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MUSIC AND DECONSTRUCTION

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Vsebina • Contents

On deconstruction in music/ology,

as this volume of *Musicological Annual* should have been entitled, was stimulated by Marcel Cobussen's lecture on deconstruction in music, held in Ljubljana in autumn of 2004. The thought of inviting other scholars to contribute an article dedicated to *deconstruction in music/ology*, was natural as a consequence of Cobussen's lecture as well as naïvely imagined project of confronting as many as possible determinations of *deconstruction* as a musicological notion (*musicological* in the widest sense of the word). The result is a modest survey of the facets that deconstruction in music/ology has, or could have.

After the articles were submitted and circulated to all contributors, they were invited to write a comment on the whole topic: either with regard to all the articles in this volume or in much broader terms. Their answers are presented at the end, in the *Postscript* chapter. This chapter should be therefore understood as a succinct reflection on the poisons and remedies that the notion of deconstruction has been offering to music/ology as one can read from this collection of eight articles – or as one can grasp from what is missing among, and in, them.

Such a ("double") reading of different tokens of one phenomenon, I believe, could help with a *theory transfer* from one discipline to another, as is the case (not only) with deconstruction in musicology. Ultimately, all "communications" among disciplines are doomed to openness as long as values and methods that eventually come out of that, do not reach (a temporary?) end – either in wider acceptance or refusal. To the best of my knowledge, none of that has been achieved with deconstruction.

I am far from claiming that this volume has the arguments to do that: i.e. to enthrone or dismiss the notion deconstruction in this or that way, for this or that reason. However, I

O dekonstrukciji v glasbi / muzikologiji,

kot bi se morala imenovati ta številka *Muzikološkega zbornika*, je tema, ki jo je spodbudilo predavanje na temo dekonstrukcije in glasbe Marcela Cobussena, ki ga je imel jeseni leta 2004 na Oddelku za muzikologijo ljubljanske Filozofske fakultete. Misel o tem, da bi več raziskovalcev prispevalo članek o dekonstrukciji in glasbi / muzikologiji, je bila razumljiva posledica Cobussenovega predavanja, ki je spodbudila naivno željo po soočenju čim večjega števila opredelitev dekonstrukcije kot muzikološkega pojma. Rezultat je skromen prerez obstoječih in potencialnih plati dekonstrukcije v muzikologiji.

Ko so avtorji oddali svoje članke in je bil vsak seznanjen s prispevki vseh drugih, sem jih prosil za refleksijo na celoto: bodisi v zvezi s članki bodisi zgolj o obravnavani temi. Prošnji so štirje ustregli s spisi iz zadnjega poglavja, ki nosi naslov *Po-govor*. Tako kaže to poglavje razumeti kot jedro premisleka o strupih in zdravilih, ki jih dekonstrukcija ponuja muzikologiji na način, ki ga je mogoče razbrati iz osmih člankov, objavljenih v nadaljevanju, ali pa iz tega, kar v njih, in med njimi, manjka.

Tovrstno (»dvojno«) branje različnih plati istega pojava pomaga pri *prenosu teorij* med disciplinami, za kar gre (ne le) pri dekonstrukciji. Ne nazadnje so vse »komunikacije« med disciplinami obsojene na odprtost, dokler vrednote in metode, ki se postopoma ne razkrijejo iz njih, ne najdejo svojega (začasnega?) konca – najsi v tem, da jih širša raziskovalna skupnost sprejme, ali pa v tem, da jih zavrže. Z dekonstrukcijo se, po mojem najboljšem vedenju, ni zgodilo ne eno ne drugo.

Zdaleč ne mislim, da ima ta zbornik dovolj argumentov za eno ali drugo: za ustoliče(va)nje ali zavračanje dekonstrukcije. Toda ne dvomim, da v nadaljevanju objavl-

have no doubt that the articles in this volume, contributed by scholars with different research backgrounds, offer a reliable compass for discussing deconstruction as a musicological notion.

Thus I am very happy to give my thanks to Marcel Cobussen for his incentive for this project (and for allowing his score of Debussy's *Syrinx* to be printed in this volume), to the chief editor of this journal, Matjaž Barbo, who enabled the realization of this idea, while my warmest gratitude goes, of course, to the contributors to this volume who offered superb intellectual rigour with praiseworthy kindness.

December 2005 Leon Stefanija

jeni članki znanstvenikov, ki izhajajo iz različnih raziskovalnih področij, ponujajo zanesljiv kompas za obravnavo dekonstrukcije kot muzikološkega pojma.

Za to se z veseljem zahvaljujem Marcelu Cobussenu za vzgib (in tudi za dovoljenje za objavo njegovega preisa Debussyjeve skladbe *Syrinx* v tem zborniku), glavnemu uredniku, Matjažu Barbu, ki je z vso prijaznostjo omogočil realizacijo te ideje, seveda pa gre najbolj srčna zahvala avtorjem člankov: njihovi intelektualni ostrini, ki so jo posredovali s hvalevredno prijaznostjo.

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Deconstructing voice

Dekonstruirajoči glas

Ključne besede: glas, pisanje, dekonstrukcija, pharmakon, logos, Platon, Sveti Avguštin, cerkvena glasba

Keywords: voice, writing, deconstruction, pharmakon, logos, Plato, St. Augustine, church music.

POVZETEK

Prispevek izhaja iz Derridajevega znamenitega spisa 'La pharmacie de Platon', enega rojstnih besedil dekonstrukcije. Po kratkem orisu Derridajevega izvajanja o fonocentrizmu in pharmakonu kot strupu in zdravilu obenem, avtor zavzema drugačno stališče glede odnosa med glasom in pisanjem. Če si natančneje pogledamo Platonovo pojmovanje glasbe, je mogoče razbrati, da Platon ne vidi nevarnosti samo v suplementarnosti pisanja, temveč tudi samega glasu. Glas, če se izogne primežu besede – če se izogne logosu –, ima skrajno nevarno lastnost, namreč da predstavlja čisto površinski užitek: grozi, da bo ublažil duha s svojo čutnostjo in mehkužnostjo, spodkopavajoč pri tem celotne družbene in nravne temelje. Tako se zdi, da analiza pharmakona v enaki, če ne celo večji meri velja za glas kakor za pisanje. Platonovim stopinjam je sledila dolga tradicija. V članku je obravnavan Sveti Avguštin, problematika glasu v cerkveni glasbi in predpisovanje glasbenih zadev po Platonovem receptu med francosko revolucijo.

ABSTRACT

The paper takes its starting point in Derrida's famous essay 'Plato's Pharmacy', one of the birthplaces of deconstruction. After briefly delineating Derrida's argument about phonocentrism and the pharmakon as both the poison and the cure, it tries to argue for a different view about the relationship of voice and writing. If one takes a closer look at Plato's conception of music, one can see that Plato sees the danger not only in the supplementarity of writing, but also in the voice itself. The voice, if it strays away from the firm footing in the word, in logos, has the perilous property of presenting the pure frivolous enjoyment, it threatens to mollify the spirit by its sensuality and effemination and thus to undermine the very bases of social and moral structures. Thus it appears that the analysis of pharmakon can apply equally, or even more appropriately, to the voice as to writing. A long tradition followed in Plato's footsteps and the paper briefly examines St. Augustine, the problems that the voice presented for church music and finally the French

Tako so v tradiciji metafizike razumeli glas ne le kot jamstvo fonocentrizma in 'metafiziko navzočnosti', marveč so v njem videli tudi nevarno nižišče spodmikanja navzočnosti, ki logos sicer podpira, a ga obenem tudi ruši. Zgodovina glasbe izčrpno priča o inherentni nejasnosti samega glasu. Tako problem ni le dekonstruiranje glasu kot jamstva fonocentrizma, temveč tudi glas, ki dekonstruira navzočnost. Odtod izhaja dvoumnost naslova.

revolution, which tried to legislate in musical matters unwittingly following Plato's recipes. So throughout the metaphysical tradition the voice was not merely seen as the safeguard of phonocentrism and the 'metaphysics of presence', but presented also the perilous underside of dislocating the presence, not merely supporting the logos, but also dismantling it. The history of music massively testifies to the inherent ambiguity of the voice itself. So the problem is not just deconstructing the voice as the pledge of phonocentrism, but also of the voice being itself deconstructive of the presence. Hence the ambiguity of the title.

The best place to start considering the problem of 'music and deconstruction' is perhaps one of the birthplaces of deconstruction, Derrida's famous essay "Plato's Pharmacy", first published in *Tel Quel* in 1968 and then reprinted in a modified version in his *Dissemination* in 1972. The essay, a close reading of Plato's *Phaedrus*, but also taking up larger issues of the Platonic enterprise as such, appeared a year after Derrida's grand *coup*, when in 1967 he published three books (among them the canonic *Of Grammatology*) and became overnight one of the greatest intellectual stars. It seemed that a new era was inaugurated, a new philosophical movement was launched, bearing the somewhat mysterious name of deconstruction, and looking back, after almost four decades, one can see that this was no mirage, not some vogue of the moment: what ensued was a vigourous intellectual movement which irreversibly changed our intellectual landscape, for better worse, its consequences and effects, far from being confined to philosophy, quickly spread to a vast number of areas, including music, and so many years later no one, whether friend or foe, can ignore its import and its results.

The essay on Plato presented a crucial step in initiating this movement. The three books of 1967 offered a vast array of subjects and themes, ranging from the extensive analyses of Husserl and Rousseau to disparate topics of Saussure, Artaud, Lévinas, Descartes, Bataille, Lévi-Strauss, Freud etc., introducing a new view of what is rather massively called 'the metaphysical tradition'. Yet, it was only with the essay on Plato that the theme of metaphysics was taken head on, its later off-springs were related to its origin, the force and validity of the new theory were to be tested on the most paradigmatic metaphysical author who inaugurated it all. The birthplace of deconstruction had to overlap with the birthplace of metaphysics. What was called, in *Grammatology*, 'the era of Rousseau' now became extended into 'from Plato to Rousseau', the new reading of metaphysics could only become compelling if it could encompass both ends, and one can already recall that both authors delimiting the era had an intense and privileged relation to music, to the voice – hence the problem of 'music and deconstruction' was already encapsulated in this initial move.

This relation was no side-show and no coincidence, for the most striking and the most surprising feature of Derrida's new theory consisted in the extraordinary and rather baffling claim that metaphysics coincided with phonocentrism, that being phonocentric defined the core of its metaphysical nature. Phonocentric, centered on the voice, privileging the voice, and consequently demoting the writing, relegating it to a status of a secondary addition. This attitude, stemming first of all from a certain understanding of language, appears to be based on the most self-evident assumption: that the voice is the basic element of speech, its natural embodiment and consubstantial with it, whereas writing presents its derivative, auxiliary and parasitic supplement, being at the same time both secondary and dangerous – for the dead letter, derivative as it is, threatens to kill the spirit and to mortify the living voice.

If the entire metaphysical tradition 'spontaneously' and consistently espoused the priority of the voice over the letter, the reason for this was that it has seen an evident advantage of the voice: the voice always presented the hold in the living presence, the privileged point of auto-affection and of self-transparency, as opposed to the externality and elusiveness of writing. The voice offered the illusion that one could get immediate access to an unalloyed present, an origin not tarnished by the exterior, a firm rock against the elusive interplay of signs which are anyway surrogates by their very nature and always point to an absence. Phonocentrism is 'the metaphysics of presence' – another Derridean term – since the writing and the trace threaten to truncate the presence and hence have to be conjured away. The dead letter disrupts the living voice, the supplement usurps its subsidiary place and can lure its way to the lead role. Writing is tele-communication, it addresses absent addressees and circulates in the absence of its author, whereas the voice is coextensive with presence, both the presence of interlocutors and the self-presence of the speaker. But the writing as a mere tool has the nasty tendency to affect the live presence of the voice for which it is but a stand-in, the mere supplement endangers the origin that it supplements. Ultimately, it is not just the writing in its positive and empirical appearance that is at stake, but more fundamentally the trace, the trace of alterity which has 'always already' sneaked into the purity of the origin and dislocated it. The secondary undermines the primary, and this is what metaphysics tries to avoid, or to disavow, at all costs. If metaphysics, in this rather massive view, is carried by the propensity to repudiate the part of alterity, the trace of the other, in order to hold on to some ultimate Meaning against the disruptive play of differences, to maintain the purity of the origin against supplementarity, then it can only do so by clinging to the privilege of the voice as a source of an originary self-presence. The divide between the interior and the exterior, the model of all other metaphysical divides, derives from there:

> The voice is *heard* (understood) – that undoubtedly is what is called consciousness[1] – closest to the self as the absolute effacement of the signifier: pure auto-affection that necessarily has the form of time which doesn't borrow from outside of itself, in the world or in 'reality', any accessory signifier, any substance of expression foreign to its own spontaneity. It is the unique experience of the signified producing itself spontaneously from within the self [...] (Derrida 1976: 20; 1967: 33)

This illusion – the illusion *par excellence* – is thus constitutive of interiority, of consciousness, of the self and of autonomy. The double sense of the French *entendre*, which means 'to hear' as well as 'to understand', points to the direct link between hearing the voice and the ori-

[1] The French *la conscience* can mean both 'consciousness' and 'conscience'. I think it is quite obvious that what is meant in this context is 'consciousness', not 'conscience', as the English translation has it.

gin of conceptuality, between vocality and ideality. *S'entendre parler* – to hear oneself speak – would thus be the minimal definition of consciousness, and the voice would thus be intimately and intrinsically linked to the whole panoply of metaphysical concepts – being, time, subjectivity, interiority to start with.

