together by means of a diminished chord. Once again, however, it is not so simple: there are moments of the movement that do not correspond to this reading either, and the link between the sonata rhetoric on the surface, and the octatonic structuration in the background, is not clear. There is a general impression that *something* is going on, that there is some kind of architecture behind the façade, and yet its precise nature cannot be discerned: neither the underlying logic holding background and foreground together, nor the significance of the bold deviations, is yet clear.

It is time, therefore, to start examining these aberrant moments in detail. Significantly, the one moment that does not fit into this neat alternation of octatonic sets is the turning point of the movement: the recapitulation in the 'wrong' key. Whilst the harmony at this point, E minor, has no relationship to either octatonic series (and therefore no relationship to the generative diminished chord), as has already been pointed out, it *does* have a strong tonal relationship to the global tonic, as its modal dominant. Moreover, as Fig. 5.7 shows, the achievement of E minor is the end of the only truly long-range tonal process in the whole movement. From the C♭ major transition that emerges out of the second S space, which goes on to become the B major restatement of the first movement's Secondary Theme, one can hear a smooth preparation for B major to be retaken at bar 351 as the dominant of E minor. In this way, the third rotation is not front-loaded but end-weighted, the forceful arrival onto A major $\frac{6}{4}$ merely a waypoint on the rush towards a firm cadence some thirty-five bars

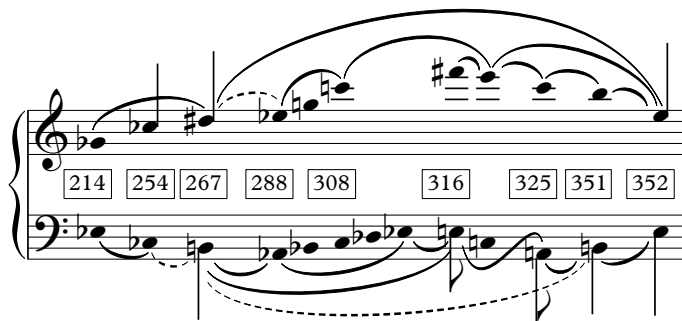


Figure 5.7: Long-range progression towards E minor 'recapitulation'

later. This moment, then, is the return of conventional tonal structuring over the looser octatonic dualism that preceded it.

If anything, the section from bar 214–352 represents breaking away from the binary choice of P and S, or O₁ and O₂: it is most forcefully heralded by the appearance of a foreign element (the first movement's Secondary Theme), and concludes with strong long-range (although not global) tonal resolution, with the added rhetorical force of both P and S appearing simultaneously; that an entirely new octatonic set is invoked merely strengthens this idea. Despite its highly unconventional form, this shape convincingly invokes the narrative of Essential Structural Closure in conventional Sonata Theory—the endpoint of a long arc, closing down a grand harmonic conflict, and ensuring that the end of the recapitulation is structurally weightier than the beginning.

In this movement, then, two conflicting systems compete to structure the musical space: a rotational sonata-form framework, and a more daring octatonic 'collage' that glues disparate harmonic regions together with parsimonious voice-leading. There is a disjunction between the rhetorical effect of distant tonalities or ingressions from other movements, and the placid undertow that organizes them into calmly alternating octatonic sets. The moment of simultaneous recapitulation, however, overrides *both* the octatonic logic *and* the neat rotational divisions, and yet does so in such a way that maintains a sense of structural unity by means of its sheer tonal force—or rather, it presents another type of unity, more fundamental, one which co-exists (or perhaps grounds) with the others. Once again, the Deleuzian overtones

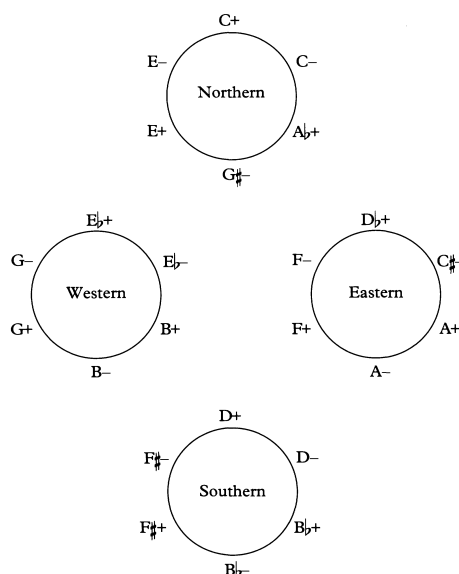


Figure 5.8: Richard Cohn's HexaCycles, taken from Cohn, 'Maximally Smooth Cycles, 17 Fig. 1

are unmistakable, although a final meaning remains elusive. In order to discover it, one last feature needs to be drawn out analytically.

The rhetorical force of introducing themes from alien movements has already been noted, as has the curious fact that in both cases—that of the first movement's S space and the last movement's chorale—this rhetorical shock is not reflected in the harmony: both moments fit easily into the alternation of O_1 and O_2 . Nevertheless, looking more broadly at the relationship between movements, especially between the first and second movements (that is, the two halves of Part I), another interpretation suggests itself. It will be noted that Fig. 5.5, which illustrates the derivation of major and minor triads from octatonic sets, is also colour-coded across octatonic sets. Across each of three groups of triads, four 'horizontal' colour configurations can be extracted—for example, C major/minor, $A\flat$ major/minor, and E major/minor are all coloured red, because they all form a single group. They, and all the other colour groups, belong to maximally smooth *hexatonic* cycles, as described by Richard Cohn. Cohn described four cycles of triads, each of which can be navigated through parsimonious voice-leading. As Fig. 5.8 shows, the 'Eastern' cycle not only includes A minor and F minor, the principal keys of the second movement, but also $C\sharp$ minor—which is the key of the first movement. The hexatonic organization in Part I of this

symphony is equally as important as octatonic organization. For instance, the codetta of P in the first rotation (bars 64–73), which leads from A minor into F minor, uses as its principal harmonic plank F *major*, navigating these three harmonies by means of parsimonious voice-leading, exactly as outlined by Richard Cohn. In this movement, then, when sections are not being knitted together through octatonic bridges, they are joined by hexatonic common-tones. This type of common-tone movement is extremely common in the first movement, too. Indeed, the first vertical harmony heard in the symphony, after the solo trumpet’s opening fanfare, is not the tonic, but a crashing A *major* chord—hexatonically related to the tonic, C# minor. Likewise, the final gesture of the movement is a movement around the ‘Eastern’ HexaCycle. Approaching C# minor from the subdominant direction, the solo trumpet (this time muted) plays an F# minor arpeggio, followed by an A major arpeggio, leaving the final harmony, a C# minor arpeggio, to a solo flute. In other words, the tonic is achieved at the end of the first movement not through a perfect cadence, but by hexatonic voice-leading.

I argue that hexatonicism binds these two movements together, something which is strengthened by the thematic references between them: it is not just the second movement that contains allusions to the first, but vice-versa. The first movement is harmonically rather staid, largely confining itself to closely related keys: the enharmonic dominant A \flat , the enharmonic tonic major D \flat , and that key’s relative minor, B \flat . The one exception is an abrupt shift just before the end of the movement (rehearsal figure 15) into A minor, the key of the second movement. At this is a foreshadowing of the funeral march to come: a repeated-note knocking figure in the second violins anticipates a similar figure in the woodwinds of the second movement, and the violas pass a yearning ninth figure, another central feature of that movement; moreover, although the violin melody is different, its opening rising sixth over a dotted crotchet rhythm immediately discloses a family resemblance. Of course, in the second movement, this march appears in F minor: nevertheless, since A minor is the global tonic of the movement, the allusion is unmistakable. For Monahan this moment is so important that he considers it to be one of the causes of sonata failure in the

second movement: ‘setting aside the negative consequences of a minor-mode ending, [the second movement’s] sonata’s “success”, *qua* sonata, would have required a presentation of S in the tonic A minor (and ideally an ESC for a definitive conclusion). So it is significant that by the time the recapitulation begins, we have already heard S in A minor—at its very first appearance, in the previous movement’s Trio II’.⁶⁴ It is this kind of inter-movement influence that is being argued for here; however, I contend that the links, and the analytical and philosophical ramifications they imply, are much more profound than Monahan believes.

In light of the detailed analysis presented above, it seems that the two movements that form Part I of the Fifth Symphony do not merely trade in simple thematic allusions, but rather are born of a more profound unity. There is a sense that throughout this two-movement unit, the same essential idea is being explored in a number of different ways, and expressed via a number of different strategies: an overarching funereal atmosphere, a limited collection of themes (indeed, themes derived from a single collection of motifs, such as rising sixths, repeated notes, and march topics) all intrude on each other and vie for space. In the second movement, these are stitched together by means of an octatonic strategy that uses a single diminished chord to link together tonally remote areas; it is squeezed into a sonata model that can barely contain it—occasionally, the intertextual references spill over outside the form, or the tonal energy of sonata form becomes too intense and boils over, pushing aside both its octatonic and rotational limits. Underneath both movements, however, lies a fundamental structuring principle—a hexatonic group, C#, F, and A, running throughout all of Part I. Here is the real hierarchy of the second movement: the hexatonic unity that links together A minor and F minor, and also links it to the C# minor of the first movement roots both movements, out of which flower the various surface strategies that give the movement its shape—sonata contrast, octatonic sets, thematic allusions.

⁶⁴ Monahan, ‘Success and Failure in Mahler’s Sonata Recapitulations’, 46.

It is as if under the surface of Part I lies something so immense that it cannot appear at once; instead, single elements force their way to the surface before subsiding or being forced back down by a new facet. Monahan has commented that in the first movement of the First Symphony, and the first movement of the Third, ‘the movement’s primary contrast obtains between the sonata- and non-sonata spaces rather than within the sonata itself’; I would argue that precisely the same conflict occurs in the second movement, to an even heightened degree: the sonata form is only one part of this movement, which itself is only one part of a larger duality.⁶⁵ The real dialogue is between that sonata form and everything that escapes it, the relationship between them, and the motivation behind them.