This is the gist of Derrida's initial argument in a very compressed form. What better showcase for this argument could one wish for than Plato's own treatment of writing in *Phaedrus*, at the dawn of metaphysics? One can find there, put into the mouth of Socrates – of the man who never wrote a single line – the myth of the origin of writing which in Plato's hands turns into a trial against writing. Writing, so the story goes, was presented by the Egyptian divinity Theuth to the king Thamus, as a *pharmakon* – a remedy, "a potion for memory and for wisdom" (*Phaedrus* 274e). But the king, in this inaugurational scene, turns down this gift:

> [Writing] will introduce forgetfulness into the soul of those who learn it: they will not practice using their memory because they will put their trust in writing, which is external and depends on signs that belong to others, instead of trying to remember from the inside, completely on their own. You have not discovered a potion for remembering, but for reminding; you provide your students with the appearance of wisdom, not with its reality. (275a)

Everything is already there: the externality of writing, its opposition to the real memory, the living memory of the soul, its introduction of appearance and of false knowledge, its connection with sophistry, its incompatibility with truth, its mechanical repetition, its artificiality opposed to the true internal nature. The moment one enters its realm one is surrounded by simulacra, copies, semblances, doubles, it is a prosthesis which denatures the nature, a mnemotechnical device which doesn't help memory, but dismembers it, a mere gadget, but which has dire consequences for the purity of origin. So the remedy turns out to be the poison, and the semantics of *pharmakon* is the oscillation between the two. Writing has no essence, it is a mere externality and artificiality, but which has the vicious property of perturbing the true order of things and reversing the natural hierarchy. *Pharmakon* is anti-eidos. Yet, the true knowledge of ideas, of eidos, has to rely, crucially, on the possibility of their ideal iterativity, the possibility of their repetition as the same, they can only be transmitted as repeatable, and this is the basis of both *anamnesis* and maieutics, the two quintessential Platonic operations: the true remembrance as opposed to its fake. Indeed, the bad writing has to be opposed to the good one:

> Now tell me, can we discern another kind of discourse, a legitimate brother of this one? Can we say how it comes about, and how it is by nature better and more capable? / Which one is that? How do you think it comes about? / It is a discourse that is written down, with knowledge, in the soul of the listener; it can defend itself, and it knows for whom it should speak and for whom it should remain silent. (276a)

> So there is the bad writing, which spoils the ideality and taints the interior, but there is a good writing on which the ideality and the interior depend – the writing in the soul, the writing on which eidos depends and which makes it possible at all. So Plato's problem would ultimately be how to distinguish between the good and the bad writing, and how to retain the good part without the pernicious effects of the bad part. Impossible endeavour, in Derrida's view: one cannot keep the one and get rid of the other, they are the same, the same *pharmakon* which shows itself alternately as the remedy and the poison, but in itself

it has no consistence, it is precisely what makes the one turn over into the other. One cannot eat the metaphysical cake and have it.

Let us say that we provisionally grant this point to Derrida. Various objections could be raised also on this level, it is true, but this is not what I wish to argue about. My concern is the opposite end: the place, the role and the value of the voice and music in this story. For it follows from Derrida's account that the role of *pharmakon* is reserved to writing, the impossibility of getting rid of its pernicious side – but the best way of doing this, the best method of metaphysical disavowal, is phonocentrism. Writing is the danger, and voice is the defence: this is how metaphysics perceives things, and this is what makes it phonocentric, prey to the constitutive illusion.

But this is not how things happen at all in Plato. There is another story to be told, both concerning Plato and the metaphysical tradition. There exists a different metaphysical history of voice, where the voice itself, far from being the safeguard of presence, was considered as something dangerous, threatening and possibly ruinous. There is a history of the voice receiving a metaphysical vote of no confidence. Not just writing, but also the voice can appear as a formidable menace to metaphysical consistency and can be seen as disruptive of presence and sense. This is not the story of the voice sustaining the logos, but rather the story of the dichotomy of voice and logos. The particular place where one can look for that is precisely in the philosophical treatments of music. This is displayed at the most poignant in relation to the voice.

Let us consider this passage from Plato's *Republic*:

> A change to a new type of music is something to beware of as a hazard of all our fortunes. For the modes of music are never disturbed without unsettling of the most fundamental political and social conventions [...]. It is here, then, I said, that our guardians must build their guardhouse and post of watch. / It is certain, he said, that this is the kind of lawlessness that easily insinuates itself unobserved. / Yes, said I, because it is supposed to be only a form of play and to work no harm. / Nor does it work any, he said, except that by gradual infiltration it softly overflows upon the characters and pursuits of men and from these issues forth grown greater to attack their business dealings, and from these relations it proceeds against the laws and the constitution with wanton license, Socrates, till finally it overthrows all things public and private. (*Republic* IV, 424c-e)

To say the least, music is no laughing matter. It cannot be taken lightly, but has to be treated with the greatest philosophical concern and utmost vigilance. It is a texture so fundamental that any license inevitably produces general decadence, it undermines the social fabric, its laws and mores, and threatens the very ontological order. For one must assign an ontological status to music: it holds the key to a harmony between 'nature' and 'culture', the natural and the man-made law.[2] Should one interfere with that sphere, everything is put into question and the foundations are truncated. Decadence starts with musical decadence: in the beginning, in the great times of origin, music was regulated by law and was one with it, but soon things got out of hand:

> Afterward, in course of time, an unmusical license set in with the appearance of poets who were men of native genius, but ignorant of what is right and legitimate in the realm of the-

[2] This is also why music is treated in a very different way from painting, which poses interminable problems of imitation, copies, mimesis etc. The best guide in this matter is still Moutsopoulos (1959), to my knowledge unsurpassed in almost half a century since its first publication.

> Muses. Possessed by a frantic and unhallowed lust for pleasure, they [...] created a universal confusion of forms. Thus their folly led them unintentionally to slander their profession by the assumption that in music there is no such thing as a right and a wrong, the right standard of judgment being the pleasure given to the hearer, be he high or low. (*Laws* III, 700d-e)

Once one blasphemously gives way to pleasure as the standard ("It is commonly said that the standard of rightness in music is its pleasure-giving effect. That, however, is an intolerable sentiment; in fact, 'tis a piece of flat blasphemy." (*Laws* II, 655d), once one has refused to comply with the law in music, there is no end to insidious consequences – impudence, moral disintegration, the collapse of all social bonds.

> So the next stage of the journey toward liberty will be refusal to submit to the magistrates, and on this will follow emancipation from the authority and correction of parents and elders; then, as the goal of the race is approached, comes the effort to escape obedience to the law, and, when that goal is all but reached, contempt for oaths, for the plighted word, and all religion. The spectacle of the Titanic nature of which our old legends speak is re-enacted; man returns to the old condition of a hell of unending misery. (*Laws* III, 701b-c)

In order to prevent this truly apocalyptic vision – the end of civilization, a return to chaos initiated by innocuous looking changes in musical forms – one has to impose a firm regimentation of musical matters. The first rule, the prime antidote for combating the monster, is this: "The music and the rhythm must follow the speech" (*Republic* III, 398d; and again 400d). Music, and in particular the voice, shouldn't stray away from words which endow it with sense; as soon as it departs from its discursive anchorage, the voice becomes senseless and threatening, all the more so because of its seductive and intoxicating powers. For the core of the danger is a voice that sets itself loose from the word, the voice beyond logos, the lawless voice.

Other prescriptions follow. One must proscribe the modes that mollify the soul or induce laxity – the "dirgelike" mixed Lydian, the higher Lydian ("for they are useless even to women who are to make the best of themselves, let alone to men", *Republic* 398e) as well as the Ionian. One must retain those fit for men, both for warriors and for manly modesty and moderation – the Dorian and the Phrygian.[3] The sexual division seems to run through music (and this will continue to our day with the sexual connotations of major and minor tonalities, *durus* and *mollis*).[4] Even more: music, as the voice beyond sense, is self-evidently equated with femininity, whereas the word, the instance of signification, is in this simple paradigmatic opposition on the side of masculinity.[5]

In a further consequence, one must also ban the polyharmonic instruments that permit the free transitions among the modes, the 'modulations', and in particular the flute, "the most many-stringed of instruments" (399d). There is in fact another, simpler and more compelling reason for that: one cannot utter the words while playing the flute. The wind instruments have the vicious property: they emancipate themselves from the text, they act as substitutes for the voice, they isolate the voice beyond words. No wonder that Dionysus has chosen the flute

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[3] For Aristotle's analogous views on the modes cf. *Politics* VIII, 1340b. Yet, a bit further (1342b 2-7) he takes issue with that particular passage in the *Republic* concerning the Phrygian mode.

[4] Cf. also: "It will further be necessary to make a rough general distinction between two types of songs, those suited for females and those suited for males, and so we shall have to provide both with their appropriate scales and rhythms; it would be a dreadful thing that the whole tune or rhythm of a composition should be out of place, as it will be if our various songs are inappropriately treated in these respects." (*Laws* VII, 802e)

[5] Some four thousand years later, Wagner will write in a famous letter to Liszt: "*Die Musik ist ein Weib*", music is a woman.

as his preferred instrument (cf. also Pan's pipes, not to mention the mythical connections of the flute with Gorgon, while Apollo has decided on the lyre. "We are not innovating, my friend, in preferring Apollo and the instruments of Apollo to Marsyas and his instruments." (399e) (This is an instance which fits the English phrase 'the masterpiece of understatement', for as the story goes Apollo actually flayed the satyr Marsyas alive after he lost the musical contest with the god; the precedence of lyre over flute was a very bloody affair.)[6]

And no wonder that the flute is fit for women:

> I would like to make a further motion: let us dispense with the flute-girl who just made her entrance; let her play for herself or, if she prefers, for the women in the house. Let us instead spend our evening in conversation. (*Symposium,* 176e)

The flute is played by a girl and her proper audience are women (and it seems there is but a quick slide which leads from flute to questionable virtue), while men will engage in philosophy.

This view of the flute will also be endorsed by Aristotle:

> And there is a further objection [to the flute]: the impediment which the flute presents to the use of the voice detracts from its educational value. The ancients therefore were right in forbidding the flute to youths and freemen, although they had once allowed it. (*Politics* VIII, 1341a 23-7) [...] Bacchic frenzy and all similar emotions are most suitably expressed by the flute [...] (1342b 5-6)

But back to Plato. It seems that both lie in music – the best remedy and the ultimate danger, the cure and the poison. Sounds familiar? This is the point where it seems that the whole of Derrida's analysis of *pharmakon* can be curiously applied to the voice just as much as to writing. Even more so, for the voice is endowed with the sensual fatal attraction, with femininity and enjoyment, whereas writing lacks the immediate imaginary appeal and is rather met with suspicion. Wouldn't the voice be thus the ultimate *pharmakon*? Apart from its ruinous effects it is also presented as the best cure and antidote:

> Education in music is most sovereign, because more than anything else rhythm and harmony find their way to the inmost soul and take strongest hold upon it, bringing with them and imparting grace, if one is rightly trained, and otherwise the contrary [...] (*Republic* III, 401d-e)

So the crucial question is how to strike a balance between its beneficial and dangerous effects, where to draw a line between redemption and catastrophe:

> Now when a man abandons himself to music, to play upon him and pour into his soul as it were through the funnel of his ears those sweet, soft, and dirgelike airs [...] and gives his entire time to the warblings and blandishments of song, the first result is that the principle of high spirit, if he had it, is softened like iron and is made useful instead of useless and brittle. But when he continues the practice without remission and is spellbound, the effect begins to be that he melts and liquefies till he completely dissolves away his spirit, cuts out

[6] According to one version of the myth the contest was at first undecided, the Muses, who acted as referees, were equally charmed by Apollo's lyre and by Marsyas' flute. This is when the god challenged his opponent to both play and sing at the same time, which Marsyas couldn't do, and which literally cost him his skin.

> as it were the very sinews of his soul and makes of himself a 'feeble warrior'. (*Republic* III, 411a-b)[7]

So how can one hope to achieve the right measure with this dangerous sort of enjoyment? Up to a point, music is sublime and elevates the spirit; from a certain limit, however, it brings about decay, the decline of all spiritual faculties, their disintegration in enjoyment. Where shall one stop? Can the philosopher set a limit to this unbounded, limitless enjoyment? Can he keep the cure without introducing the fatal poison?

This ambiguity is by no means confined to Plato, it is not his specific concern. It may well be that it originates at this birthplace of metaphysics – one is tempted to say 'the birth of metaphysics out of the spirit of music' – but it has very much defined the whole era. Let us jump a millennium, or almost, and open Augustine's *Confessions*, book X, 33. There we read the following striking meditation about "sinning by the ear":

> Now, in those melodies [*sonis*] which Thy words breathe soul into, when sung with a sweet and attuned voice, I do a little repose. [...] But with the words which are their life and whereby they find admission into me, themselves [sc. melodies, *soni*] seek in my affections a place of some estimation, and I can scarcely assign them one suitable. For at one time I seem to myself to give them more honor than is seemly [*decet*], feeling our minds to be more holily and fervently raised unto a flame of devotion, by the holy words themselves when thus sung, than when not; and that the several affections of our spirit, by a sweet variety, have their own proper measures in the voice and singing, by some hidden correspondence wherewith they are stirred up. But this contentment of the flesh, to which the soul must not be given over to be enervated, doth oft beguile me, the sense not so waiting upon reason, as patiently to follow her; but having been admitted merely for her sake, it strives even to run before her, and lead her.

We can't be surprised by now to find again the voice as the paramount source of danger and decay. Also the remedy is familiar: stick to the Word, the word of God, make sure the word maintains the upper hand and thus be rid of the voice beyond the word, the unbounded voice. So Athanasius acted most wisely when prescribing that the psalms should be sung "with so slight inflection of voice that it was nearer speaking than singing." Shouldn't singing be rather banned to avoid the ambiguity?