This reading is in danger of tipping over into a traditional formalist interpretation, one which posits an overall ‘unity’ and in the process neatly and tidily explaining the entire trajectory of a piece of music. The urge to such a reading should be resisted for a number of reasons: first, there is nothing remotely interesting, musicologically speaking, in such an analysis. It is the same kind of teleological, organicist formalism that has been critiqued over and over again—it simply explains away, or ignores, what is particular about this movement. Second, and relatedly, the process of that ‘explaining away’ overwrites an important source of meaning within this movement: it has already been noted that disruption and disunity are central features of Mahler’s symphonic language, here and in his large-scale orchestral works generally. As in the Schubert sonata in Part II, to discover an underlying logic that renders the musical surface wholly explicable would not constitute a greater understanding of the music: indeed, it would amount to entirely missing the point. And third, such a reading would not be Deleuzian. To posit that hexatony is the fundamental unifying force in the symphony, to which everything else can be reduced, is an act of extreme *generalization*. The point of this chapter is not to discover generality, but repetition.

⁶⁵ Monahan, ‘Success and Failure in Mahler’s Sonata Recapitulations’, 43 n. 46.

It is interesting to consider, then, the second movement not as a companion-piece to the first—another section of the same large work, both of which can be seen as growing out of the same seed—but as an *alternative* to the first. It is a different trajectory through the same musical space, a complex object viewed from a different angle. Hexatony is not the *ur*-form of this piece, if for no other reason than it is hopelessly indistinct: it is significant that it seldom appears on the musical surface in any appreciable form, and when it does, it only does so in passing, never in any systematic way. Hexatony has been inferred through close analysis, it is the common element in all the eccentricities of the first part of the symphony, but it does not tie up any of the investigative knots: the music's surface is still cracked with octatonic conflict and intertextual confusion, none of which is resolved by intimations of a *very* remote hexatonic network. Even after a lengthy analysis, the piece's 'identity'—the 'thing' that this piece is trying to be—is still unspeakable: Sonata Theory and neo-Riemannian analysis may have drawn out a little more information about its shape, but it is still impossible to see the whole thing at one glance. It is this tension that is at the heart of Deleuzian repetition, and the way in which Mahler thematizes this is most clearly seen by examining the final, and most shocking, excrescence in the second movement: the breakthrough.

5.6.3: Failure, Breakthrough, and Materiality

The tension at the heart of the Deleuzian conception of repetition has been formulated in this chapter *via* a topological metaphor: an object of transcendent dimensionality, forcing itself onto a plane of lesser dimension, such that it presents itself differently depending on the perspective from which it is observed (the orientation in which it emerges into the lesser plane). It is worth spending time with this metaphor, since topological formulations are prevalent in music analysis; indeed, I argue that they extend beyond mere analogy, to reveal a fundamental problem at the heart of

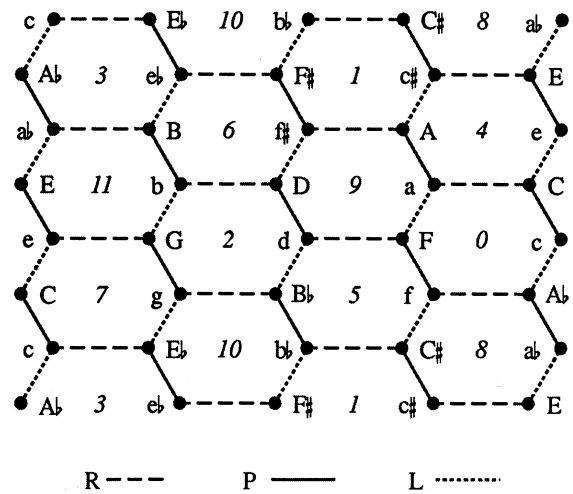


Figure 5.9: *The Chicken-Wire Torus*, taken from Douthett & Steinbach, 'Parsimonious Graphs', 248 Fig. 7a

analytical discourse. By exploring the topology of the second movement in relation to a Deleuzian analysis of repetition, I will show that the question of topology is fundamental to the nature of art music—it is in fact the very essence of what constitutes a musical performance.

One of the most obvious topological music-analytical constructions is Douthett and Steinbach's 'chicken-wire torus', already introduced in Chapter Three.⁶⁶ In flattened out form, it is simply a modified *Tonnetz*, one that shows progressions between triads by means of three common neo-Riemannian transformations. As explained in Chapter Three, because neo-Riemannian theory assumes enharmonic equivalence, the entire diagram can be folded back on itself. Notice that the highlighted $A\flat$ major on the right-hand side is in an area of the diagram otherwise in sharps: under this system, it is identical to the $A\flat$ major highlighted on the left-hand side. The left-hand side and the right-hand side can be joined, forming a seam; likewise, the very top and the very bottom can be joined (notice the identity in key areas there, too), forming a torus, as shown in Fig. 3.10, reprinted here for convenience. This supplantation of the tonal system is also a transcendence of it: the movement into three dimensions, which allows more flexible movement between sonorities that

⁶⁶ See Chapter Three, §III.2.1.

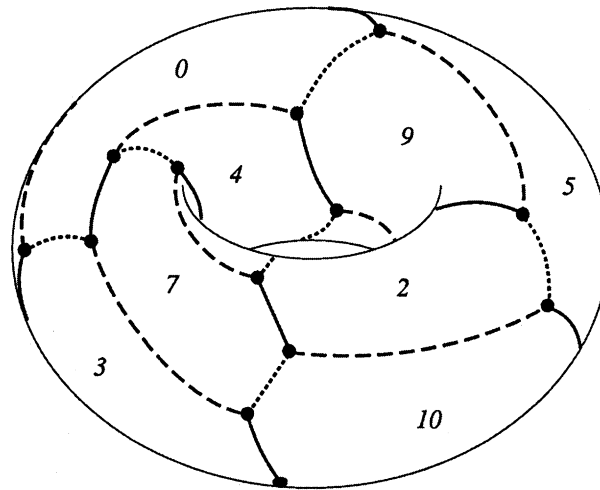


Figure 3.10: Douthett & Steinbach's toroidal arrangement of harmonic space, taken from 'Parsimonious Graphs', 248 Fig. 7b (reprinted)

would not be allowed within tonality, including crossing over the enharmonic divide, otherwise impermeable. Without enharmonic identity, the chicken-wire diagram could not be folded over: movement would be restricted to two dimensions. Enharmony allows bursting out into an additional dimension, effectively short-circuiting harmonic routes by moving across a solid body that would otherwise have to traverse a more complex route across a plane.

Another of Douthett and Steinbach's analytical tools takes this to the next level: the CubeDance revolves around the intersection of hexatonic systems and augmented chords. The premise is similar to the PowerTowers used in the Mahler analysis above: in CubeDance, groups of hexachordally related harmonies are joined via a fundamental augmented triad. CubeDance is illustrated in Figure 5.10. Despite the name, the complex network that Douthett and Steinbach have drawn is not a cube, but rather a hypercube: that is, it is a representation of a four-dimensional topology — it would be impossible to join the correct vertices of four cubes in the way this graph requires in three dimensions. The cubic nodes are three-dimensional, effectively miniature three-dimensional *Tonnetz* structures; the augmented triads that serve as their (absent) seams exist in on a different (conceptual, topological) level from the rest of the graph: incorporating them requires an extra dimension.

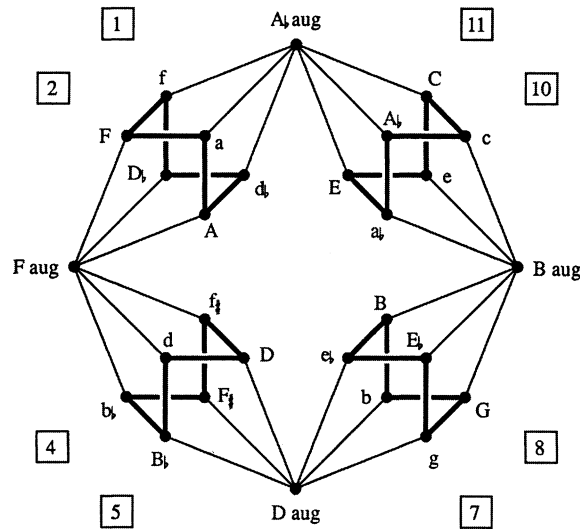


Figure 5.10: *CubeDance*, taken from Douthett & Steinbach, 'Parsimonious Graphs', 253 Fig. 9b

The point of this is not to suggest that this oblique approach to musical analysis approaches more truthfully the nature of music, but rather to argue for the opposite. Musical space, especially construed this way, is only a metaphor, and there is nothing four-dimensional about Mahler's music. Therefore, the claims such approaches implicitly make for themselves are potentially problematic. Humans in the 'real can theorize higher-dimensional space, even impute its existence, but cannot experience it. By contrast, neo-Reimannian theories such as the ones discussed here tacitly claim that 'musical four-dimensionality' *can* be experienced. The increasing level of abstraction, represented topologically by increasing numbers of dimensions is an analogy for—indeed, it may well be a direct consequence of—moving away from a relationship with how music is experienced, with music theory's humane roots in the cultural sedimentation of tonality. Folding the chicken-wire into torus, and constructing higher-dimensional CubeDances are a concerted effort to draw us away from how the music appears, and towards (necessarily) absent foci, such as augmented triads and hexatonic sets.

It must be stressed, this is not to deny that these foci exist: the reason these tools are so powerful is because they bring to the fore aspects of music's structuration that *cannot* be directly experienced, even if it does profoundly affect those parts of music

that *can* be. Nevertheless, the point of this chapter is not to focus exclusively on the transcendent proportions of 'what lies beneath', but rather to consider how it is brought into being. Is this not what the analysis offered above shows? Music must eventually be forced onto this existential plane, and it is precisely in the disjunction between its transcendent Ideal form and the limited dimensions of mundane time and space that these intriguing performative, analytical, and philosophical conundrums are formed. Mahler's movement is deformed not because it has transcended tonality (or form, or history), *but emphatically because it hasn't*: whatever 'music' is, it has to be squeezed into a historically mediated, temporally bounded form. And therefore what is fascinating about it is neither its analytical perfection in three, four, or however many dimensions, nor its 'real' existence as performed sound, but rather is the movement between one and the other.

In a sense, Hepokoski and Darcy's Sonata Theory presents exactly the kind of abstract perfectionism I have just objected to, at least according to its critics. Julian Horton has outlined an approach to the application of sonata models that he considers preferable; the similarities the approach taken here are clear. Arguing against the concept of 'deformation', he argues that 'nineteenth-century sonata forms are therefore in essence dialectical: they simultaneously acknowledge and supersede the high-classical model, whilst presenting the result as a synthetic whole. The dialectic is the norm of its time; Hepokoski's deformations are its individual manifestations'.⁶⁷ That is, according to Horton, rather than attempt to classify exactly each individual piece according to a Type, one should recognize that it is the movement from (perfect) Type to (imperfect) materialization in reality that is at the heart of the Romantic aesthetic; I believe this theory is borne out through this analysis of Mahler. Monahan refers to the prevalence of 'hypothetical music' in this movement: 'Mahler [...] so often requires us to distinguish between what is merely hinted at (or wished for) and

⁶⁷ Julian Horton, 'Bruckner's Symphonies and Sonata Deformation Theory', *Journal of the Society for Musicology in Ireland* Vol 1 (2005), 12.

what is conclusively attained'.⁶⁸ I would argue that, while it is certainly exemplified in this movement, music's (partially) hypothetical qualities have been encountered in all the music studied in this thesis: I believe it is a hallmark of the Western Art Tradition, the justification for Cook's instinct that 'there might be such a thing as music' beyond and outside of its own performances.

With this in mind, Mahler's approach to breakthrough in this movement takes on a special significance. The D major chorale is a breakthrough in a double sense: it has the air of a promise, a promise of the breakthrough to come in the final movement, when the whole symphony is wrenched up a semitone from C# to D. Indeed Caroline Baxendale terms the chorale breakthrough in the second movement 'an anticipatory vision' of the final movement's apotheosis.⁶⁹ But 'apotheosis' is not quite the right word. Breakthroughs are understood in Sonata Theory as coda-events that make up for failed sonata schemes: if, for example, a sonata recapitulation does not adequately secure the tonic key, some 'outside force' can intrude upon the coda in a blaze of glory—a sort of tonal *deus ex machina*. In other words, the breakthrough in the second movement is, first and foremost, a gesture that claims 'D major is the answer to all your problems—and here it is'. This is a problematic claim, however. As I have demonstrated, the 'issues' of this movement exceed a failed sonata form: the tension in this movement is the impossibility of bringing into being of an inchoate musical idea so immense that only glimpses of it are possible—shared themes and hexatonic ties.

The D major chorale cannot fulfil the role of the breakthrough, and, as I shall show, to do so would be problematic in any case. The materiality of the chorale, and therefore its ontological conflict with the idea of transcendent 'breakthrough', is deeply encoded in the key scheme of the second movement, and the symphony as a whole. D major is not part of the generative HexaCycle that seems to constitute the

⁶⁸ Monahan, 'Success and Failure in Mahler's Sonata Recapitulations', 47.

⁶⁹ Caroline Baxendale, 'The Finale of Mahler's Fifth Symphony: Long-Range Musical Thought', *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, Vol. 112 No. 2 (1986–7), 270.

arena of whatever lies beneath the extraordinary two-movement superstructure. By contrast, it *is* part of the octatonic scheme that structures the second movement's surface. As Fig. 5.6 showed, all the dissonant tonalities within the posited A minor tonal structure belong to the group generated by O₂: the second subject, foreshadowed in the first movement, moves from F minor to A^b major; the fragment of the first movement's second subject at bars 266–287 is in B major; and finally the chorale, anticipating the end of the final movement, in D major. In other words, they form a set—a rising chain of minor thirds throughout the movement, whose final element is a triumphant D major.

This long-range bass progression reading would point to the arrival of D major not as an external force erupting into the musical landscape, but the fulfillment of a long-term musical goal, something with which the movement achieves completeness. A related phenomenon can likewise be observed at the multi-movement level. Warren Darcy notes how the final movement's D major tonality completes a descending chain of thirds across the whole symphony (excluding Part II's scherzo, which is both an interloper and another premonition of the symphony's end): C#–A–F–D.⁷⁰ Darcy, however, does not emphasize that the shift from major to minor thirds at the last moment is significant. A continuation of the chain of major thirds would lead to a final movement in C# minor—a cyclical structure, but more importantly, one that would remain within the hexatonic collection C#–A–F. While hexatony in this symphony has been interpreted as primordial, signifying (or indeed embodying) the deep structure of the music—that which cannot establish itself at the surface—octatony by contrast has been identified with this musical surface itself—that which is brought into being in the music as it appears in the score/in performance. Thus the double appearance of D major in triumphant chorale form, could signify the abandonment of the unknown primordially working beneath the surface, in favour of the octatonic

⁷⁰ Warren Darcy 'Rotational Form, Teleological Genesis and Fantasy-Projection in the Slow Movement of Mahler's Sixth Symphony', *19th-Century Music* Vol. 25, No. 1 (Summer, 2001), 50 n. 2.

collections that are the hallmark of surfaces: it is the stability hard reality, it is plenitude.

There is a generalized anxiety about the role of apotheotic breakthroughs in Mahler symphonies along precisely these lines. William Kinderman has noted Alma Mahler's negative judgment on the final movement's chorale: 'she related that when Mahler first played the symphony for her at the piano in the autumn of 1902, she told him that the chorale at the conclusion was "hymnal and boring", and that he was "not [...] at his best in working up a church chorale"''.⁷¹ Adorno's critique is even more damning: 'his voice cracks, like Nietzsche's, when he proclaims values, speaks from mere conviction, when he himself puts into practice the abhorrent notion of overcoming on which the thematic analyses capitalize, and makes music as if joy were already in the world'.⁷² There is an aesthetic as well as an ethical question-mark over Mahler's breakthroughs: not only can they seem overblown, but they are morally questionable in their decisive self-satisfaction. The sublimity of the final movement's chorale intimates Utopia, and the chorale in the context of the breakthrough implies Utopia established.

This sense is emphasized, and given greater depth, by the analytic context that has been established: that the rhetorical weight of the transcendent chorale coincides with the music's breaking out from the primordial hexatonic collection into the 'worldly' D major confirms Adorno's suspicion that Mahler is writing 'as if joy were already in the world'. In the second movement, D major is doubly significant, lying outside the hexatonic space, and as the long-term harmonic goal of the interpolated globally dissonant sections. Rather than signifying the 'beyond', the realm outside reality, this breakthrough seems to confirm that the beyond has come to us, has appeared in the world: the chorale topic, with its Christological overtones, is apposite.

⁷¹ William Kinderman, "'Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen": Mahler's Rückert Setting and the Aesthetics of Integration in the Fifth Symphony', *The Musical Quarterly* Vol. 88 No. 2 (Summer, 2005): 233.

⁷² Adorno, *Mahler*, 138.

However, exactly the idea that Utopia can be brought into being, as the very goal of the Enlightenment project, is the target of Adorno and Horkheimer's criticisms in the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*.⁷³ From the various Heideggerian, Lacanian and a materialist dialectical perspectives that this thesis takes it also is philosophically problematic: the necessary absence of Being, the impossibility of looking upon the Real, and the importance of the movement between (rather than the synthesis of) the Ideal and Material poles, are all central to the concept of the artwork—indeed the concept of existence—that this thesis has been arguing for.

Perhaps it is for these reasons that recent commentators have been moved to comment on the ways Mahler undermines these narratives of sublime resolution: William Kinderman claims that the intertextual links between the fourth and fifth movements of the Second Symphony override and undermine the importance of the final chorale;⁷⁴ James Buhler investigates the way that the chorale at the end of Mahler's First Symphony is incongruent with structural closure, undermining its rhetorical effect;⁷⁵ and Warren Darcy posits that

In Mahler's Sixth Symphony, which ends in A minor, the *Erlösung* paradigm not only fails but also carries even more disturbing implications. As it proceeds the work appears to question or even deny the worth of the aspiration itself: it posits utopia as an illusion, a self-deluding conceit, the pursuit of which is ultimately futile. From this point of view, the work is not adequately characterized by its traditional title: more than "tragic," this symphony is resolutely nihilistic.⁷⁶

⁷³ In Adorno and Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, trans. John Cumming (London and New York: Verso, 1997).

⁷⁴ 'This affirmative gesture [the final chorale] is also surely critiqued within the work itself. On the one hand, hints of parody in the preceding music from the Adagietto introduce a sense of ironic distance'. Kinderman, "'Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen'", 264. See also 247–57, and 264–8.

⁷⁵ 'Mahler's finale [...] articulates the transcendent chorale as a formal problem. This is a problem that the acceptance of the conventional schema of the darkness-to-light schema mitigates but does not solve'. James Buhler, "Breakthrough" as Critique of Form: The Finale of Mahler's First Symphony', *19th-Century Music* Vol. 20, No. 2 (Autumn, 1996), 128; 'that the transcendent moment is not at the same time a moment of return is ultimately what condemns the chorale to arbitrariness' (ibid., 137).