> When I remember the tears I shed at the Psalmody of Thy Church, in the beginning of my recovered faith; and how at this time, I am moved, not with the singing, but with the things sung, when they are sung with a clear voice and modulation most suitable [*cum liquida voce et convenientissima modulatione*], I acknowledge the great use of this institution. Thus I fluctuate between peril of pleasure, and approved wholesomeness; [...] by the delight of the ears, the weaker minds may rise to the feeling of devotion. Yet when it befalls me to be more moved with the voice than the words sung, I confess to have sinned penally, and then had rather not hear music.

Again, it is a question of the limit, the impossible good measure, for music is both what elevates the soul to divinity, and a sin, *delectatio carnis*. It presents carnality at its most insid-

[7] Aristotle will have to deal with the same problem. The liberal studies, with music in the highest place of honor, are quintessential to education, they are "proper for a freeman to acquire, but only in a certain degree, and if he attend to them too closely, in order to attain perfection in them, the evil effects will follow." (*Politics* VIII, 1337b 15-7) Curiously, most of the Book VIII of *Politics* is devoted to music as a means of education.

ious since in music it seems liberated from materiality; the voice is the subtlest and the most perfidious form of the flesh.

The oscillation of St. Augustine defines very well the bulk of what was to happen in the next thousand years and more in the troubled and intricate relationship of the Church to music.[8] The main problem that kept emerging with an uncanny perseverance was that of regimentation and codification of sacral music which ultimately always took the form of confining the voice to the letter, the Holy Scripture. But whatever the attempted regulations, there was always a crack, a loop-hole, a rest that kept recurring, a remnant of a highly ambiguous enjoyment. It could take e. g. the form of *iubilus*, the space allotted to Alleluia, where the general principle of one syllable to one note was omitted and where the mere voice could take over in its own jubilation, the melisma without a support. In a curious development, the notes without words were later underpinned with new words and whole sequences, thus threatening with heretical intrusions into the Text. But isn't *iubilus*, although perilous, at the same time also the most appropriate way to praise God? Augustine himself says so: the jubilation expresses what cannot be expressed by words, the singers are so overwhelmed with joy that they abandon words and give way to their heart. "*Et quem decet ista iubilatio, nisi ineffabilem deum?*" ("And to whom does this jubilation pertain, if not to the ineffable God?" Quoted in O'Donnell's commentary of *Confessions*, 1992, vol. III, pp. 218-9). So it is only the pure voice beyond words that matches the ineffability of God. But then, can we ever be sure that it is really God that we are praising?

One can follow the same predicament with the enormous problems posed by the introduction of polyphony, since when several voices sing at the same time and follow their own melodic lines, the text becomes unintelligible. We see it again in the battle against chromatics, since the semi-tones threaten to undermine the harmonic structure and introduce the mollification of the spirit, the proscribed enjoyment. Each new musical invention had devastating effects and was immediately seen, in a very Platonic manner, as a way to moral ruin. Pope John XXII had to issue a curious decree concerning music, *Docta sanctorum Patrum*, in 1324, trying to put things in order, but to no avail. The Trent Council, in the sixteenth century, had to toil with the same problem and commended the same antidote of intelligibility vs. voice: *in tono intelligibili, intelligibili voce, voce clara, cantu intelligibili* ... (cf. Poizat 1991: 144-5). All the documents seem to have been written by the same hand and guided by the same single obsession: to pin down the voice to the letter, to limit its disruptive force, to dissipate its inherent ambiguity. And once the new musical devices, such as chromatics and polyphony, were espoused, once it was accepted that they can have beneficial spiritual effects and can be put to use, there were already new monsters lurking behind the corner, new wars had to be launched against each new invention.

Not everything fitted within this monotonous picture. Some mystical currents proposed an astonishing reversal of this massive paradigm: music is the only appropriate way to God since it is aiming precisely at the God beyond the word. It is a way to a limitless and ineffable being, a quality that Augustine was already aware of. But if God is the musical principle *par excellence* and the divine word attains its true dimension only in the singing voice, then the radical consequence could follow that the mere word belongs to the devil. This extreme conclusion was indeed drawn by Hildegard of Bingen, the famous twelfth century abbess, who – beside her philosophical preoccupations and conferring with some of the most illustrious men of her time – largely devoted her time to composing, which secured her place as a great figure in the

[8] For a detailed account of that cf. Poizat's remarkable book on sacral music, *La Voix du diable* (1991). I draw a lot of information in this section from this source.

history of music, and a woman at that, a highly rare occurrence in musical history (which has lately turned her into a rather fashionable figure). In *Ordo virtutum*, a musical morality play, we have the story of a soul being tempted by the devil and rescued by the virtues – virtues personified, and of course singing. In a most curious *tour de force*, the devil is the only masculine and the only speaking role, being confined just to words, to mere 'logos'. An inherently non-musical creature, the devil is the devil because he cannot sing. (One might add: no wonder that his temptations couldn't amount to much.) Of course the Church was bound to be doubtful and worried – the synod in Trier, in 1147, almost condemned her as heretic, wondering whether her visions were to be assigned to the devil rather than to God. Is the voice that she hears and writes down really the voice of God? Is there a way to tell? It took the authority of Bernard of Clairvaux to rescue Hildegard.

The question that was raised finally boiled down to this: does music come from God or from the devil? For what is beyond the word announces both the supreme elevation and the vilest damnation. What raises our souls to God makes God ambiguous; beyond the word one cannot tell apart God from the devil. Music may well be the element of spiritual elevation beyond worldliness and representation, but it also introduces, for that very reason, the indomitable and senseless enjoyment beyond the more tractable sensual pleasures. There is no assurance or transparency to be found in the voice, quite the contrary, the voice undermines any certainty and any establishment of a firm sense. The voice is boundless, warrantless, and – no coincidence – on the side of woman. But if it introduces this fatal ambivalence, then the only consistent course would be to ban church music altogether – and indeed, this radical conclusion in the opposite extreme was drawn by the Puritans: for fifteen years, from 1645 to 1660, the time of Cromwell, music was banned from the Anglican Church, music books and sheets were burned and organs demolished as "the devil's pipes" (cf. Poizat 1991: 44). God was restored to the Word, and to silence.

Let me finish this 'brief history of metaphysics' with the French revolution, although many more detours should be taken into account and many more authors examined – in particular I am leaving aside the case of Rousseau whose complexity would demand a much more extensive treatment. At the height of the victorious Revolution, somebody had the brilliant idea to create, in 1793, the *Institut national de la musique*, an institution through which the State would now take care of music in the best interest of the people. François-Joseph Gossec, who was in charge of the project, has duly written in a programmatic text that its goal should be to promote music "which would support and animate the energy of the defenders of equality and to prohibit music which mollifies the French soul by its effeminate sounds in the salons and in the temples consecrated to imposture" (quoted by Attali 1977: 111). Music has to be drawn out of the courts, churches and concert halls, it has to be performed in the open air, accessible to everyone; the melodies should be such that the people can sing along, not the pompous and pretentious artifices which only serve the degenerate. Gossec himself entered music history as the initiator of the mass choir singing and one of the first composers for brass orchestras. Musicians should become state employees, not dependent on the generosity of the rich, and the whole musical enterprise should be well planned and organized from above.[9]

So the tables could be reversed and the same weapons could be turned against the Church, now seen as the major agent of the voice against the sense. But the defenders of reason were

[9] François-Joseph Gossec (1734-1829) acquired his musical knowledge and some glory as a court composer. In 1766 he became *intendant de la musique* of prince Condé and in 1774 *maître de musique* at the Royal Academy, then the founder and the first director of École royale de chant. After the revolution he was the music inspector and one of the principal holders of musical authority in France for a quarter of a century. In 1816, after the downfall of Napoleon and the restoration, he was summarily sacked for his allegiance to revolutionary ideas, so he died in great poverty and entirely forgotten. Among his numerous works one can find e. g. *Hymne a Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Hymne a l'Etre Supreme, Hymne a la liberté, Chant du 14 juillet*, etc. His *Requiem* is still sometimes performed, and is actually not bad at all.

for once unwittingly in perfect accord with their enemies, the senseless and effeminate voice was equally dangerous to both. It is highly indicative that one of the first decrees of the Revolution was the prohibition of public singing of castrati, who became the emblematic and monstrous figure-heads of the perversity and corruption of the *ancien régime*, the embodiments of its degenerate enjoyment epitomized by the voice.[10] They were not only the heroes of the baroque and classical opera (up to and including Mozart), but also the figure-heads of the Catholic music, their cradle and sanctuary was the Sistine Chapel, the core of perversity at the very heart of the Church.

One can draw, from this brief and necessarily schematic survey, the tentative conclusion that the history of 'logocentrism' doesn't go hand in hand with 'phonocentrism' at all, that there is a dimension of the voice which runs counter to self-transparency, sense and presence: the voice against the logos, the voice as the other of logos, its radical alterity. Metaphysics has always been very well aware of that, as we have seen, compulsively clinging to a simple exorcising formula, repeating it over and over again, compelled by the same invisible hand throughout millennia. Maybe what defined it as metaphysics was not just the demotion of writing, but in the same gesture the banishment of the voice. The phonocentric voice was just one part of the story, presenting the illusory pledge of the presence, reduction of its inherent ambivalence and its part of alterity. But the voice renders the presence doubtful the moment the anchorage in sense is eluded, and it is not only writing, but even more the voice which makes logos utterly ambiguous.

The victory of the Enlightenment brought about also the end of the great metaphysical tradition, which breathed its last sigh with Hegel. But when the nineteenth century brought about the theme of finding the way out of metaphysics, of the critique of metaphysics, this was done, in some of its philosophical ramifications, precisely and most tellingly under the banner of music. Think of Schopenhauer, think of Nietzsche, who both relied on music as the alterity of logos in their search for other ways of thinking.

Music and deconstruction: curiously, as we have seen, music is most intimately linked with the very possibility of deconstruction. Derrida's view was oddly biased, when he set the basic opposition between phonocentrism and *différance*, between the voice and the writing, the presence and the trace, where the first was always seen as the disavowal of the second. But the voice, as it turns out, is no less dangerous than the writing, if anything it is more insidious, for its hold in presence and in interiority makes it disruptive from within, while the external danger of writing threatens to invade the pure interiority from the outside. There is a moment of deconstructive dislocation already in the voice itself precisely when it strays away from the word. It doesn't need the letter, or the trace of otherhood, to stray away, it does so as if by its own immanent pull. The voice is more of a *pharmakon* than writing, by Derrida's own standards. It is not the interplay of signs which dismantles the illusion of the voice/presence, since the voice is threatening precisely where it is not a sign, where it presents itself as a non-signifying voice. Or put another way: voice is not a supplement, the two logics are not symmetrical, the voice is rather something menacing to be perverted in itself and by itself, if it doesn't get a footing in logos, i. e. in a scripture, a word, a letter, a sign. The danger of the voice doesn't stem from some supplementary, auxiliary, derivative entity which would then invade that towhich it was supposed to be a mere supplement; it is rather that the voice needs the supple

[10] I cannot venture here into the fascinating realm of the history of castrati, their rise within the Catholic church in the sixteenth century, their quasi angel-like demeanour which seemingly dissociates the enjoyment of the voice from sex, their massive presence in the opera, their incredible vogue that lasted some three centuries, their gradual decline until they were confined to the Sistine Chapel, finally their banishment, only in 1903, by the Pope Leo XIII. They illustrate the ambiguous deconstructive nature of the voice in the most immediate way – angle-like, divine, denatured, perverse, all in one. The best accounts of their history so far are probably Patrick Barbier, *Histoire des castrats* (Paris 1989: Grasset), and Hubert Ortkemper, *Engel wider Willen* (Berlin 1993: Henschel).

ment of the letter so as not to get perverted on its own. It is as if the voice was its own deconstruction, it detains both the key to the presence and to its impossibility. So isn't phonocentrism then centered on something that is endowed with a deconstructive force greater than writing? (Hence the ambiguity of the title, where the voice can be read as either the object or the subject of deconstruction: Derrida's endeavour is to deconstruct the phonocentric voice, while it appears that the voice itself is deconstructing.)

But one shouldn't fall prey to the illusion that the voice pertains to nature (pure sensuality, linked to femininity etc.), some indomitable precultural force that would need to be tamed by logos. The trouble is rather that the voice is itself the product of culture from the very outset, coextensive with logos, the result of the signifying cut, not some natural substance or propensity; it is the voice pertaining to logos itself.[11] Its intoxicating and seductive magic is the cure and the poison inherent to culture itself. It seems that the safeguard against the double danger of writing on the one hand, and the voice on the other, was the metaphysical endeavour to match them, to hold on to the area of their overlapping which would secure a firm footing of sense, a vocal logos, a structured voice. But can they ever match? Can they overlap? Isn't their missed encounter the source of all trouble? And isn't their impossible match the stuff that music is made of, appearing as it did both as the pledge of highest sense, the sense beyond all words, and as the meaningless and dangerous enjoyment?

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[11] "Music exists only for a speaking being", as Baas (1998: 196) has very well put it.