⁷⁶ Darcy, 'Rotational Form', 50. It should be noted that Darcy launches a positively acidic critique of James Buhler, stating that 'Buhler combines a fundamentally flawed understanding of the concept of

Whether or not one agrees with Kinderman, proof that the Symphony as a whole undermines the overblown ‘yea-saying’ that Adorno heard is not within the scope of this chapter. Instead—happily for this reading, perhaps—the enormous rhetorical claim of the D major chorale in the second movement eventually fails, and we are left with the overwhelming sense that whatever was being brought into being has remained resolutely in the background. And the philosophical significance of that is the focus of the remainder of this chapter.

5.7: To Be in Time

The scepticism of the score, and the more complex intuition of what constitutes a ‘work’, demonstrated by the Music as Performance paradigm is not uniquely proper to it, but rather is a feature shared with Adorno. In the Preface to the second German edition of his book on Mahler, Adorno writes:

In the opening Adagio [of the Tenth Symphony], which is clearly the furthest advanced, sometimes only the harmonic “chorale” and one or two main parts are written down, the contrapuntal fabric being merely indicated. However, the layout of the work and the whole approach of Mahler’s late style leave no doubt that it is only the harmonic polyphony, the tissue of voices within the framework of the chorale, that would have brought into being the concrete form of the music itself.⁷⁷

There is a fruitful tension at work here: while the ‘core’ of the movement is extant within the sketches, Adorno suggests that ‘the music itself’ can only be brought out by means of the missing detail. Out of all possible solutions that could be proposed from this evaluation, Adorno advocates the most unexpected. He rejects the

Durchbruch with an analysis of the finale of Mahler’s First Symphony that is both naïve and indefensible’ (ibid., 63 n. 27). While I do not share Darcy’s animosity, I do agree that, *pace* Buhler, ‘breakthrough as a deformational technique emphatically does constitute a transcendent critique of sonata form’ (ibid.), and it is on this understanding I have interpreted the breakthroughs in Mahler’s Fifth Symphony in this chapter.

⁷⁷ Adorno, *Mahler*, x.

possibility of performing the sketches as they are found, since ‘one arrives at something incomplete and contradictory to [Mahler’s] intention’.⁷⁸ He also rejects the idea of fleshing out the sketches into a fuller texture, since ‘the adaptation usurps the true theatre of Mahler’s own productivity’.⁷⁹ But neither does he admit defeat and concede that ‘the music itself’ of the Tenth Symphony is irretrievable. He instead posits that ‘someone who senses the extraordinary scope of the conception of the Tenth ought to do without adaptations and performances’, and, drawing a parallel with unfinished paintings by Old Masters, suggests that ‘anyone who understands them and can visualize how they might have been completed would prefer to file them away and contemplate them privately, rather than hang them on the wall’.⁸⁰ It is clear that although the *bringing into being* of music is key for Adorno—in those terms, the sketches are incomplete enough to render them useless for performance—this is separable from the *existence* of the music (itself), which can be inferred, and perhaps even accessed, through contemplation, that is to say, intellection. It is debatable whether or not Adorno is correct in his rejection of completions by other composers (how important is the ‘authenticity’ of Mahler’s hand in the bringing into being of music? Naturally, it would be a different piece, but not necessarily any less of a piece), but it is certain that it is precisely his scepticism about the score that allows a separation of ‘work’ and ‘performance’. The work exists whether or not the score is complete: it does not exist in the same way—in this world, as it were—but it can be adumbrated.

It is possible, then, to separate out some of the issues laid out at the start of this chapter. Adorno’s comments are formally identical to the idea of musical performance constituting the ‘reality’ of a musical work, but this adds new depth: performances constitute the reality of a work insofar as they are the appearing of that work in reality—a not insignificant quality, but formally discrete from the identity of the work

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

itself. Obsessing over the maintenance (or not) of fixed features across performances was something of a dead-end, therefore. It was necessary to explore the logic of score-based performance in detail, since that is the logic upon which Music as Performance, as well as a good proportion of analytical study, has thus far been founded; however, it now seems obvious that the identity of a musical work does not lie in either the score or its performances, but rather in the fact that both the score and its performances are appearances of an inner musical idea, the final stage of bringing-into-being of 'the music itself'. And I argue, furthermore, that this understanding of performance is itself being performed in the Fifth Symphony: Mahler thematizes the bringing-into-being of the musical idea in the form of his disjointed, ill-fitting, two-movement complex. What remains to be settled, then, is what precisely—ontologically—is that 'musical idea'?

In fact, this is formally identical to the question 'what is the secret subject that lies beneath the surface of repetition', which was intentionally left unanswered above. It would be too simplistic to christen this subjectivity 'Mahler' (for this reason I do not share Adorno's distaste for 'inauthentic' completions), and too fanciful to suggest that it is the symphony itself, directing itself. It has been stated above that the secret subject of repetition is *music itself*, distinct from *the music itself*, a distinction I now explain.

It was noted above that Deleuze posited that the 'secret verticality', the true source of repetition, was 'furnished by the death instinct'. This is a statement about the nature of human subjectivity. Freud, in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, came to the conclusion that consciousness—itself a gross excrescence in what is otherwise a simple chemical reaction of growth, reproduction, and decay—was determined by the death drive: death, as the inevitable and necessary end of human life, rendered consciousness and human subjectivity nothing more than a sheer act of will, an ongoing process of self-creation, merely the continuation—the repetition—of an organism thrust into consciousness, into an awareness of time.⁸¹ Or as Heidegger said,

⁸¹ Sigmund Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (Pacific Publishing Company: 2010).

a human—in his terms, *Dasein*—is ‘distinguished by the fact that, in its very Being, that Being is an *issue* for it’: in other words, humans are conscious of their own Being, we are aware we exist.⁸² So one might say, combining the several angles, that humans are the beings forced to narrate their own lives, by the fact that they are aware of what life (and thus, death) is.

It is a commonplace that music is one of the ways humans narrate their own existence, literally giving significance to the passing of time, by making time itself signify; as Susanne Langer put it, ‘music makes time audible, and its form and continuity sensible’.⁸³ It would be a straightforward claim that the ultimate arbitrariness of the tonal or chromatic system mirrors the arbitrariness of conscious existence, as does the drive nevertheless to imbue both with meaning. J. P. E. Harper-Scott has criticized such a superficial reading while dealing with the topic of meaning in music: ‘poststructuralists would agree with Heidegger’s argument that, as a language-bearing being, man invests the world with meaning, but they run to a different conclusion. For the poststructuralist, it therefore follows that the world is either intrinsically meaningless, or else that such meaning as it has ought not to be trusted, because it was made up by a controlling elite’.⁸⁴ But in a Heideggerian reading, precisely because what is human about humans is understanding, that is never an issue. Meaning may be incomplete, but it is never absent—not only is it all we have, it is what we are: ‘on [Heidegger’s] view, we are always understanding, never not understanding. As Gadamer puts it: “Heidegger’s temporal analytics of *Dasein* has, I think, shown convincingly that understanding is not just one of the various possible behaviours of the subject but the mode of being of *Dasein* itself”’.⁸⁵ Even Gallope agrees on this point. Heideggerian ‘Being’ is broadly analogous to Deleuze’s ‘virtual’, while the passing-into-being, Heideggerian ‘understanding’, or

⁸² Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie & Edward Robinson (Oxford: Blackwell, 1962), 32.

⁸³ Susanne Langer, *Feeling and Form: A Theory of Art* (New York: Scribner’s, 1953), 110.

⁸⁴ J. P. E. Harper-Scott, *Edward Elgar: Modernist* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 166.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 156.

simply the psychoanalytic idea of 'subjectivization'—all of which is to say, the grouping of this undifferentiated virtual into language in order to make sense of it—is termed the 'actual'. Gallope states that 'we can't entirely do without the actual. That would risk absolute deterritorialization, or death, making a life nothing more than a chaotic or purely accidental bustle of indifferent matter that is purely external to itself'.⁸⁶ In the context of the Freudian reading advanced above, the full resonance of the word 'death' should be apparent: without the actual—without understanding—there is no life, only a meaningless chemical reaction ending in death.

I am led to conclude, therefore, that both parts of being are essential and interlinked: being-in-the-world is partial, a mere repetition, founded on a fracture of meaning; what holds it together—what guarantees the identity of the being-in-the-world—is the consciousness, the Dasein, the death drive. Or in Deleuze's more poetic language: 'Eros [pleasure principle/'living'] and Thanatos [death drive/consciousness (of death)] are distinguished in that Eros must be repeated, can be lived only through repetition, whereas Thanatos (as transcendental principle) is that which gives repetition to Eros, that which submits Eros to repetition'.⁸⁷ Since, following Deleuze, the 'Self itself is a contemplation',⁸⁸ this has ramifications for the nature of time, too: 'the synthesis of time constitutes the present in time. It is not that the present is a dimension of time: the present alone exists. Rather, synthesis constitutes time as a living present, and the past and the future as dimensions of this present'.⁸⁹ So the secret subject of repetition is always the self as contemplation, human consciousness, Dasein as understanding.

Is this not precisely the nature of music? Something transcendent of meaning, unrepresentable, beyond time, but that must pass into time in order to 'really' exist. Mahler's symphony, by laying bare its construction, its process of passing into time,

⁸⁶ Gallope, 'Is there a Deleuzian musical work?', 100.

⁸⁷ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 22.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 97.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 101.

performs this truth of all art music. Music is not, therefore, a crude a metaphor for human meaning in temporality, it *is* human temporality. Harper-Scott agrees on the fundamental similarity of musical and human temporality—‘music is a mimesis of humankind’s temporal existence’—but is emphatic about the distance between music and Dasein.⁹⁰ That is, he stresses that music is *only* mimetic of humanity, it is not humanity itself (albeit, mimetic in a strong, Heideggerian sense): ‘I stress again that I do not mean to equate music directly with Dasein: they are utterly different things’.⁹¹ I take a more extreme view than Harper-Scott on this issue; this is partly due to differences in the contexts we are examining. Harper-Scott is denying that a specific piece of music is a specific Dasein: Mahler’s Fifth Symphony, in other words, is not a Dasein, but ‘J. P. E. Harper-Scott’ is. On this we can agree. But music *is* ‘Dasein’ in the sense that it is part of human thought brought into existence—it is of a piece with the very texture of Being. That is to say, Mahler’s Fifth Symphony has a relationship to ‘Dasein’ in the same way that ‘a piece of music’ has a relationship to ‘music itself’ (once again, distinct from the Platonist idea of *the* music itself).