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In Defence of 'Structural Hearing': Some Problems With the New Musicology

V zagovor 'strukturnega poslušanja': nekatere težave Nove muzikologije

Ključne besede: estetika, dekonstrukcija, de Man, formalizem, ideologija, Kerman, teorija glasbe, Shenker, 'strukturno poslušanje'

Keywords: aesthetics, deconstruction, de Man, formalism, ideology, Kerman, music theory, Schenker, 'structural listening'

POVZETEK

Prispevek obravnava vrsto vsebin s področja novejših usmeritev teorije glasbe. K njim sodi nasprotovanje 'analizi' ali 'strukturnemu poslušanju' kot (domneven) prispevek Nove muzikologije v diskurz mainstream muzikologije, katere namen naj bi bil nenehno obnavljanje kanona priznanih 'mojstrovin' in vrsta elitističnih vrednostnih sodb, ki so običajno naslovljene na taka dela. K temu sodi ideja – izpeljana po Paulu de Manu in predstavnikih literarne dekonstrukcije –, da bi mogli imeti pojmi, kot so 'organska forma', strukturna enovitost, tematska povezanost, celovit tonalitetni ali harmonski razvoj itn. in so razumljeni kot rezultat določene 'estetske ideologije' za sumljive, celo usodne posledice, če bi jih uporabili na širšem polju kulturne politike. Menim, da je to zgrešena ali vsaj zelo tendencionzna miselnost, ki sama nedopustno transponira pojme iz enega (literarnoteoretskega) področja, kjer tovrstni argumenti imajo določeno moč, na drugo (glasbenoteoretsko)

ABSTRACT

This essay raises a number of issues with regard to recent developments in music theory. Among them is the turn against 'analysis' or 'structural listening' on account of their (supposed) investment in a discourse of mainstream musicology whose aim is to perpetuate the canon of acknowledged 'great works' and the kinds of elitist value-judgement that are conventionally applied to such works. Along with this goes the idea – derived from Paul de Man and exponents of literary deconstruction – that notions such as those of 'organic form', structural unity, thematic integration, long-range tonal or harmonic development, etc., are products of a certain 'aesthetic ideology' with dubious, even sinister, implications when transposed to the wider realm of cultural politics. I maintain that this is a false, or at any rate a highly tendentious line of thought which itself involves the illicit transposition from one domain (that of literary criticism) where such arguments have a certain force to another (that of music

področje, kjer preprosto ne vzdržijo kritike drugače kot z močno in nezadovoljivo raztegljivostjo po načelu analogije. Takó je zoperstavljanje naivnemu organicističnemu branju poetične metafore pri de Manu, ki domneva neposredno kontinuiteto (celo identičnost) med umom in naravo, subjektom in objektom, ali jezikom in pojavno intuicijo, pri prenosu na področje naše čutne glasbene izkušnje, ki je tudi konceptualno podprta, izrazito neustrezno.

Nakazana vprašanja skušam podajati skozi branje različnih teoretikov z obeh strani debate, vključno z Adornom, čigar poudarjanje kreposti 'strukturnega poslušanja' kot sredstva upora proti rutinskim, v navado otrdelim ali ideološko pogojenim načinom odzivanja ponuja morda najbolj mogočen ugovor novejšim nasprotovanju analizi v vseh njenih oblikah. Nadalje tudi dodajam, da so bile te oblike analize veliko bolj raznolike – in pogosto manj predane organicistični veri – kot jih skušajo predstaviti njihovi obrekovalci, ki nagibajo k enačenju 'analize' z analitično metodo Heinricha Schenkerja in njenim v temelju konservativnim, dogmatskim in ideološko obremenjenim pristopom. V podporo svojemu protiargumentu se sklicujem na različne smernice kognitivne znanosti in psihologije percepcije skupaj z nedavno debato med filozofoma Petrom Kivyjem in Jerroldom Levinsonom, ki zadeva močno kontroverzno tezo slednjega, namreč da je razumevanje glasbe zamejeno na časovno zelo kratke odlomke (spominskega in anticipatoričnega) dojemanja. Izvajanje sklenem z mislijo, da je mogoče naše presojanje glasbe krepko poglobiti in obogatiti z različnimi vrstami trajnostnega ali dolgosežnega strukturnega dojemanja glasbenega toka, kot ga skuša razkriti analiza, in da je katera koli teorija, ki to izključuje – ali znižuje na golo 'estetsko ideologijo' –, *ipso facto* na napačni poti.

theory) where they simply don't apply unless by a great and implausible stretch of analogy. Thus de Man's case against naïvely organicist readings of poetic metaphor which assume a direct continuity (even identity) between mind and nature, subject and object, or language and phenomenal intuition must appear distinctly off-the-point when applied to our sensuous but also conceptually-informed experience of music.

My essay pursues these questions via a reading of various theorists on both sides of the debate, including Adorno, whose emphasis on the virtues of 'structural listening' as a means of resistance to routine, habitual, or ideologically conditioned modes of response offers perhaps the most powerful rejoinder to this current revolt against analysis in all its forms. I go on to remark that those forms have been far more diverse – and often less committed to a hard-line organicist creed – than their detractors like to make out, tending as they do to equate 'analysis' with Heinrich Schenker's deeply conservative, dogmatic, and ideologically-loaded approach. In support of my counter-argument I draw on various developments in cognitive science and the psychology of perception, along with a recent debate between the philosophers Peter Kivy and Jerrold Levinson concerning the latter's highly controversial claim that musical understanding is limited to very short stretches of temporal (retentive and anticipatory) grasp. I conclude that our appreciation of music can be greatly deepened and enriched by the kinds of sustained or long-range structural comprehension that analysis seeks to provide, and that any theory which rules this out – or puts it down to mere 'aesthetic ideology' – is ipso facto on the wrong track.

1

It is a long time – getting on for a century – since literary critics first became involved in earnest (often heated) debate about the relative merits of 'appreciative' and 'analytic' criticism. In fact one can date the most significant outbreak to the period just following the 1930 publication of William Empson's *Seven Types of Ambiguity*, a text that is nowadays perhaps more talked about than actually read but which remains (in my judgement) altogether unsurpassed for sheer brilliance, acuity, analytic insight, and – be it said – occasional flights of soaring free-associative fancy (Empson 1930). No work since then has come anywhere close to *Seven Types* for the extent of its influence (especially on the US New Criticism) and the way that it opened up new possibilities of detailed textual exegesis combined with the strongly speculative bent of a first-rate analytical intelligence. Indeed it is fair to say that this transformative impact was as much upon the poems or passages that Empson singled out for scrutiny as upon those receptive – and to that extent 'appreciative' – readers for whom poetry would never be quite the same again. Nevertheless the book attracted, and continues to attract, a good deal of hostile commentary from two main quarters. On the one hand are scholar-critics, like Rosamond Tuve, who have attacked Empson for his flagrant 'misreadings', most often brought about – they claim – through his blithely anachronistic approach or cavalier disregard for the standards of interpretative truth imposed by a due respect for the constraints of philological research, authorial intent, and period-based generic convention. (See for instance Tuve 1952.) On the other – more relevant in the present context – is the charge brought against him by those who maintain that our experience of poetry is first and foremost a matter of 'appreciation', that is to say, an intuitive mode of response that cannot – or should not – be subject to any such pleasure-destroying excesses of analytic rigour.

This objection was voiced by John Sparrow in an article, published in the journal *Oxford Outlook*, to which Empson replied with a vigorous defence of his own, typically 'Cambridge' outlook of sturdy scientific rationalism *versus* Sparrow's typically 'Oxford' offence at the idea of having his fine-tuned aesthetic responses so rudely laid open to inspection (Empson 1987: 193-202; also Sparrow 1930: 598ə607). In other words, there was no real danger that (in Empson's phrase) by 'pruning down too far toward the emotional roots' the critic might thereby destroy the delicate flower. Any good poem, i.e., one that merited such close analytical attention would surely stand to gain through this process of helping the reader to appreciate at a more conscious or reflective level what had hitherto been largely a matter of inchoate, ill-defined emotive response. And again, if the poem – or the reader's enjoyment – was spoiled by the analyst's approach then most likely that enjoyment was misplaced, whether because the poem didn't deserve it or because the reader was responding in some wrong or inappropriate (e.g., emotionally self-indulgent) way. Thus, for Empson, the chief virtue of analytic criticism was in drawing conscious attention to a range of otherwise unnoticed (or subliminal) nuances and depths of meaning, and thereby offering the reader a firmer, more confident basis for arriving at judgements of value. At the same time it could happily avoid the kind of vague, unsupported, or downright dogmatic evaluative talk that all too often resulted when critics like Sparrow fell back on the appeal to unaided intuition as the sole arbiter of aesthetic or literary worth. That is to say, any judgement could be taken as implicit in the fact that the poem or passage concerned had not only been singled out for close attention but shown itself responsive to an analytic treatment whose success – in so far as it achieved its aims – was sufficient guarantee of such worth. At this stage opponents are likely to object that the whole process has become purely circular, since 'good' poetry is now defined as just the sort that lends itself best to the analyst's foregone methods and predilections, while these are in turn borne out by

(what else?) their working so well with the poetry in question. To which Empson's response, quite simply, is that the mind takes pleasure in achieving a better, more conscious grasp of its own operations and hence that any doctrine – like that of his opponents – which prevents it from so doing is one with harmful consequences not only for our appreciation of poetry but also, by extension, for the conduct of our intellectual, moral, and everyday social lives.[1]

So much for the back-and-forth of this debate as it emerged in response to Empson's *Seven Types* and has continued to rumble on since then, as for instance in the later round of 'theory-wars' provoked by deconstruction, post-structuralism, and other such dubious continental imports as viewed by the (mainly Anglophone) upholders of intuitive or common-sense wisdom. However it would over-simplify the issue to state it in quite these terms since, as anyone will know who has followed developments in French critical thought over the past three decades, things have moved on apace since the heyday of structuralism in its 'classic', i.e., intensely theoretical and (at least by its then-current lights) methodologically rigorous phase. The challenge to that erstwhile confident self-image came from various quarters, among them Derrida's deconstructive reading of Saussurean structural linguistics and Lévi-Strauss's structural anthropology. (See Derrida 1976; and Derrida 1978: 278-93.) It also took a lead from Roland Barthes' reflections – in *The Pleasure of the Text* and elsewhere – on that whole missing dimension of affective and erotic experience (*plaisir* and *jouissance*) which could not but elude the grim paternal law of a full-fledged structuralist approach, as adopted in some of his own earlier writings (Barthes 1976). Still it is hard to avoid the impression that Barthes' turn 'against theory' is one that not only draws intellectual sustenance from all those past encounters (with Saussure, Lacan, and Althusser among others) but also leaves room for a great deal of very subtle between-the-lines theoretical and speculative thought. (For further striking examples see Barthes 1975; Barthes1977 and Barthes 1977a.) In most respects no two critics could be more different than Empson and Barthes, the one a commonsensical, distinctly 'British' kind of rationalist with strong empiricist leanings who tended to excoriate literary theory (especially in its French manifestations) as so much intellectual hot air, the other (so to speak) a theorist *malgré lui* even his moments of intimate reflection on the erotics of reader-response.[2] All the same they have at least this much in common: that they conceive the relationship between theory, analysis, and pleasure (or appreciation) as one that goes wrong – gives rise to much sterile debate – as soon as those activities are thought of as in any way separable one from another.

2

My main interest here – and my pretext for this detour *via* Empson and Barthes – is the recent emergence of similar debates with regard to the merits of musical analysis as a means of enhancing or (as some would have it) of obstructing our straightforward, intuitive grasp of what music has to offer by way of pleasurable experience.[3] This analogy is itself rather less than straightforward for various historical, cultural, and discipline-specific reasons. One is the fact that music analysis was pretty well established as a *modus operandi* from the mid-19th century on, albeit in forms that would scarcely pass muster by present-day academic standards. appreciation of music – or adequate account of musical meaning and value – would need to respect its 'absolute' status and would hence do well to resist or discount any notion of programmatic content (Hanslick 1986). Such was the basic philosophical premise of what there For it was then that the idea emerged, most forcefully in Hanslick's writings, that any genuine

[1] See various of the articles and reviews collected in *Argufying* 1987 for further arguments to this effect.
[2] See *Argufying* 1987 for some of Empson's repeated fallings-out with 'theory' in its various forms.
[3] See for instance Baker / Beach / Bernard 1977; Bergeron / Bohlman 1992; Cook / Everist 1999; Kramer 1995); Lochhead / Auner 2002; Solie 1993.

after became a veritable item of faith for critics who professed to be concerned with the musical work 'itself', rather than with various (no doubt interesting but strictly extrinsic) aspects of its cultural background, psychological genesis, reception-history, and so forth.

Thus the trend toward ever more refined and sophisticated methods of formal-structural analysis is one that took hold very largely through the growth of academic musicology and its attendant division of intellectual labour between, on the one hand, positivistically-inclined music historians or sociologists and, on the other, theorist-critics with a strong autonomist bias.[4] Its benchmark expression – for proponents and antagonists alike – was Schenker's ultra-formalist insistence on tracing every detail of a work's surface structure to some underlying generative theme or motif which then served as justification for the claim of structural coherence or 'organic' form.[5] Indeed this approach went so far as to assert that the ultimate aim of analysis was to derive the entire composition from the tonic triad (or root chord) in relation to which it could then be seen as a massive yet always homebound excursion through various thematic transformations, tonal departures, or long-drawn cadential and other such suspensive devices. To be sure this invites a number of objections, among them the familiar circularity-charge (to put it crudely: that analyst and work are engaged in a process of mutual reputation-boosting) and the claim that such methods, Schenker's in particular, are reductionist to the point where all music is treated – absurdly – as a mere detour en route to restoring that primordial 'chord of nature'.[6] Furthermore, suspicions have lately been raised that the origins of this approach were deeply bound up with a form of 'aesthetic ideology' which deployed metaphors of organic growth and development in the service of a cultural-nationalist creed with distinctly hegemonic, highly conservative and (some would say) proto-fascist inclinations.[7] After all, Schenker took it as self-evident – a truth infallibly borne out by analysis – that the greatest works were those belonging to the mainstream Austro-German line of descent from Bach, through Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven, to Schubert and Brahms. This status had to do not only with their superior degree of thematic complexity and formal integration but also with their standing in just that kind of privileged lineal relationship, one that effectively transferred those values from the individual work – organically conceived – to a version of musical history likewise premised on organicist (i.e., strongly teleological) notions of predestined development and growth.