Nevertheless, the ends are the same: to treat music in this way is to testify to the existence of Being, to testify that there is such a thing as the Idea, as the Self (which, in music, are the same: not the Self of Mahler, or of the performer, but human Selfhood generally—the state of being Dasein). Although we can never reach it, we can reach for it, and we can advocate for its implicit existence. And one of the ways of doing this is precisely *not* by simply reducing it to its sounding, or to its use as a medium of relations between people, but by commanding a deep respect for its *intellectual* content: by thinking about music, as Adorno did, as an object to be thought about—indeed, as a thought-object, in the sense that it *is* thought. Not ‘a thought’, not a single piece of music as a single Idea, but music as thought in general.

⁹⁰ Harper-Scott, *Edward Elgar: Modernist*, 171.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 61.

Nor does this understanding of music as essentially the making-sensible of human Being have to conflict with any theory of musical performance—where this chapter began. Indeed, David J. Elliott has provided a compelling theory of the performance of musical thought: ‘that the intentional human action we call musical performing is cognitive, or thought-*full*, is the first step in expanding our understanding of what counts as knowledge. It leads us to a new epistemology, one in which knowing is not restricted to words and other symbols, but is also manifested in doing. People know many things and hold many concepts that cannot be reduced to conventional language terms.’⁹²

In a wide-ranging article that begins with what seems like a conventional attack on musical formalism—‘according to the aesthetic concept, music is a collection of autonomous pieces, works, or aesthetic objects that exist to be contemplated in abstraction from their contexts of use and production’⁹³—Elliott moves to a provocative rallying call for a reconceptualization of how music and knowledge interrelate. Far from opposing the uncovering of a piece’s internal workings with its performance—in other words, rather than subordinating the supposed ‘content’ of music with the social dynamics involved in bringing it to life—he makes a convincing case as to why, in successful performance, they are one and the same. He begins by noting a peculiarity in the way human aptitude is perceived:

There is a critical lack of understanding about what successful practitioners actually ‘know’ when they know how to do something well. On one hand, we have little difficulty identifying surgeons, basketball players, singers, teachers (and so on) who perform well. We recognize quality in practical performances when we see it. On the other hand, we understand little about the nature of such performances. The tendency in the literature is to dismiss such practical ‘doings’ in one of two ways: either coldly, as

⁹² David J. Elliott, ‘Music as Knowledge’ *The Journal of Aesthetic Education* Vol. 25 No. 3 (Autumn, 1991), 26.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 22.

matters of mindless 'skill' [...], or warmly, as the outcomes of talent, intuition, inspiration, and so on.⁹⁴

This serves as a partial rejoinder to Nicholas Cook's rather bald juxtaposition in his claim that music is 'a performing art, that is to say one that is not reproduced but rather *created* in the act of performance'.⁹⁵ The type of creation Cook is talking about is precisely that pure physicality that contrasts so strongly with supposedly 'musical' meaning: 'one would understand ensemble performance as a process of interpersonal negotiation (of rhythm, tempo, texture, dynamics, articulation, and intonation), the outcomes of which may be in some respects scripted by a score but remain fundamentally emergent. Put another way, music is the audible trace of a process of social interaction'.⁹⁶ On the other hand, Elliott's conception of musical *creation* is powerful precisely because it relates to knowledge, not as a demonstration of some prior (verbal) knowledge, but as a form of knowledge itself: 'Gilbert Ryle makes the point succinctly: "Overt intelligent performances are not clues to the workings of minds; they are those workings". [...] The notion that thinking is a purely "mental" phenomenon, that thinking is only expressed verbally, still dominates many philosophical considerations of epistemology and cognition'.⁹⁷ He uses an analogy with quotation to drive home the message that musical performance is more than musical production, because it relies on some conception of understanding:

When we say that a pianist is performing Bach's English Suite no. 2 in A Minor what we mean, in part, is that the performer is producing the precise sounds indicated in the score and deliberately intending that the sounds he or she makes are those that Bach stipulated. To this extent what a musical performer does is analogous to what a speaker does when he or she utters a quotation. But there is obviously more to a performance than this. [...] Quoting John Paul Jones to assert a point demands that I first understand

⁹⁴ Ibid., 24.

⁹⁵ Cook, 'Revisiting the Future', 20.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 16.

⁹⁷ Elliott, 'Music as Knowledge', 26.

what Jones means (that I interpret Jones correctly) and that I consider how Jones's words will be understood in context [...] Performing a musical work [...] is parallel to quoting someone else's words in order to assert something. One produces the notated sounds of a musical composition (as one might speak Jones's precise words) in order to express one's concept or interpretation of the composition (as one might assert one's understanding or interpretation of what John Paul Jones meant by his words). Performing a musical work, then, is matter of understanding and interpreting as well as producing.⁹⁸

Of course, Elliot's example is only an analogy, albeit a powerful one, because he has already made clear that knowledge is not a purely verbal phenomenon. He thus avoids all of the usual problems that obtain when making comparisons between music and language, because his whole point is that knowledge, while it can be expressed in language (understood as a verbal or written phenomenon), can likewise be expressed in *action*, including musical action. And since these actions thereby become 'thought-full', as he puts it, he also opens up the possibility to transcend the critique that musical formalism is tainted by its association by language. On this reading, music-theoretical insights would not be troublingly restrictive linguistic formulations foisted upon some freer, socialized form of musical performance; rather, music theory merely verbalizes the musical knowledge that expert performance performs. Both are just different ways of bringing this 'knowledge'—this residue of human Being—into the world.

Knowing music is what Daphne Leong would term *kennen*: neither knowing what something is abstractly (*wissen*), nor merely knowing how to make something work in practice (*können*), but rather understanding it in both senses at once, knowing it as one might know a person.⁹⁹ In Leong's construction this type of knowledge is a dialectic between the other two types of knowledge, and so the links with the philosophy engaged thus far are readily appreciable: musical knowledge as displayed

⁹⁸ Ibid., 30–1.

⁹⁹ Daphne Leong, 'Analysis and Performance' unpaginated (paragraph 17).

in performance is a dialectic between the ideal content of music (*wissen*) and its material execution (*können*).¹⁰⁰ It is therefore possible to talk about a ‘horizontal’ relationship between the score and performances, albeit in a subtly different way, if rather than being treated as co-extensive—either singly or in concert—with the musical ‘work’, they are understood as different material instantiations of an idea. They are the bringing forth in music of an idea of the Self, the secret subject of repetition, which itself is nothing other than the ‘Ideal’, since it is now clear that human life, from this radically ontological perspective, is at bottom conceptual. It is worth noting, therefore, the difference between human life in this conceptual sense, and human existence in a mundane sense. An explanation of this difference concludes this chapter, and the main part of the thesis.

5.8: From the Work-Concept to Music as Work.

This chapter has proposed a new approach to thinking about music as performance, rejecting the sociological model that is currently prevalent within the academy. In its place, a materialist dialectic—first introduced in Part II—has been proposed, with musical performance seen as (part of) the necessary materialist pole, bringing into being something called ‘music’, which ultimately has been shown to be of a piece with human consciousness, and by extension humanity itself. There are various ethical facets to this. There is an ethical undercurrent to the overriding question of this thesis, namely, ‘what’s the point of writing about music?’: given the basic injunction that actions should not make the world worse, and ideally should make it better (rather than, for example, being pointless), this chapter has shown how theoretical, analytical writing about music is neither deleterious or redundant. I have responded to the charges levelled against a certain type of abstract, ideal engagement with music, namely that it cannot give an adequate account of musical performance, by

¹⁰⁰ In the previous chapter, this difference was explained with Harper-Scott’s use of Dilthey’s differentiation of ‘*Erklären*’ and ‘*verstehen*’, ‘explaining’ and ‘understanding’.

demonstrating that it is only by engaging with the theoretical limits of musical works we can come to terms fully with what musical performance is.

I furthermore demonstrated that the approach advocated by the 'Music as Performance' movement fails to give an account of musical performance in an intellectually rigorous way, abdicating, meanwhile, their ethnographic responsibility to engage with Western Art Music in the way it is intended to be received by its practitioners, by erasing the invocations of transcendence and (semi-)autonomy that are so evident within the idiom. Incontrovertible ethnographic evidence has been marshalled to demonstrate that a continuous tradition exists wherein music has been composed, performed, and received a body of repertoire to this end: from Nicholas Cook's own observations of Michelangeli's 'sacramental' piano performances, Philip Auslander's comments on the modest dress and lighting of classical musical ensembles, to Mahler's own comments on his use of abstract forms, this understanding of musical 'transcendence' is incontrovertible. Moreover, an extended case study was used to suggest that this very ontology of music was thematized in the second movement of Mahler's Fifth Symphony.¹⁰¹

It would be wrong, of course, to posit this as the *only* way that Western Art Music can (or should) be approached: to do so would be an authoritarian move, empowering only a very narrow means of understanding music, to the disparagement of countless other ways (some of which were outlined in Part I). It is therefore extremely interesting to note the implicit authoritarianism of Cook's position, determining in what ways music ought to be significant, to the exclusion of theorists, analysts, and as has been shown, the performers themselves. Indeed, a theoretical understanding of music is decidedly less authoritarian, since in an ideal world (no pun intended) any enculturated listener is capable of understanding a musical work defined conceptually; understanding music only as performance transfers all

¹⁰¹ This is in no way to imply that Western Art Music is the *only* idiom to (attempt to) achieve this; it is, however, the exclusive focus of this thesis.

authority to those in control of the transmission of the performance—usually performers themselves, but also festival directors, architects, and of course performance analysts themselves, who act as mediating forces between performances and readers. With no other recourse on which to fall back, we only have access to (for example) Cook’s reification of a performance situation, his values, and his construction of the musical object.