Whence, so the charge-sheet continues, Schenker's attitude of undisguised contempt for any music – including, notoriously, that of Debussy – whose sensuous appeal, thematic elusiveness, or lack of 'structure' in the operative (Schenker-approved) sense rendered them resistant or opaque to analysis and thus placed them firmly beyond the canonical pale. Moreover, in hindsight, that attitude takes on a whole range of disturbing, even sinister overtones to the extent that it foreshadows those kinds of 'national aestheticism' – exemplified above all in the Wagner-cult and associated forms of Nazi cultural propaganda – which likewise entailed a demotion or suppression of other, so-called 'decadent' or 'degenerate' art (Lacoue-Labarthe / Nancy 1988). In short, there is a dangerous pseudo-logic that can easily lead from claims concerning the structural integrity or 'organic' character of certain works, *via* claims with regard to their intrinsic value thus defined and analytically revealed, to claims that such value is the sole prerogative of just those cultures – or just that singular, rightfully predominant culture – which brought them to birth. That Schenker is well known to have espoused political views very much in keeping with such musico-aesthetic values and predilections is yet further grist to the

[4] See Kerman 1980; Kerman 1983; Kerman 1985; also Burnham 1996; Solie 1980.

[5] See Schenker1973; Schenker 1979; also Beach 1983; Blasius 1996; Forte / Gilbert 1982); Narmour 1977; Siegel 1990; Treitler 1989; Yeston 1977.

[6] See various entries under Notes 3, 4 and 5, above.

[7] See for instance Goehr 1992; Korsyn 1993; Solie 1993; also – in a closely related vein – Man 1996; Lacoue-Labarthe / Nancy 1988.

deconstructive mill of those present-day theorists – exponents of the 'New Musicology' – who have taken to denouncing the whole enterprise of 'analysis' as merely an expression of deep-laid ideological bias concealed behind a fake appearance of objectivity and rigour. (Notes 3 and 4.) Along with this, very often, goes a protest in the name of musical pleasure, enjoyment, or appreciation as against the kind of 'structural listening' enjoined by critics who assume – in typically 'analytic' style – that any hearing of a work which fails to perceive its long-term patterns of thematic transformation, motivic development, tonal progression, and so forth, is a hearing that manifestly fails to grasp its true significance and value.[8]

Such claims are by no means confined to analysts of a broadly orthodox, that is to say, for the most part academically-based and – by their own account – politically neutral persuasion. Indeed, the case for 'structural listening' is one that is put with great emphasis by Adorno since he considers it the only means by which music can effectively challenge – or be heard and understood to challenge – the kinds of uncritical, facile, or stereotyped response that otherwise typify every aspect of our social and cultural lives under the conditions of late commodity capitalism. (See especially Adorno 1973, 1982, 1997, 1998.) Thus, for him, it stands opposed to those forms of mass-media entertainment (such as music that lends itself readily to large-scale popular consumption) whose relentless promotion by the 'culture industry' is among the most effective agencies of social control, working as it does to repress or destroy any last remnant of the critical-emancipatory impulse (Adorno 1991). Hence Adorno's stark diagnosis of the trend toward 'regressive listening' which fails (or refuses) to engage with the long-term structural elements of musical form and contents itself solely with the kinds of enjoyment to be had from the standard fare of 'popular classics', or from favourite chunks of those works wrenched out of context so as to demand least effort of musical comprehension.

For many readers this just goes to show that Adorno, whatever his supposedly 'radical' (i.e., Marxist-influenced) ideas, was in fact an upholder of the cultural status quo and a defender of elitist values which were none the less so for his presenting them in the guise of a critical theory that proclaimed its opposition to every form of ideological conditioning. (See Briel / Kramer 2001; Cook D. 1996); Gibson / Rubin 2002; Paddison 1996.) As evidence of this they cite (among other things) his constant appeal to the canonical masterworks of Western musical tradition, his indiscriminate lumping-together of 'authentic' jazz with its tin-pan-alley derivatives, and (above all) his contempt for any music that didn't measure up to those classically-derived standards of formal integrity and good taste. The latter is a phrase that would scarcely have entered Adorno's critical lexicon but one – so his adversaries argue – that none the less captures the ethos and the tone of his writing once shorn of its pseudo-radical posturing. Thus Adorno's uneasy (not to say perverse) combination of an intensely formalist analytic approach with a critical agenda premised on emancipatory social and ethical values tends always to lean in the former direction, that is, toward an idea of 'structural listening' which effectively disqualifies any response that falls short of its own exacting criteria. What this amounts to is a further propping-up of 'the canon' and its hegemonic status, along with those increasingly refined analytical methods (albeit here bearing a Marxist inflection) which have served to maintain that status through various well-practised techniques of ideological co-option.

Such is at any rate the charge levelled against Adorno by a range of hostile commentators, from defenders of 'popular' music in its various forms, genres, or styles to critics who reject what they see as his Kantian (again strictly formalist) bias against any kind of aesthetic 'appreciation' that errs on the side of sensuous pleasure or downright hedonist indulgence. Amongst the New Musicologists one who has argued very forcefully to this effect is Rose Rosengard

[8] For a range of views on musical analysis, its scope and limits, see Bent / Drabkin 1987; Cook 1989; Cook 1993; Cook 1996; Dempster / Brown 1990; Dunsby / Whittall 1988; Pople 1994.

Subotnik in her book *Deconstructive Variations* (Subotnik 1996). Here she puts the case that any such emphasis on the virtues of 'structural listening' – whether by mainstream music analysts or by those, like Adorno, who claim to deploy it in the service of socio-cultural critique – should be seen as just another standard device for shoring up those ideological values invested in the canon of received 'great' works. Subotnik finds nothing but high-brow cultural prejudice linked to professional self-interest in the notion that those works are intrinsically such as to demand an effort of sustained analytical attention, and that this provides not only a measure of their true greatness but a touchstone of musical perceptiveness and intelligence on the listener's part. Hence Adorno's attitude of sovereign contempt for those other, less elevated modes of response – ruthlessly exploited by the 'culture-industry' – which, so far from requiring a capacity for long-term structural grasp, encourage the listener to attend spasmodically, to pick out favourite passages for repeated hearing, and completely to ignore any aspects of musical form beyond the most basic, easily assimilated melodies and harmonic progressions. To his way of thinking, this marked the prevalence of a regressive, even infantile fixation on the kinds of purely sensuous pleasure – or desire for immediate gratification – that went along with other signs of a widespread malaise in the body politic, such as the demise of autonomous critical reflection among those who took their beliefs and values ready-made from mass media sources. Thus the stultification of collective intelligence went on apace, aided in no small part by the endless recycling of clichéd, stereotyped modes of listener-response whose effect – as with jazz, on Adorno's notoriously negative view of it – was to create an illusion of spontaneity which in fact worked to conceal its thoroughly banal and commodified character (Adorno 1991).

In an earlier book, *Developing Variations*, Subotnik had drawn quite extensively on Adorno's musical and sociological analyses, not least in making her case for a feminist and class-based critique of the dominant paradigms in academic musicology (Subotnik 1991). With the sequel, as I have said, she pretty much disowns this allegiance and comes out very strongly against his idea that 'structural listening' to works that invite or reward such attention is the *sine qua non* for any critical practice that would keep faith with music's now much diminished and yet – as Adorno strives to maintain – still latent emancipatory potential or occluded truth-content (Adorno 1991a; Adorno 1991b; Adorno 1998a). On the contrary, she argues: this Adornian perspective is just another chapter in the long history of high-toned formalist and philosophic put-downs suffered by popular culture at the hands of those who would denigrate its pleasures as nothing more than frivolous distractions or ways of remaining blissfully well deceived. Thus Subotnik sees nothing wrong – nothing at all 'unmusical' – in the kinds of unfocused, intermittent, easily side-tracked, half-conscious, or free-associative listening that Adorno finds grimly symptomatic of our twilight cultural state. Still less does she go along with his distinctly Kantian mistrust of any pleasure in modes of aesthetic experience – such as the enjoyment of music at a sensuous level – that cannot be subject to formal analysis, or to treatment in conceptual (philosophic) terms.

To be sure, a central theme and motivating impulse in much of Adorno's work is the need to resist that totalising (potentially totalitarian) drive toward absolute conceptual mastery that tends always to repress or ignore the stubborn particularities of lived experience (Adorno 1997; Adorno 1974). Yet it is often hard to escape the impression that Adorno's own dialectical drive – albeit in the name of a 'negative dialectics' that strives to resist such closure – is itself so strong and conceptually hard-driven as to place that aim in some doubt. Thus his critics have a point when they remark on this tension in Adorno's thought between an overt dedication to saving the particular from the ravages of abstract generality and an approach that risks doing precisely the opposite through its relentless pursuit of dialectical arguments whose result – very

often – is to force a procrustean either/or logic onto musical works and musico-historical developments. Such is, for instance, the doctrinaire juxtaposition of Schoenberg *versus* Stravinsky in *Philosophy of New Music* and the constant presumption in Adorno's writing that any musical 'appreciation' meriting the name must go by way of so intensive an analytical engagement as to place it quite beyond reach of any but the most refined and highly-trained musical intellects. So to this extent at least there is a certain justice in the charge often levelled against Adorno of his having drastically devalued the role of pleasure (or sensuous fulfilment) in our experience of music and, by the same token, over-rated the importance of analytic grasp – or 'structural listening' – as a measure of what such experience properly involves.

All the same this argument may be thought to have gone too far if it concludes that analysis has no place in our musical responses, or that pleasurable listening has nothing whatever to do with the kinds of longer-term structural awareness that analysts are expert in finding out. Thus Adorno was right to insist – as against Subotnik and others who attack his 'elitist' approach – that there is something intrinsically valuable about the kinds of listening (and the kinds of work) that find room for a perception of long-range tonal, thematic, and developmental structure as well as for the more immediate pleasures of short-term sensuous response. To adopt such a view is not merely, as some sociologists of culture would have it, an expression of class-prejudice or gender-bias encoded in a highly technical language (i.e., the discourse of present-day, post-Schenkerian music analysis) whose seeming objectivity and effort to avoid any taint of programmatic or affective content is precisely the mark of its ideological character. (See various entries under Notes 3, 4, 5 and 7; also Bourdieu 1984.) That is to say, borrowing a useful distinction from philosophy of science, interests of this sort may well play a role in the 'context of discovery' where music critics – and listeners bent upon increasing their stock of 'cultural capital' – are no doubt subject to all manner of social, professional, academic, psycho-biographical, and other such extraneous motivating factors. However they have no bearing on issues raised in the 'context of justification' where it is a matter of making good one's claims with respect to (say) structures of tonal development or motivic and thematic transformation. (See especially Reichenbach 1938.) For those claims are typically advanced with respect to certain agreed-upon standards – of evidence, precision, demonstrative warrant, sensitivity to context, and so forth – in consequence of which they can properly be held to stand on their merits and transcend any reductive sociological account.

Of course it will be said by opponents that these are just the sorts of self-confirming, purely circular and hence empirically vacuous criteria that typify the analytic enterprise, determined as it is to keep itself in business by producing ever more elaborate analyses which merely take for granted the superiority of music that suits its own preconceived values. Thus the two main prongs of this adversary case are, first, that such values apply only to a narrow, canonically privileged subset of musical works and practices, and second, that they are not so much 'there' to be discovered through objective analysis as projected onto those works through a strong disposition in favour of ideas like thematic development, organic form, structural complexity, etc. Hence Subotnik's later, more 'radical' position according to which there is something intrinsically suspect – ideologically compromised – about the whole business of music analysis, even where this takes the form (as in Adorno) of a project with overtly critical, progressive, and social-emancipatory aims.

3

These developments in recent, broadly 'deconstructive' music theory can be traced back to a influential 1983 essay by the critic Joseph Kerman, whose work up to then had combined an

analytic with a cultural-historical approach and done so without any overt sense of a looming crisis in either discipline, or the relationship between them (Kerman 1980). The article ('How We Got Into Analysis, and How to Get Out') sought to put an end to this comfortable state of affairs by declaring the crisis already upon us and offering a diagnostic account of its symptoms and their cultural aetiology. Briefly stated, analysis as practised hitherto by mainstream musicologists was a product of that same 'aesthetic ideology' which literary theorists had long since recognised as a potent source of illusory notions – such as that of 'organic form' – whose extension into the wider (socio-cultural and political) domain was at best an unfortunate category-mistake and at worst a highly dangerous conflation of realms. (Notes 3 and 4.) It was just this delusion which had given rise to that particular strain of 'aestheticised' politics whose expressions ranged from the more overtly nationalist versions of German idealism and romanticism to Wagner's ideal of the *Gesamtkunstwerk*, or from Schenker's conception of musical form as growing out of certain germinal motifs to his likewise deeply organicist view of those same values as bearing out his claim for the superior quality of works in the Austro-German line of descent. Thus Kerman put the case that musicologists had yet to catch up with certain crucial developments in literary theory – chiefly of a French provenance – which had gone far toward deconstructing the kinds of ideological baggage that went along with the analytic programme, albeit (no doubt) unbeknownst to most of its practitioners. What the discipline needed was a healthy injection of 'theory', this latter equated by Kerman with a willingness to examine its own deep-laid, even (it might be) discipline-constitutive values, assumptions, and priorities. Only thus – by taking various leaves out of the deconstructionist book – might analysis shed that bad Schenkerian legacy of national-aestheticist thinking and learn to question those hegemonic notions (of form, unity, thematic integration, 'structural listening', and so forth) that presently exerted such a harmful grip on its working principles and practices.

What made the situation worse, according to Kerman, was the way that music analysis of this sort went along with an approach to musical history that was likewise in hock to certain outworn, nineteenth-century 'positivist' conceptions of scholarly method. Here also, musicologists proceeded as if their discipline could and should remain entirely untouched by those major developments in other fields – hermeneutics, critical historiography, narrative poetics, structuralism, post-structuralism, feminism, deconstruction – whose deployment elsewhere had exerted such a powerful transformative impact. Once they started taking stock of such developments, Kerman surmised, they would find themselves impelled not only to re-think the methodological foundations of their work but also to raise serious doubts with regard to its ideological complicities, not least as concerned that *entente cordiale* – rather nicely exemplified, one is tempted to remark, in Kerman's own previous work – between music history and music analysis as currently practised. (See for instance Kerman 1962, 1967, 1981.) In particular they would have to ask whether the very fact of this peaceful coexistence might not indicate a symptomatic failure or refusal to examine that complex, essentially contested, and ideologically charged relationship. Even a cursory acquaintance with the writings of a literary theorist like Paul de Man would suffice to show that they had come nowhere near thinking it through with the requisite degree of self-critical awareness. (See Man 1996; also Man 1983, 1984 and Man 1986.) And it would then become apparent, so Kerman claimed, that musicology in both departments was in urgent need of opening its doors to the kinds of thinking that had brought such benefits – as he definitely took them to be – when applied in those other, more advanced and speculative regions of debate.

When Kerman's essay first appeared he could plausibly strike the heroic tone of one crying in the academic wilderness, or of Milton's archangel Abdiel, 'alone against the forces of

night'. Now, twenty years on, his plea for musicologists to broaden their theoretical horizons and absorb the lessons of deconstruction and other such cutting-edge developments is apt to sound distinctly old-hat or more like a fairly conservative prognosis of developments already under way. For it can hardly escape the notice of anyone who browses through the current music journals, bibliographies, or publishers' catalogues that musicology has taken the 'deconstructive turn' with a vengeance, and that 'theory' has triumphed (or at any rate made territorial inroads) beyond Kerman's wildest dreams. (See Notes 3, 4 and 7.) Indeed it wouldn't surprise me if he was less than happy about the extent to which – in certain quarters at least – his proposals have been taken on board and the rapidity with which they have become something very like an orthodox creed. Thus there is now a minor industry of 'deconstructive' musicology devoted to dismantling both the discourse of mainstream analysis – especially any talk of 'organic form' – and, beyond that, the habits of structural listening or long-term musical-cognitive uptake which are thought to fall in with just such ideologically complicitous notions.

Of these debates perhaps the most revealing is that between Jonathan Dunsby and Alan Street on the topic of Brahms' late piano *Fantasies*, Op. 116. In this sequence of pieces – most often thought of as loosely related in terms of style, mood, and general character – Dunsby purports to hear (and to demonstrate by detailed analysis) a whole range of thematic cross-connections and subtle inter-movement unifying features (Dunsby 1983; also Dunsby 1981). To which Street responds that Dunsby's desire to 'discover' such features in the music is a projection of his own analytic (and ideologically-driven) belief that a great work *must*, by very definition, manifest them in some degree and that the greatness of these particular pieces can be brought out all the more convincingly by showing their unity to transcend the limits of their surface, episodic or suite-like form (Street 1989). In the process Street draws upon a good many theoretical sources, among them de Man's deconstructive readings of numerous texts – philosophical, literary, literary-critical – which he (de Man) takes to exhibit all the signs of their having been seduced by that form of aesthetic ideology which consists in 'confusing linguistic with natural reality' (Man 1986: 11). Such is, for instance, the widespread idea among literary critics of otherwise diverse persuasion that poetic language somehow has the power not merely to describe, evoke, or represent features of the natural world but (through devices like metaphor and symbol) to render them with all the sensuous vividness that belongs to our various modes of perceptual experience. This elementary confusion – as de Man thinks it – gives rise to the further, more dangerous since ideologically charged error of attributing characteristics to language which are then metaphorically extended beyond the aesthetic domain to concepts of language, culture, and (ultimately) the nation-state as expressions of a likewise natural process of organic development and growth. (See Man 1983, 1984, 1986.)

Hence, to repeat, his constant emphasis on the need for close attention to those crucial passages in certain exemplary thinkers – pre-eminently Rousseau and Kant – which show how they managed to avoid such temptations by maintaining the highest degree of critical vigilance, but also how their texts were later subject to various kinds of 'aberrant', ideologically driven misreading. It is this deManian imperative that Street and other deconstructive musicologists have in mind when they counsel an attitude of principled suspicion toward any method, technique, or practice of analysis that rests its claims on such illusory (and, in their view, politically retrograde) notions as those of organic form or long-range structural unity. To which end they typically set about showing – as in Street's altercation with Dunsby – that the analyst's text itself contains certain symptomatic blind-spots or unnoticed and questionable turns of metaphor that unwittingly reveal its deep involvement with just such ideological values. Only thus, so the argument runs, can music criticism at last catch up with those developments in lit-

erary theory that have long since disposed of an organicist aesthetic, like that of the 'old' New Criticism, whose talk was of seemingly disruptive or 'non-totalising' figures such as ambiguity, irony, or paradox but whose overriding aim was to present the poem as a 'verbal icon' wherein such tensions were finally resolved or reconciled. (See especially Brooks 1947 and Wimsatt 1954.) Here again de Man is taken to provide an object-lesson in the deconstructive reading of texts that are thereby forced to reveal their ideological hand (Man 1983).

To be sure, Street brings some strong theoretical arguments to bear on the discourse of mainstream music analysis, arguments which make a plausible case for viewing it as heavily mortgaged to just those values that de Man finds complicit with the workings of aesthetic ideology. His proposed remedy – again taking a lead from de Man – is to read that discourse against the grain by refusing to endorse the privilege it attaches to tropes such as metaphor and symbol, that is to say, 'totalising' tropes which reliably facilitate the passage from particular details of the literary work to a conception of that work as exhibiting an overall, transcendent unity of theme and idea (Man 1983: 187-208; also Man 1979). Such a reading would take as its principal aim the demonstration that metaphors self-deconstruct into chains of metonymic displacement, substitution, or surreptitious part-for-whole transference, and moreover that the symbolist notion of organic form – as it figures (expressly or implicitly) in so many versions of aesthetic ideology – can likewise be shown to fall back upon textual mechanisms whose structure is that of allegory, rather than symbol. This is not the place for a full-scale exposition of the various texts (in particular his readings of Rousseau, Nietzsche, and Proust) where these claims are tested to the utmost degree of hard-pressed rhetorical analysis, not to mention – as some might add – the utmost limits of readerly endurance. (Man 1979 and Kerman 1962; Kerman 1967; Kerman 1981; also Gasché 1998 and Norris 988.) Suffice it to say that metonymy stands as the trope whose prosaic, down-earth, literal, non-'totalising' character allows it most effectively to counter the claims of metaphor, that is, to remind us how the language of metaphor unravels or self-deconstructs into chains of contingently-related metonymic detail that stubbornly resist assimilation to the realm of metaphorical quasi-transcendence. So likewise in the case of allegory *versus* symbol: where symbolist readings typically indulge in an over-willingness to take such claims at face value (that is, as achieving a consummate union between subject and object, mind and nature, time-bound or mortal existence and a realm of transcendent eternal truths) allegorical readings typically insist on the temporal character of all understanding and hence the sheer impossibility that language might attain that wished-for condition.

Thus allegory is not so much a well-defined literary *genre* – including such works as *The Faerie Queene*, *Pilgrim's Progress*, or *Animal Farm* – but a certain mode of critically reflective and rhetorically alert close-reading which holds out against the seductive blandishments of symbolist thought. And again: metonymy is not (as often supposed) just a kind of poor relation to metaphor, that is to say, a trope whose mundane character – forming as it does the stock-in-trade of most non-'literary', e.g., journalistic or workaday prose – invites unfavourable comparison with the creative or world-disclosive potential of metaphoric language. Rather, on de Man's account, it is a trope that can be shown to inhabit that language and indeed to constitute the underlying structure of every (supposed) metaphor. Thus metonymy and allegory turn out to subvert the traditional order of priorities and the high claims vested in metaphor and symbol as somehow granting access to truths beyond the grasp of commonplace, prosaic understanding. So to read allegorically and with an eye to metonymic details that resist or obstruct the suasive power of other, more seductive metaphorical-symbolist readings is also to engage in a form of *Ideologiekritik* with large implications for our thinking about issues of

ethics and politics. This is why, as de Man provocatively puts it with an eye on his Marxist or cultural-materialist critics, "[t]hose who reproach literary theory for being oblivious to social and historical (that is to say ideological) reality are merely stating their fear at having their own ideological mystifications exposed by the tool they are trying to discredit. They are, in short, very poor readers of Marx's *German Ideology*' (Man 1986: 11).

However there is a problem – I want to suggest – with attempts to transfer this approach from the realm of literary criticism to the domain of musical analysis where any claims advanced on behalf of this or that 'reading' must surely concede a certain priority to the perceptual or phenomenological experience of music. That is to say, the fact that many verbal analyses (like Dunsby on the Brahms *Fantasies*) can be shown to exhibit a strong attachment to organicist models or metaphors is no proof that they are distorting or misrepresenting the music to ideological ends, or indeed that those metaphors don't capture something intrinsic to the well-equipped listener's pleasure and appreciation. Where de Man's arguments get a hold is through the undisputed truth – undisputed by all save die-hard adherents to a Cratylist doctrine of linguistic mimeticism – that language is a system of purely conventional ('arbitrary') relations between signifiers and signifieds, or again (in Saussurean structuralist parlance) of 'differences without positive terms' (Saussure 1974). Thus apart from such oddities as onomatopoeia or cases, as with poetry, where the sound very often in some way 'echoes the sense' it is a clearly a fallacy – and one subjected to withering critical scrutiny by de Man – to suppose that verbal language can somehow partake of the 'natural' reality that makes up its field of reference. In de Man's somewhat tortuous phrasing: '[t]he phenomenality of the signifier, as sound, is unquestionably involved in the correspondence between the name and the thing named, but the link, the relationship between word and thing, is not phenomenal, but conventional' (Man 1986: 10). And again: '[l]iterature is fiction not because it somehow refuses to acknowledge "reality", but because it is not *a priori* certain that language functions according to principles which are those, or which are *like* those, of the phenomenal world' (Man 1986: 11). However it is far from clear that this argument might plausibly be carried across from the textual-linguistic to the musical domain, or – what is chiefly at issue here – from deconstructive readings of the discourse of music analysis to claims concerning our perceptual or phenomenological experience of music. For these latter have to do with modalities of jointly sensuous and cognitive (i.e., conceptually informed) perception which cannot be treated as mere figments of 'aesthetic ideology', or as symptoms of the Cratylist delusion that naively conflates linguistic structures with the forms or processes pertaining to natural phenomena.

This is why, as I have said, theorists should not too hastily reject the idea of 'structural listening' – whether advanced by mainstream analysts or by a critical dialectician like Adorno – as just a product of those old elitist values that serve to shore up both the canon of established 'great works' and the business of academic musicology. For it is simply not the case – or, at least, not simply the case – that such listening (and the pleasure afforded by it) is confined to some few professional adepts and leisured cognoscenti who have access to the specialist books, journals, or high-brow broadcast media whereby these values are diffused, along with the kinds of analytical approach that bolster their cultural standing. Rather, what is revealed by a good, sharp-eared, intelligent, and (above all) intuitively valid essay in musical analysis is what the listener is able to hear for herself through close and sustained attention to the music although perhaps, without having read that essay, unable to articulate in verbal form with such point and precision. This is not to deny – far from it – that analysis can bring out aspects of a work, from subtleties of detail to aspects of long-range structure, that the listener might well have missed up to now or been 'aware' of only in so vague or unfocused a way as scarcely to

count as conscious recognition. All the same, such analytically arrived-at insights will themselves scarcely count as such unless they chime with something in the listener's intuitive musical response which then serves as a measure of just how far the analyst has managed to hit on the right (i.e., perceptually salient) aspects of detail and structure.

A rough but useful analogy here would be that of the grammarian whose theories of what constitutes a well-formed or ill-formed sentence, a normal or deviant active-passive transformation, and so forth, must always be checked against the verdicts of a competent native speaker if they are to claim any kind of descriptive validity. Indeed, one branch of recent, post-Schenkerian analysis that brings out this point very clearly is the transformational-generative model proposed by Lerdahl and Jackendorff, where listener-response must surely be a crucial test in evaluating some particular claim with regard to what's really going on the process of depth-to-surface tonal and thematic transformation (Lerdahl / Jackendoff 1983). Nevertheless, here as with other kinds of analysis, one should also allow for the extent to which musical perceptions can be further, more deeply or even creatively informed by the kinds of consciousness-raising structural insight that such theories seek to provide. It is this possibility that seems to be barred – ruled out on ideological grounds – by those among the New Musicologists who see nothing but a rearguard defence of elitist cultural values in the value attached to 'structural listening' as against the claims of straightforward, uncomplicated musical pleasure. That is say, these theorists may be indulging a form of inverted cultural snobbery whereby it is assumed that complex, long-range or sophisticated modes of musical appreciation are *ipso facto* beyond reach of a popular audience while other, more immediate forms of gratification – those pleasures to be had from 'music in the moment' – are the sort that do possess a widespread appeal and should therefore be defended against their detractors by anyone with a well-developed social and political conscience. However, this risks selling everyone short: the analysts (whose efforts are written off as mere products of aesthetic ideology), the 'structural listeners' (who are, after all, perfectly entitled to their own kinds of satisfaction), the creators and performers of 'popular' music (which itself covers a huge range in terms of musical complexity and value), and – not least – the mass-audience whom these theorists effectively rule off-bounds when it comes to other, more demanding (and perhaps more musically rewarding) modes of listener-involvement.