Nevertheless, this chapter, especially in the context of the preceding chapters, has opened a significantly larger ethical arena than merely the question of whether a particular approach to writing about music is worthwhile or a waste of time and resources. Chapter Four advanced an idea of ethics that moved away from simple moralizing, towards ontology. Ethics, following Badiou, is about the construction of a subjectivity that has an authentic relationship with the ontology of the world—in this case, the world of music. Thus one might aver that the double meaning of ‘right’—both ‘correct’ and ‘morally good’—exceeds mere chance, and reveals an ethical truth: that what is good, in the end, is simply what is correct. Though this might seem blunt or redundant, it is neither: for example, the MAP discourse analysed in this chapter explicitly disavows any real ontological investigation, relying instead on a purely ontic formulation of music, which in this thesis has been aligned with materialism in its philosophical *and* political senses—caught up in relativism, commodification, and the pre-eminence of exchange over more humanistic values. Even the quality of music’s dimensions, examined in §5.6.3, is ethically fraught. Considerations of music’s literal ‘transcendence’ are considerations of what music *is* in the world: reducing it to its bare materiality has been extensively critiqued as an ideologically motivated move in line with the political desires of late capitalist hegemony, but—as Alma Mahler suspected—pretending that its transcendence can be fully manifested, either in performance or simply in language, is suspect too. The approach here, which gives a dialectically materialist framework within which to understand these facets of music’s ontology, is therefore an attempt at an *ethics of musicology*.

Finally, as noted at the end of Chapter Four, ethical situations (which are, by their very nature, ideal) are always expressed as political concerns; it is not surprising, therefore, that the ontology of music outlined here has political ramifications. It is worthwhile to conclude by considering in what state the concept of musical ‘work’ has been left. Since the Platonist Ideal work has long been dispensed with, it does not make sense to talk about some kind of Ur-Symphony that is ‘really’ Mahler’s Fifth—a network of hexatonic relations, or a collection of shared themes. Nevertheless, the purely materialistic regulative concept theorized by Goehr, or the performative horizon outlined by Cook now no longer function either, given just how far beyond any plausible score or possible performance the analysis above has travelled. Rather, the musical work can be seen as some kind of vanishing point: closer and closer contact with, for example, the second movement of the Fifth Symphony gets us closer and closer to what was termed above *bare music*. Paradoxically, the closer we get to bare music, the less it has to do with something recognizable as the second movement of the Fifth Symphony; this, however, is precisely what makes music special—it puts us in touch not with something historically specific and analytically mediated, but something profoundly, beautifully, humanly general: human consciousness itself. As Deleuze and Guattari themselves say, ‘if successful, [the] monumental and permanent work produces a metaphysical incarnation of what all music can do at any point in space or time, that is, produce an absolute “sensation in itself”, stripped of all worldly mediation and interpretation, revealing the ontological variety of all there is’.¹⁰²

The word ‘work’ is still highly apposite, however. Since music is an intentional object, it is something into which work has been put. Likewise, and again in contradistinction to the postmodern fashion for intuitive reaction and total interpretative freedom, extracting this facet of music itself requires prolonged work: all of the analyses collected in this thesis have been *processes*, not in the sense that there

¹⁰² Quoted in Michael Gallope, ‘Cavell and Deleuze’, *Journal of Music Theory* Vol 54. No. 1 (Spring, 2010), 111.

has been a progression from surface/lack of understanding to depth/understanding, but rather that the process itself constituted the analysis, to the extent that the analytical imperative is *not* to conclude, but rather to keep the dialectical movement further and further inward going. This, clearly, is work: it is an activity that must keep going, rather than a postmodern instant of subjective self-creation, which has more in common with consumption. Elliott has furthermore shown that the performance of this music is a demonstration of constructive knowledge—it is work, in the sense that it brings something real into being. Extending this distinctly Marxian approach to the concept of work is productive, revealing entirely different relationships with time and temporality.

Under a Marxian reading, the recognition of a piece of music as a ‘work’ is inherently a temporal concern, since human work is principally understood as a ‘coagulation’ of socially useful labour-time. Since alienating an object from its labour-time is the principal means by which capitalism exploitatively generates surplus value, it is tempting to suggest that the New Musicological problematization of the musical work is nothing more than the effects of a (historically contemporaneous) neo-liberalizing ideology that consolidates the capitalist process of the commodification of everything. Whilst the idea of a musical object congealing time within itself is attractive, I do not think one needs to be as blunt as this. Instead, Hannah Arendt’s distinction between ‘labour’ and ‘work’ is useful here. For Arendt, ‘labour’ is that which is required simply to maintain life—those things, in other words, that are immediately used up, that have no permanence: food that is eaten, clothes that wear out. ‘Work’ attests to the other side of human life: that which makes merely existing into living. ‘Viewed as part of the world, the products of work—and not the products of labour—guarantee the permanence and durability without which a world would not be possible at all’.¹⁰³ Arendt recalls the Ancient Greek distinction between *zoē* and *bios*, ‘bare life’ and ‘living’: labour sustains *zoē*, the chemical act of not dying, whereas

¹⁰³ Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), 94.

work has to do with *bios*, something specifically human. ‘The chief characteristic of this specifically human life [...] is that it is itself always full of events which ultimately be told as a story, establish a biography; it is of this life, *bios* [living] as distinguished from mere *zoē* [life], that Aristotle said that it “somehow is a kind of *praxis*”’.¹⁰⁴ The resonances with the Heideggerian, Deleuzian, and Freudian perspectives invoked so far are unmistakable: Heidegger’s prioritization of understanding as the Dasein’s mode of being, Freud’s elevation of consciousness to an excrescence in excess of chemical existence, and Deleuze’s resistance to the deterritorialization of ‘death’ or uncathected life—all are drawn in to Arendt’s formulation of work.

Therefore, in our own discipline, stressing the importance of musical ‘works’ is not to guard against the labour-time of the composer being ignored or exploited, but rather to ensure that music is not limited merely to the mundane and utilitarian aspect of the human life-cycle. This itself gives rise to an entirely different conception of time, one that exceeds human temporality encountered ordinarily: what Alain Badiou might call ‘Immortality’.¹⁰⁵ Arguing against a conception of humanity that ‘equates man with his animal substructure’ and ‘reduces him to the level of a living organism pure and simple’,¹⁰⁶ he instead proposes that ‘Man is to be identified by his affirmative thought, by the singular truths of which he is capable, by the Immortal which makes him the most resilient and most paradoxical of animals’.¹⁰⁷ This is based on his extensive ontology, in which he rejects the idea that ‘there are only bodies and

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 97.

¹⁰⁵ See Alain Badiou, *Ethics: An Essay on the Understanding of Evil*, trans. Peter Hallward (New York and London: Verso, 2012), 10–13. He has elsewhere noted the Aristotelian legacy of this concept, especially its identification with humanity’s capacity for intellection. This is most notable in *The Nichomachean Ethics*: ‘so if the intellect is divine compared with man, the life of the intellect must be divine compared with the life of a human being. [...] we ought, so far as in us lies, to put on immortality, and do all that we can to live in conformity with the highest that is in us’. Aristotle, *The Nichomachean Ethics*, trans. J. A. K. Thompson and Hugh Tredennick (London: Penguin Books, 2004), 272.

¹⁰⁶ Badiou, *Ethics*, 12.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 16.

languages',¹⁰⁸ and instead that 'life is a subjective category. A body is the materiality that life requires, but the becoming of the present depends on the disposition of this body in a subjective formalism'.¹⁰⁹ As before, this is based on Badiou's demonstration that human beings are dual creatures: 'according to human finitude, two situations are separable: those which are subsumed under the attribute of thought (*cogitatio*) and those under the attribute of extension (*extensio*). The being of this particular mode that is a human animal is to co-belong to these two situations'.¹¹⁰

Works, therefore as edifices to *bios*—'living'—are permanent (to use Arendt's word) not because they last forever, but because they point to the timelessness of human Being: 'because of their outstanding permanence, works of art are the most intensely worldly of all tangible things [...]. It is as though worldly stability had become transparent in the permanence of art, so that a premonition of immortality, not the immortality of the soul or of life but of something immortal achieved by mortal hands, had become tangibly present'.¹¹¹ Arendt is likewise forceful about the 'immortality' of art's relation to human intellection, and intellection's separation from humanity's merely animal nature: 'the immediate source of the art work is the human capacity for thought [...]. These are capacities of man and not mere attributes of the human animal like feelings, wants, and needs, to which they are related and which often constitute their content. Such human properties are as unrelated to the world which man creates as his home on earth as the corresponding properties of other animal species'.¹¹² Thus, although *life* is temporally limited, linked to a cycle of growth and decay (or as Deleuze would say, 'bare repetition') *living* is eternal, and it is to that aspect that the work of art speaks: 'we need not choose here between Plato and Protagoras, or decide whether man or a god should be the measure of all things; what

¹⁰⁸ Alain Badiou, *Logics of Worlds: Being and Event II*, trans. Alberto Toscano (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 1

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 508.

¹¹⁰ Alain Badiou, *Being and Event*, trans. Oliver Feltham (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 119.

¹¹¹ Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 167–8.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 167.

is certain is that the measure can be neither the driving necessity of biological life and labour nor the utilitarian instrumentalism of fabrication and usage'¹¹³.