The phrase 'music in the moment', as used above, is actually the title of a book by Jerrold Levinson which raises some of these issues from a different but related philosophical angle (Levinson 1997). Levinson agrees with the New Musicologists that analysis goes wrong by attaching such inordinate value to long-range structural aspects of music, as distinct from those far more vivid, direct, and readily appreciated 'momentary' features – accessible to short-term memory – which constitute the listener's chief source of genuine (rather than abstract or hyper-cultivated) pleasure. However his reasons for taking this view have less to do with any programme of socio-cultural-political critique than with certain lessons which he thinks should be drawn from phenomenological or cognitive-psychological reflection on the scope and limits of perceptual responses to music. In brief, these are that our attention-span is more restricted than the analysts suppose, that our powers of retentive grasp are confined to just a short stretch of time, and moreover that even when we know a work well – and should thus (on the analytic view) have a long-term anticipatory awareness of developments yet to come – we are still listening very much 'in the moment' and largely oblivious of them unless at a level of abstraction far removed from the actual experience of music. Thus Levinson – like Subotnik but on different grounds – takes a pretty dim view of any analytic approach whose effect is to promote the virtues of structural listening and thereby devalue the pleasures that accrue (more precise-

ly: that occur in rapid succession) if one lends an ear more attuned to those short-term modes of perceptual experience.

He is challenged on this by another philosopher, Peter Kivy, who not only disagrees strongly with Levinson concerning those tight limits on the human capacity for long-range musical perception but states his disagreement in unusually forceful and passionate terms (Kivy 2001). For Kivy – and also, I should say, for myself as a matter of personal as well as theoretical conviction – it is a truth borne out on many occasions over the years that one's appreciation of music can be greatly enhanced by the reading of perceptive analyses which conduce to a heightened, more adequate grasp of large-scale structural attributes far beyond the sadly impoverished range of Levinson's amnesiac listener. Indeed, I would suggest that Levinson's low estimation of our normal capacities in this respect is such as to imply a likewise low estimation of the standards that music should meet – standards of inventiveness, thematic interest, sustained harmonic development, tonal progression, rhythmic subtlety, and so forth – if it is to offer the kinds of reward that come with repeated and properly attentive listening. Thus anyone whose powers of retentive or anticipatory awareness were really as limited as Levinson decrees would be very much at home with the compositions of Philip Glass, Michael Nyman, (the later) Arvo Part, John Tavener, and other such exponents of a minimalist style which relies on the constant repetition of banal and easily recognised themes with just enough in the way of undemanding harmonic or rhythmic variation to jog the hearer into semi-consciousness once in a while. Or again, they would be equipped to appreciate a large amount of bottom-drawer baroque music which also involves an absolute minimum of 'structural listening' in so far as it rehearses a predictable range of well-worn stylistic and formal techniques with only minor departures from the expectations raised by an acquaintance with the relevant generic norms. However their responses would fall drastically short when it came (say) to Bach, to Vivaldi's more inventive works, to those other baroque composers (or individual works) that rose above the stock-in-trade conventions of the time, or to all but the earliest of Haydn's quartets and symphonies. Still less could they come close to a real appreciation – as distinct from a piecemeal enjoyment – of mature Mozart, late Beethoven, Schubert, Brahms, or indeed any music where the interplay set up between expectations and the thwarting or subtle disrupting of those same expectations is a chief source of sensory-perceptual pleasure and intellectual stimulus alike.

4

Hence, as I have said, the taint of inverted snobbery that hangs around the discourse of professional musicologists, theorists, and philosophers who claim to be speaking on behalf of the common listener when they attack such 'elitist' values, but whose argument can just as plausibly be read as an attack on the overweening pretensions of any listener – 'common' or not – with a taste for more developed or sophisticated modes of musical response. This revolt against analysis (or structural listening) in the name of, ostensibly, more direct and non-exclusive musical pleasures is one that has other dubious results. They include the return – by various exponents of the 'New Musicology' – to an oddly reductive and literalist notion of programmatic content (often reminiscent of the old 'life-and-times' approach) motivated partly by their anti-formalist bias and partly by the concomitant desire to bring music and music criticism back down to earth through an account of their class-based, gender-inflected, or ideologically 'constructed' character.

Here again Kivy has some sharp observations to make, especially concerning this current trend in its cruder, more doctrinaire manifestations. Thus there is, to say the least, something

caricatural about hearing the pent-up dynamism in the first-movement development section of Beethoven's *Eroica* Symphony as an expression (or unwittingly blatant confession) of the thwarted rapist's urgent drive for sexual mastery (McClary 1991; also McClary 2000). Nor does it conduce very much to our better musical understanding to be told that the contrast between 'masculine' first subject and 'feminine' second subject in the opening movement of Tchaikovski's Fifth represents a desperate struggle in the composer's mind between socially-enforced denial and deeply-felt acceptance of his own homosexual desires (McClary 1991). Admittedly these are extreme cases and one could instance other readings of musical works with a view to their (often ambivalent) psychosexual or ideological sub-text which involve nothing like so crassly reductive an approach. Nevertheless, even at its most sensitive and methodologically refined, this approach tends push the anti-formalist reaction to a point where it risks falling back into a harmful confusion of life and work. That is to say, it shows many signs of regressing to a standpoint strangely unconversant with Adorno's far subtler, more musically responsive yet also – quite compatible with this – more historically and socio-politically informed mode of analytic discourse. Thus when theorists like Subotnik claim to have thought their way through and beyond Adorno's influence – and to have done so, moreover, by an outright rejection of ideas such as that of 'structural listening' – one is entitled to question whether this constitutes any kind of intellectual advance or indeed (as advertised) a return to the values of genuine musical enjoyment as opposed to the abstract rigours of formal analysis.

Kivy makes the point rather neatly when he invites us to entertain a thought-experiment regarding the claims of programmatic or 'content'-based interpretation on the one hand and formalist or structurally-oriented approaches on the other (Kivy 2001). Consider, he suggests, the case of three accomplished but in varying degrees untypical appreciators of the arts – Peter, Paul and Mary – whose aesthetic responses each have a certain distinctive or peculiar feature. Peter is an enthusiast for German poetry who possesses an exceptionally acute ear for the phonetic qualities (rhyme-schemes, patterns of alliteration, or ways of playing off of metrical structure against natural speech-rhythms) to be found in Goethe, Hölderlin, and Rilke but who doesn't understand a word of German and thus savours those qualities with not the least grasp of how the sound echoes or subtly qualifies the sense. Paul is a visual-art connoisseur who has developed an ultra-fine appreciation of various formal attributes – of balance, contrast, structural proportion, perspectival effects, the interplay of light and shade, etc. – but who suffers from a curious kind of aspect-blindness that prevents him from perceiving the representational content of figurative paintings. Then there is Mary, a music-lover, who doesn't merely 'know' (in the abstract) all that abstract stuff about sonata-form, first and second subjects, developing variation, progressive tonality, and so forth but who truly understands, enjoys, and appreciates what music has to offer on just those descriptive or analytical terms. That is to say, she is a 'formalist' or adept of 'structural listening' but one to whom this comes very much as second nature and for whom such descriptions genuinely chime with her first-hand, intuitive and passionately engaged experience of music. What puts her in the company of Peter and Paul, for the purposes of Kivy's thought-experiment, is that Mary just doesn't get it when people talk about the programmatic content of works like the *Eroica* Symphony, or Haydn's *Creation*, or Richard Strauss's *Ein Heldenleben*, or Elgar's *Falstaff*, or indeed – perhaps more controversially – some of Bach's (to most ears) very striking mimetic devices in his settings of religious texts. (These are my examples, not Kivy's.) Thus Mary might be counted a fellow-sufferer in so far as she seems to be missing out on something that other, 'normally' equipped listeners can be expected to hear in the music and which presumably heightens their appreciative grasp of its content, meaning, and value.

However it is just Kivy's point that, despite appearances, these cases are in fact very different. Thus whereas Peter can scarcely be said to 'appreciate' German poetry at all, and whereas Paul must likewise be considered blind to something intrinsic to the nature of figurative art, Mary cannot rightly be said to lack anything essential to the proper understanding or appreciative grasp of music. Perhaps it may be said – by anti-formalists of various persuasion – that she does in fact miss out on certain kinds of pleasure enjoyed by other listeners, i.e., those receptive or responsive to such elements of programmatic content. However, so Kivy maintains, this is surely not a failure of *musical* intelligence, perception, or involvement on her part, nor a deafness to anything intrinsically 'there' in the work, but rather a non-dependence on ways of listening that by very definition have at most an extraneous, secondary, or strictly inessential role to play. More than that: in cases where the listener – or (possibly) the music – does rely heavily on attributions of programmatic content then this gives reason to suppose that one or other falls short of what the best, that is to say, most musically rewarding since least secondary-response-dependent works have to offer.

Now of course this will strike the opponent (whether old-style defender of content-based musical interpretation or new-style advocate of deconstructive, Foucauldian, feminist, neo-Marxist or kindred forms of *Ideologiekritik*) as just another, albeit neatly-turned statement of the formalist case and hence as subject to the same charges of inherent circularity or empty self-confirmation. Indeed, it will no doubt stand accused of reinforcing that potent strain of 'aesthetic ideology' – transposed into the likewise highly suspect notion of 'structural listening' – which music theorists have been quick to take up from de Man's later writings. All the same, as I have said, such accusations run the risk of ignoring some pertinent (even some ideologically crucial) distinctions, among them that between the kinds of deeply organicist, methodologically doctrinaire, and often quite explicitly chauvinist formalism exemplified by Schenker and those other varieties of analysis – whatever their particular problems or shortcomings – that hardly conform to this stereotype. Thus Adorno's work provides one striking example of an expressly analytic approach (and a corresponding emphasis on the virtues of structural awareness) conjoined with a range of cultural, historical, and – not least – philosophical reflections on the complex dialectical relationship between music and its social contexts of production and reception. (See Adorno 1973, 1982, 1991, 1991a, 1991b, 1997, 1998, 1998a.) But there are, and for quite a while have been, plenty of other, less elaborately theorised instances of music criticism that manages to heal – or at any rate to bridge for its own specific purposes – the rift that Kerman lamented between the discourse of music analysis and those wider contexts. Here I am thinking especially of Charles Rosen's writings, where a singular depth and acuity of musical perception goes along with a detailed scholarly knowledge of the relevant socio-cultural background and also a keenly intelligent sense of how debates in other areas (historiography, narrative theory, poetics, hermeneutics, and so forth) may help toward a better, more appreciative understanding. (See for instance Rosen 1975, 1976, 1996, 2000.) I would also mention – among my own favourites – the wonderfully perceptive study of Ravel by Vladimir Jankélevitch, a critic whose other chief interests (in phenomenology, ethics, the philosophy of time, and irony) can be seen to inform his responses to the music in numerous subtle and revealing ways (Jankélevitch 1951, 1959).

So I am inclined to disagree with Kerman as regards his 1982 diagnosis and to suggest that things were in fact nowhere near as bad with the then-current state of academic musicology as he made out. Moreover, as implied by the above comparisons, it strikes me that Rosen is justified in claiming that a good deal of work produced by its subsequent, theory-led and sociologically-minded debunkers must be found to fall far short of the insights delivered by intelli-

gent, context-sensitive analysis (Rosen 1994). That is to say, there is something distinctly wrong-headed about the notion that these approaches cannot go together, that a penchant for analysis *must* entail an attitude of downright indifference to socio-historical concerns and hence a complicity with dominant ideological values, or again – conversely – that a critical engagement with those same concerns and values will inevitably lead one to reject 'analysis' and all its works. On the contrary, I have argued: not only *can and do* they sometimes go very nicely together but it is also the case that neither approach can come close to an adequate understanding of music without those insights and conceptual resources provided by the other. This is one issue where literary theory might offer a useful lead, not so much in its more extreme (e.g., purist deconstructive or cultural-materialist) strains but more through its effort, over the past few decades, to achieve a synthesis or working balance between the formalist/structuralist imperative to analyse texts in strictly synchronic terms and the kinds of diachronic, historically-based approach enjoined by Marxists, sociologists of literature, and others of a seemingly opposite persuasion. (See especially Lodge 1977.) Thus, as Roland Barthes once wrote in a cryptic but typically pregnant passage, 'while a little formalism turns one away from history, a lot of formalism turns one back to it' (Barthes 1984: 186). At any rate there is more to be gained in this way, from the viewpoint of a critical musicology, than by following other doctrinally committed literary theorists to the point of an ultimate stand-off or breakdown of communication between the interests of analysis or 'structural listening' and the interests of historically-informed commentary.

The same applies – so I have argued – to that other false antinomy between music as an object of analysis and music as a source of pleasure. What we need to do here is triangulate and see that there is pleasure to be taken not only in the process or activity of formal/structural understanding but also in the kinds of appreciative benefit brought by a knowledge of music in its cultural-historical context. This might seem at odds with my general endorsement of Kivy's case as regards the primacy of formal attributes – and our ability to perceive or apprehend them – over any such merely 'extraneous' concerns. However one can take his argument on board (i.e., the primacy-thesis as a matter of aesthetic principle) without concluding that those latter sorts of knowledge or interest are therefore to be counted strictly irrelevant to musical experience, properly so called. There is support for this more accommodating version of the thesis from a range of disciplinary quarters, among them that of cognitive psychology where recent debate has often turned on the extent to which our various mental capacities should be thought of as 'encapsulated' or 'hard-wired'. That is to say, it is the issue as to just how far – if at all – they involve the operation of relatively discrete, self-contained, or (in the jargon) 'cognitively impervious' modules which carry out their multiple specialised functions with little or no input from other, more global or widely distributed modes of cognitive processing.