This, it seems, is the definition of 'music'—that is to say, Art Music—that Nicholas Cook seemed so keen to maintain, as something existing outside of its performances, although it runs counter to his overall point. For if this is the case, then when music is 'choreographing social relationships', or 'expressing [...] group identities', then it is not being music, in this sense. The work is only the work of music when it is decidedly more than its performing, as Cook and Pettengill themselves concede: 'whether we are talking about a musical work or a religious ritual, meaning may be said to inhere in the excess of performance over repetition'.¹¹⁴ Music, then, is the thing that is *never* heard, the part that is always left behind. The musical work is not the accumulation of a history of performances, it is the bit that was never performed, and could never be performed. 'Music', in fact, is not for listening to, nor for performing because it cannot be heard: it is purely conceptual. Crucially, it is now clear that the work is not external to the piece, its score, or its performances, but internal—and this has ramifications for the way it must be approached. Thinking about music, pulling it apart, peering into it, reveals the outline of the work that has (literally) been put into it—the ground among the details, existing between the notes. And when we peer into music, we see human Being staring back up at us.

¹¹³ Ibid., 174.

¹¹⁴ Cook and Pettengill, 'Introduction', 10–11.

Epilogue

Conclusions, Contributions, and Suggestions for Further Research

This thesis set out to consider why anyone might want to write about music, a question with a variety of ethical implications depending on the perspective from which it is examined. The ways in which writing fixes meaning and limits subjective response, the question of whether a distinction can be drawn between writing about ‘music’ rather than musical situations, and the question of whether doing any variation of those things is useful—politically, socially, philosophically—were all laid out, along with their relationship to the different aspects of contemporary musicology, in the Introduction. Over the course of five chapters, I have attempted to explore possible answers.

I demonstrated in Chapter One that the vast majority of research into the ethics of music centred on music as a medium for the interaction of people: a site of possibility in which ethical situations arose. I concluded that, despite its foreclosure by the New Musicology, the consideration of music ‘as music’—that is, the consideration of the interaction between music and people—was worthy of investigation. This prompted a thoroughgoing re-evaluation of music’s ontology. After showing how, despite allegedly being founded on poststructuralist thought, New Musicology tacitly reinscribes the self-present subject as primary—and for this reason rejects any encounter with ‘music’, preferring to focus on subjective constructions—I conducted an analysis that held firm to poststructuralism’s deconstructive edge, examining the final moments of Bach’s Fugue in C# Minor, BWV 849/2 in such a way that the analysis gave rise the subject, rather than *vice versa*.

Chapter Two argued that postmodern approaches to art, including music, were a nihilist reaction to the conflicts and complexities of modernism. I further concluded

that the type of subjectivity this postmodern abandon constructed is complicit in the workings of late capitalism in distinct, but interrelated ways:

1. In their absolute vacation of any content from artistic objects, relegating their significance entirely to their circulation, postmodern attitudes to art replicate the commodity exchange of capitalism.
2. In postmodern interpretations of music, the prioritization of primary selfhood, adorned with artistic particles in the decorative creation of an acceptable subjectivity, itself replicates the mechanisms of desire characteristic of capitalist accumulation.
3. Finally, the resultant musical discourse, one which takes for granted access to musical meaning, rather than seeing it effortfully constructed—in effect reinscribing a worn-out naturalism—merely restricts musical interpretation to an ever-shrinking socio-economic elite.

In contrast, I proposed reverting to an earlier modernist understanding of subjectivity, specifically a Heideggerian ontology, which I demonstrated adequately responds to the poststructuralist concerns that motivated the postmodern turn without the self-contradictions that full-blown postmodernism entailed. This Heideggerian ontology was revealed to be the conceptual framework behind the Bach analysis that concluded Chapter One, showing therefore its potential as a tool of musicological understanding.

Chapter Three turned to a more extended, and more detailed, examination of the constructions of musical subjectivities and their relationship to society. I first demonstrated that the networks of meanings in which the historical figure of Schubert and his music are caught make any attempt to understand either one difficult: both Schubert and his music are still understood in relation to a hegemonic Beethovenian ideal, one which either renders his music unintelligible, or expands just enough to include it without ever upsetting the rigidity of the discursive model. In contrast, I proposed to understand Schubert's music dialectically, such that it was seen to

respond to the received compositional norms, but also to contribute to and alter them. I cast this as a materialist dialectic: a constant negotiation between the ideal level that structures meaning, and the material interventions that instantiate it. In an analysis of the second movement of Schubert's Piano Sonata in A Major, D. 959, I demonstrated how tonality can be understood through this materialist dialectic: by overdetermining the material level of tonal strategy in the movement, Schubert draws attention to the fact that tonality is not just an ideal structure that legislates for material possibilities, but is rather the product of negotiation between the two levels. This in turn has the result that Schubert's relationship to his society and our own can be seen in a new light: no longer restrained to the margins, I concluded that his contributions fundamentally destabilize the social, gendered, and musical norms in a way that shows they are not only fundamentally negotiable, but indeed merely material reductions of a wholly excessive ontology.

Chapter Four attempted to generalize the materialist dialectics of Chapter Three in order to give a better sense of how that excessive ontology, beyond the narrow confines of tonal normativity, might be significant. Introducing the philosophy of Georg Lukács and Karl Korsch, the materialist dialectics was represented in its original Marxist formulation, allowing it to be understood not only outside the bounds of tonality, but as something with a strong political bent. I argued that the ideal level of a piece of music was not simply coextensive with its analytical and theoretical elements, but rather described its quality of excess—the Real, in Lacanian terms, or its 'inner core' in Lukácsian ones—something that enabled it to escape its historical, geographical, or interpretative bounds and become significant elsewhere. I concluded that the structure of the materialist dialectic is itself revolutionary, since by enshrining an excess of possibility over what exists, and thus prompting perpetual negotiation, it carries revolutionary change in its very form. *Pace* the New Musicology, then, a dialectical materialist engagement with music is valuable precisely because of, rather than despite, its dematerializing tendencies: it takes music

away from itself, resisting the reification—even autonomy—that obtains when music is interpreted only against a narrow set of historical circumstances.

These conclusions were tested against a case study, examining the literature on the oppression of women through music in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. I noted that while several authors were content to flag the ways in which an enormous variety of music (including most of the operatic repertoire, *galant* music, character genres such as the minuet, and a type of music publication intended specifically for young girls) activated misogynistic tropes, and even participated in the oppression of women, they refused to engage with the question of whether the offending music could still in good conscience be tolerated, and if so, on what grounds. While two authors—Samuel Breene and Matthew Head—did outline ways in which misogynistic tropes could be resisted, I demonstrated their reasoning to be illogical, and came to an alternative conclusion. While they propose that pieces of music can still be valuable if their disciplinary tendencies are incompletely effective, I argued that this mistakes cause for effect, and instead proposed the very opposite: that certain disciplinary works do not always have to function as oppressive tools because they are *also* pieces of music—that is, they contain an excess over their material history that allows them to be understood in a different way. I therefore suggested that one of music’s most important features is *not* the way it encodes a specific cultural history, but rather the way it is able to *escape* it, and reflect instead a more generalized humanity, one divested of specificity, division, and otherness.

This, however, necessitated a firm division between ethics and politics. Under the formulation I put forward, ethics is understood an ontological framework, which makes only one demand: to recognize the ontology of the situation, namely the constant, unresolving dialectic between material and ideal that characterizes the human condition. Politics, on the other hand, is the necessarily incomplete, pragmatic, material work concerning the material conditions of actually-existing human beings. Preferably, both should work in a way that reflects the ontological truth of the human

condition, although given their contradictory impulses, the negotiation between them will itself be organized dialectically.

Chapter Five extended this dialectical approach to the performance of music, responding to the concerns of a burgeoning movement within musicology, 'Music as Performance'. I demonstrated that the 'Music as Performance' paradigm is riddled with logical inconsistencies, tacitly reassigns authority to performance scholars rather than democratically opening it to a broader public, and functions contrary to its ethnographic principles insofar as it ignores art music's clear invocations of autonomy and transcendence. I furthermore demonstrated that the differing interpretations of what constitutes a musical work can be traced back to a confused notion of musical temporality; I therefore suggested a Deleuzian perspective on repetition as a clarifying measure. A Deleuzian reading of the second movement of Mahler's Fifth Symphony gave rise to an understanding of the musical work as an ideal vanishing-point existing within the material ground of a piece of music, nothing other than a reflection of human consciousness itself. A musical 'work' was thus no longer understood as a piece of music's *identity*, but rather the state of being a materialization of an idea: when a human thought-process is brought into being through music, a musical work is being 'performed'. I argued that this very process is dramatized the second movement of Mahler's Fifth Symphony. This dialectical materialist understanding of the work-concept invited further Marxist interpretation: music as *work*, not in a vulgar commodified sense, but in the Arendtian sense of that which makes life livable: that which testifies to humanity's intrinsically dual nature, exceeding mere biology and becoming what Badiou terms 'Immortal'. Recognition of this feature of life, separate from mundane economies of need, is a vital Marxist manoeuvre since it runs counter to the capitalist (and especially neoliberal) tendency toward universal commodification.

This thesis has therefore made several original contributions to the discipline of musicology. It has productively re-opened the debates that sparked the New Musicology in a way that neither discards its findings nor disparages its aims, but

rather refines its methods. This is principally achieved by undertaking, for the first time, a thorough investigation of its underpinning philosophy. The ontology of music that emerges from that investigation uniquely links concerns as disparate as neo-Riemannian analysis and revolutionary politics: the framework I provide here allows tonal music to be convincingly analysed with reference to a much broader network of concerns than has previously been possible. And in so doing, this thesis opens a major new line of investigation in the burgeoning field of music and ethics.

I have introduced new ways of understanding the music I have analysed, including providing the first comprehensive analyses of the Schubert and Mahler movements. But more than this, I have sought to provide new ways of understanding these works in relation to a much broader cultural framework, especially in my attempt to re-orient the discussion of Schubert's relationship to Beethoven. The links I proposed between neo-Riemannian theory and the materialization of music, either physically at the keyboard or in the broader sense of 'performance', poses new questions about the role of theory and analysis in arenas from which it is traditionally excluded, and invites further investigation.

I have nevertheless attempted to produce a thesis whose findings are not restricted to the internal debates of musicology, but that might contribute to wider philosophical and political debates. The ontology of music I have proposed, which claims a fundamental identity between the musical 'work' and the nature of human consciousness, implies a unique role for music in the investigation of human ontology more generally. Equally, my separation of ethics from politics, here restricted only to musicological debates, stems from more general considerations on the interaction of ontology and politics, and could usefully be extended outside the discipline. Closer to home, the relationship I suggest in Part I between certain areas of musicology and the political and economic mechanisms of late capitalism invite further discussion about the structure, value, and accessibility of high-level academic training. An urgent discussion is well overdue about the role of art and its interpretation in contemporary

society; I will return to this politically charged problem at the conclusion of this epilogue.

This thesis opens up several new avenues of research, both inside and outside musicology. The most immediate development would be an investigation into how the dialectical materialist model I have proposed functions outside the bounds of tonality, since within this thesis the tonal framework has provided a useful distillation of the ideal structure of society and socialization. Freely atonal and serial music, for instance, offers the double attraction of responding directly to the modernist concerns that motivate this thesis, while explicitly rejecting the historico-cultural framework of tonality that provided its support. Escaping from the Western capitalist arena entirely would raise even more questions: the consideration of music that predates both tonality and capitalism would radically alter the parameters of any dialectical materialist investigation, while providing a historicizing perspective onto this project that might prove enriching. Likewise, the study of non-Western music might highlight the limitations of the Western philosophical framework upon which I have relied here: while there are good ethnographic reasons to study Austro-German music against the backdrop of Austro-German philosophy, if extended to ancient or contemporary India (for example) the priorities of the investigation would have to change. This is not to say that the entire project is hopelessly linked to narrow Western European concerns, however: the consideration of Indian Classical music against the philosophy of *Advaita Vedanta*—the Hindu philosophy of non-dualism, to which both negative dialectics and Heideggerian ontology bear more than a passing resemblance—might be a fruitful starting point in the consideration of similarities across otherwise disparate musical and cultural traditions. And finally, the link I have proposed between the transcendental streak in Western Art Music and human ontology invites investigation from other disciplines, which might use music as a fertile testing ground for future investigations into ontology, aesthetics, philosophy of art, political science, and ethics.

From Ethics to Politics—Again, and Again

At the end of Chapter Four, I made a distinction between ethics, which I argued was an abstract assessment based on a situation's relationship to purely ontological concerns, and politics, which I saw as practical interventions in material situations. This thesis, as the title suggests, is largely concerned with ethics; yet, at various points, I have not restricted myself to ethical/ontological commentary, and entered into political, economic, and social critique. Indeed at times the distinction between the purely philosophical assessments of ontology and the more involved political interventions have become wholly blurred. I would like to close by explaining and expanding on that disciplinary divide, and its traversal within this thesis.

To put it bluntly, that my ethical formulations have found political expression could not be otherwise. As this thesis has attempted to demonstrate, the defining feature of human intellectual endeavour is the dialectical relationship between the ideal and the material levels: what exists ideally is only accessible through its material expression, and so it is with ethics. This thesis is a 21st-century thesis, and it responds to the material concerns of the 21st century. If the New Musicology, and the poststructuralism that preceded and gave rise to it, taught the world anything, it is that objectivity and pure abstraction are impossible: I could not have written anything that remained solely at the level of the Universal, because the Universal is inaccessible to language, and impossible to manifest in the world. Instead, abstract concerns can only be brought into being through concrete examples, which are necessarily historically mediated. The gap (and the desire to close it) between how those ideals could be materially expressed, and the really-existing material circumstances of the contemporary world, has a name: politics.

All of which is to say that the political impulses in this thesis do not betoken a confusion on my part—or an attempt at deceitful substitution—between two categories of thought, but are simply the materializations of the ontological conclusions of my research. The politics emerges, in other words, from the ethics: this

thesis is not critical of misogyny and capitalism on a whim (since, if nothing else, that would simply be the postmodern individualist relativism that I was careful to dismantle in Part I). Rather it is because, as far as I have been able to ascertain, misogyny and capitalism distort fundamental ontological truths about human being: namely, that first and foremost humans are defined by their consciousness and its dialectical relationship with the material world, something which not only joins all humans together equally, irrespective of any material difference, but anchors a significant proportion of what makes us human in immaterial, ideal concerns. Racist, sexist, homophobic, and capitalist philosophies all cut across these vital aspects of shared humanity, and therefore, on the understanding of this present work, ought to be resisted. But this process also flows in the other direction: the politics suggested in this thesis can lead back to the ethics that I argue bear an authentic relationship with the nature of being, and therefore if one is to understand the ethics, the politics must be put into practice.

It would be a mistake, however, to assume that this 'politics' is located outside musicology, in a street march, a voting booth, or the pages of the *Morning Star*. As I showed at length in Part I, musicology has always been deeply politicized, and the New Musicology even more so, since alongside the explicit political work it set out to do, it inadvertently forged a profound ideological link with postmodernism (or late capitalism). That period of history was characterized by declarations of endings: Francis Fukuyama's end of History and Gordon Brown's end of economics are particularly notable for their irony at twenty years' distance.¹ Both of these examples

¹ Francis Fukuyama, 'The End of History?', *The National Interest* No. 16 (Summer 1989): 3-18, and *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York: Free Press, 1992); one of Gordon Brown's repeated promises when Chancellor of the Exchequer for Great Britain and Northern Ireland was to put an end to the 'boom and bust' cycle of economics. In practical terms this would herald not only an end to disputes internal to capitalism, such as that, current at the time, between Keynesianism (favoured by the Labour Party) and the policies of the Chicago School (introduced by the Thatcher government), but also serve as a refutation of the standard Marxist argument that capitalism is always in a state of partial collapse due to the structurally inbuilt tendency for the rate of profit to fall as growth increases. While he did not, therefore, explicitly promise to end economics, what he did promise would have amounted to it.

are characterized by their implication that the great intellectual struggles of the past were over, and that ideology was an unnecessary concept in the new age. They sought, in other words, to make materialists of us all. I do not think it is a coincidence, then, that New Musicology promised in its own way the end of musicology itself: as Susan McClary famously wrote, 'I am no longer sure what MUSIC is'.² The subsequent decades have shown that the assertions of Fukuyama and Brown were grossly mistaken; Part I, likewise, showed that while the New Musicology was successful in decentring the discipline away from its blinkered, formalist past, it did not escape the pull of ideology, but rather entrenched—albeit in a subtle, camouflaged way—the damaging postmodern nihilism of the age. In all cases, then, the old ideologies continued as before, except that for a time they did so 'under the radar'. While it may now be 'acceptable'—after the most prolonged economic depression in a century—to once again voice a distaste for the workings of capitalism, and it may now be possible—with a resurgent right-wing extremism sweeping the West, an intensification of regional conflict and ensuing humanitarian crisis in the global South, and an impending global ecological catastrophe—to once again suggest that history might not be over after all, the same cannot be said for musicology. The move towards materialism continues apace, and the role of the sorts of ideal concerns laid out in this thesis are still uncertain.

It is obvious that Western Art Music, theory, and analysis are not under attack: it is simply the case that the discipline has broadened to include a greater variety of repertoires, and techniques to approach those repertoires. It should not be necessary to emphasise, after the political commitments of this thesis, that I agree this is only a good thing, but I will: this is an enormously important step in the demystifying and decolonizing of what has been a very problematic discipline. Nevertheless, Part I provided ample evidence that postmodern musicology was founded to a greater or

² Susan McClary, *Feminine Endings: Music, Gender, and Sexuality* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), 19.

lesser extent on the rejection of the ideal level of music, in line with broadly late-capitalist trends; Part III made much the same argument in relation to Music as Performance. This thesis has made a strong case for the importance of engaging with the ideal component of art music—indeed the entire project is a defence of the concept of McClary’s problematized ‘MUSIC’. And thus, contrary to the general thrust of contemporary musicology, the existing repertoire of art music, along with the theoretical and analytical tools used to approach it, should be defended not only on a political basis—and certainly not on a politically *conservative* basis—but on an ethical one too.

This thesis in no way excludes the possibility that other musical traditions might be considered from any number of perspectives, nor does it exclude the possibility that Western Art Music might be considered from similarly numerous and varied perspectives. It does, however, wholeheartedly exclude the possibility that all music should be considered from the same perspective: one that makes no attempt to understand it as anything other than sounding social relations, or entertainment, or simply noise—or worse, that it should not be considered at all. Insofar as this goes against not simply the fashion of my own discipline (since that would amount to no more than petty counterculturalism), but rather the long and deleterious trend of advancing materialism that seeks to turn us into merely producing bodies, and turn us away from what defines us as thinking, feeling beings, an enduring and proportional engagement with art—from whatever geographic, social, or political provenance—cannot help but be radical.

And it is that very fact that balances this thesis—productively, I hope—on the knife-edge where ethics and politics intersect. The central claim of this thesis has been that art music is defined by its dual nature as material and ideal, and that this dual nature is what makes it so valuable: it puts humans in touch with a fundamental truth about their own existence. I have furthermore shown that this ideal level is broached through the universal human capacity for intellection: anyone who is enculturated, anyone with access to the relevant language, can escape the confines of language

through language. That, then, is the answer to the original question: *that* is why writing about music is valuable.

However, despite enculturation being universally *possible* (since human ontology is primarily defined by intellection through language), whether or not it is universally *available* is purely political. It is entirely dependent on the really-existing opportunities for exposure to, and education about, art music. Marginalizing the ideal content of art music may originate as a philosophical act—and I believe, and have attempted to argue, that it is a misguided one—but it ends up being a political one. The solution, therefore, is likewise twofold, and dialectical: philosophical projects, like this one, and political projects, like the free and full education that made it possible.

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