Jerry Fodor is the best-known defender of the 'strong'-modularity thesis according to which this applies to quite a range of otherwise diverse mental functions (Fodor 1976, 1983, 1989). These would include our everyday syntactic competence as language-users (here taking a lead from Chomsky's work in transformational-generative grammar) and also types of behaviour – like the 'fight-or-flight' response – which may well have required a complex but rapid and unthinking, i.e., highly 'encapsulated' cognitive mechanism so as to facilitate species survival. However Fodor has lately shown signs of softening that line, at least in so far as he now sees intractable problems with the strong thesis when it comes to offering some plausible account of how we manage to perform high-level, complex, and inherently hard-to-formalise mental tasks – such as abduction, or inference to the best explanation – which must involve drawing

on a wide range of background knowledge, much of it tacit or below the threshold of conscious awareness (Fodor 2000). This also has a bearing on our thought about music, as Mark DeBellis has argued in a recent book on cognitive-psychological aspects of the dispute between formalism (or 'structural listening') and its various detractors (DeBellis 1995). In brief, he puts the case that our musical responses cannot be strongly modular since they are clearly affected – most often in positive or experience-enhancing ways – not only by our reading of perceptive musical analyses but also, if to less striking effect, by our knowledge of relevant historical and socio-cultural background information. That such knowledge indeed belongs to the background, rather than the foreground where analysis has a more significant role to play, is a main plank in DeBellis's argument for the conceptually-informed nature of musical understanding and hence – in cognitive-psychological terms – its 'permeability' by the kinds of knowledge conveyed by sharp-eared analysts or structural listeners. All the same, it is hard to see how a principled distinction could be drawn so as to hold the formalist line between one and the other sorts of musical consciousness-raising, i.e., that which results from acquaintance with 'genuine' analytic insights and that which contingently accrues through exposure to some more-or-less 'relevant' piece of musico-historical information.

Thus DeBellis, like Kivy, makes a strong case for the merits of analysis as an active, integral, even transformative component of our musical experience rather than – as the current debunkers would have it – a discourse whose deeply ideological character is signalled by its sheer remoteness from such experience as well as its commitment to suspect values like those of thematic development, structural coherence, or (worst of all!) organic form. On the other hand their arguments also leave room for the intuitive conviction of many listeners, not all of them by any means naïve or musically illiterate, that knowledge of a work's historical context and even of certain psycho-biographical factors can often have a more-than-anecdotal bearing on the listener's musical experience. This it may well be true – as DeBellis maintains – that such experience, though grounded to some extent in a 'modular' capacity of musical response, nevertheless draws widely on other cognitive resources including that of analytically informed structural listening. But then there seems no compelling reason (formalist prejudice apart) to reject the idea that information of other sorts might play a broadly comparable role, albeit subject to the twin condition of (1) its demonstrable relevance to the work or passage in hand, and (2) the possibility of bringing out that relevance through an adequately detailed musical analysis in some shape or form. The chief problem with recent debate is that it has managed to create this artificially induced dilemma between a typecast 'formalism' wholly bereft of substantive historical or socio-cultural content and a likewise typecast 'reductionist' approach in the latter vein. Moreover, both have tended – through a kind of Newtonian equal-and-opposite-reaction principle – to adopt increasingly doctrinaire stances on the main points at issue and thereby confirm their opponents' worst suspicions.

5

If deconstructive musicologists want to break out of this dead-end predicament then they might take a second (or maybe a first) look at Derrida's essay 'Parergon', where he reflects with extraordinary tact, subtlety, and insight on the problems raised by Kant's formalist aesthetic (Derrida 1987: 15-147). What emerges from Derrida's reading of the Third *Critique* is a series of deep-laid aporias – conflicts, dilemmas, moments of strictly unresolvable impasse – having to do with the Kantian insistence on formal autonomy as an absolute requirement of art and aesthetic disinterest as the absolute condition for appreciating art (or natural beauty) as a matter of purely contemplative, i.e., non-instrumental pleasure (Kant 1978). Thus Kant is constantly

obliged, by the logic of his own argument, to posit a range of *de jure* distinctions – as between form and content, 'free' and 'adherent' beauty, intrinsic and extrinsic attributes, 'determinate' and 'indeterminate' modes of judgement – which can be shown to self-deconstruct through the impossibility of holding them firmly in place. That is to say, the entire conceptual structure of this work – along with its crucial justificatory role *vis-à-vis* certain epistemological and ethical issues that were left unresolved in the previous two *Critiques* – turns out to depend upon the use of arguments, examples, metaphors, and analogies that are strictly indispensable to Kant's case yet which complicate the logic of that case beyond its power fully to determine or control.

Such is what Derrida describes as the 'parergonal' character of Kant's reasoning (from the Greek 'parergon' = 'frame', 'border', or 'that which surrounds, encloses, or sets off a work whilst not an integral part of it'). 'Parergonality' thus takes its place as another in the sequence of deviant, non-classical, or paraconsistent logics that Derrida first broached in his readings of 'supplementarity' in Rousseau, the *pharmakon* in Plato, *différance* in Husserl, and 'iterability' in the discourse of Austinian speech-act theory. (See Derrida 1987, 1976, 1980, 1982, 1989; also Norris 2003.) With Kant it emerges in some obvious ways, as for instance in his strange, surely untenable case for excluding from aesthetic consideration (i.e., from the domain of artistic form, properly so called) such 'parergonal' features as the drapery on statues, the colonnades of palaces, the flying buttresses or other 'merely' functional outworks that support gothic cathedrals, and so forth. However it also causes problems for his cardinal distinction between the realms of determinate and indeterminate judgement, or of knowledge (where sensuous intuitions are somehow 'brought under' adequate concepts) and aesthetic experience (where such concepts cannot apply since there would then be no room for that free and harmonious interplay of the faculties which signifies our appreciation of the beautiful). What these difficulties all come down to is the fact that any such Kantian attempt to 'frame' or delimit the proper sphere of aesthetic judgement will always run up against problems, aporias, or counter-instances that make it strictly impossible to decide whether some feature should be counted 'intrinsic' or 'extrinsic' to the artwork or our experience of it.

Thus – to take the most obvious and literal case – the frame around a painting would seem parergonal by very definition, yet can scarcely be held to have no effect on our appreciation of the work, since the right choice of frame sets it off to best advantage while the wrong choice may detract from its aesthetic appeal. And things become more complicated still if one considers how far – or by what kind of *a priori* aesthetic jurisdiction – the frame can serve as an impermeable border between that which properly belongs inside it (i.e., the painting) and that which exists altogether outside its aesthetically privileged space, such as the wall on which it is hung, the other paintings that surround it, or any number of supposedly irrelevant 'background' factors. For here again it is only in deference to certain Kantian formalist distinctions – like those between intrinsic and extrinsic attributes, or 'free' and 'adherent' beauty – that we might feel impelled to maintain what is otherwise (as Derrida's reading brings out) a deeply problematical doctrine. Moreover, this difficulty goes yet deeper since it affects Kant's argument concerning the uniquely contemplative, disinterested, non-instrumental (and hence non-conceptual) character of aesthetic experience. For if this were indeed the case – if concepts (e.g., philosophical concepts) were wholly extrinsic to our appreciation of art – then that experience could in no way be influenced, for better or worse, by our acquaintance with Kant's Third *Critique* or any other work of criticism, theory, analysis, or aesthetic philosophy. One only has to state the issue in these terms in order to see how implausible is that position and how pointedly Derrida's reading engages with the aporias not only of Kantian aesthetics but of Kant's entire critical project.

Still it would be wrong – a gross misreading of Derrida's essay – to conclude that this puts him firmly on the side of those (at present a large company of sociologists, cultural theorists, postmodernists, and adepts of the New Musicology) who reject not only such formalist ideas as aesthetic autonomy or intrinsic value but also the entire discourse of post-Kantian aesthetics as merely the expression of a dominant bourgeois ideology passing itself off as the pure, disinterested judgement of taste. (Bourdieu 1984; See especially Bourdieu; also – for some arguments to contrary effect – Norris 2000.) For this is to ignore his repeated point: that such values are deeply intertwined with the wider, i.e., the ethical and socio-political project of enlightened thought, and hence cannot (or should not) be renounced whatever the abuses to which they have subject and the various ideological admixtures or impurities that have always gone along with them. (In this connection, see Derrida 1983, 1992, 1992a; also Norris 2000 and Norris 1993.) Thus Derrida expressly repudiates the kinds of wholesale anti-enlightenment thinking associated chiefly with postmodernist thinkers like Lyotard, and also – on related grounds – the sorts of dismissive or downright contemptuous attitude toward any talk of disinterest, aesthetic value, the *sensus communis* of shared critical judgement, and so forth, adopted by the current debunking school of thought (Lyotard 1984). To be sure, he devotes much of his argument in 'Parergon' and other middle-period writings to a detailed analysis of the way that those cardinal Kantian distinctions – all of which turn on some variant of the pure/impure dichotomy – can be shown to break down, under deconstructive pressure, into further such value-laden binaries (like 'free' *versus* 'adherent' beauty) that are no more capable of holding up when subject to critical reading. All the same, as I have said, Derrida is very firm in maintaining the 'absolute and principled' necessity that those aims, values and priorities should be kept constantly in view as the only means by which thinking can orient itself toward a better understanding of the various factors and forces that work against their attainment as a matter of ethical or socio-political justice.

This is why philosophy takes its place on the 'left bench' of the Kantian parliament of the faculties, that is to say, as a discipline utterly remote from the centres of executive or legislative power. Yet it is a faculty which, for that very reason, should be granted the freedom to question and criticise any uses or abuses of such power, or indeed any item of received belief – political, moral, or theological – that might be enjoined upon those right-bench occupants whose executive status allows them no equivalent freedom. (See Kant 1979 and Kant 1976.) This is also why the discourse of aesthetic judgement, concerned as it is (on the Kantian account) with matters at the furthest possible remove from the interests of government and state, should none the less be seen – and again, for just that reason – as embodying certain, albeit as yet unrealised and perhaps unrealisable values which offer a constant implicit critique of the executive branch. So it can hardly be denied that Derrida's reading goes various elaborate ways around in order to question or to deconstruct the concepts, categories, and presuppositions of Kantian formalist aesthetics. However – and it is here that the New Musicologists have most to learn – it does so always in such a way as to conserve their critical valence and thereby maintain the critical tension between this way of thinking (or the kinds of experience envisaged by its advocates) and the conditions under which it must presently remain a discourse marked by various kinds of contaminating ideological influence. Given time, one could trace this nexus of themes right back to some of Derrida earliest essays where they are engaged by way of the conflict of interpretations between, on the one hand, a structuralist approach that treats the literary text as an autonomous, self-referential, ahistorical entity and, on the other, a phenomenological approach that treats it as expressing – inevitably so – a wide range of socio-cultural as well as individual or subjective meanings. (See especially Derrida 1978.) Here again

he adopts not a blandly accommodating line that would simply defuse the issue but, in the strictest sense, a deconstructive mode of engagement that locates the precise points of tension, aporias, or methodological blind-spots on both sides so as to achieve a more adequate grasp of the interests and commitments at stake.

My point in all this is that the New Musicologists – or some of them – have been too quick to claim Derridean warrant for certain of their claims with regard to the bankrupt, ideologically complicitous character of music analysis in general and (more specifically) formalist notions of structural listening or long-range thematic and tonal integration. What is being played out in these somewhat predictable debates – like that between Dunsby and Street – is yet another version of the well-worn 'analytic' *versus* 'continental' spat in recent (mainly Anglophone) philosophy. Thus analytical types charge the continentals with indulging deplorably lax standards of conceptual clarity and grasp while the latter see nothing in that rival discourse but a narrow-minded professionalism which treats all philosophy as aspiring to the strictly self-evident (hence tautological or vacuous) status of the analytic proposition. (For further discussion, see Norris 2000a.) If there is one area of study where such pseudo-dilemmas should have no place it is that of music criticism, taken (one would hope uncontroversially) to embrace whatever kinds of approach can be shown to enhance our understanding of and pleasure in the experience of music. No doubt there are some theorists who will indeed controvert the naïve or hopefully ecumenical assumption underlying that last sentence. That is, they will take issue with the joint claim that better, more refined or structurally informed understanding is itself a great source of musical pleasure, and again, that such pleasure is by no means just an unwitting product of 'aesthetic ideology' or a mere distraction from the sorts of hard-headed *Ideologiekritik* that would expose its less-than-edifying cultural and socio-political origins. Amongst them, as I have said, are certain deconstructive musicologists who cast a cold eye on the very idea – the 'eudaimonic' delusion, in de Man's parlance – that pleasure might have any significant role to play in an undeceived, rigorous, critically alert response to those works (or to the discourse about them) that solicit our enjoyment on terms unacceptable by any such exacting standard (Man 1986).

All the more ironic, therefore, that these theorists should also have taken to denouncing formal-structural 'analysis' as an adjunct to the strain of aesthetic ideology which supposedly promotes this complicity with suspect modes of musical experience. After all, until quite recently – in fact, around the time of Kerman's landmark intervention – the main dispute within music criticism was that between 'appreciative' and 'analytic' schools of thought, a dispute going back (as I mentioned at the start of this essay) to the early days of textual close-reading as a literary-critical method. So it is strange, and a symptom of the currently widespread 'hermeneutics of suspicion', that we should now have a sizeable number of music theorists – something like a new orthodoxy – for whom both approaches must be treated with the utmost caution (or even rejected *tout court*) since they each bear witness to the powerful hold of an aesthetic creed that exerts, in de Man's admonitory phrase, a decisive claim on the 'shape and limits of our freedom'. (See especially Man 1984a.) It seems to me, for reasons argued above, that one unfortunate result of such over-zealous transpositions from one domain (literary theory) to another (music criticism) is to dictate the shape and limits of our musical experience in a way that excludes – or at any rate sternly disapproves – just about everything which gives that experience its ultimate meaning and value.

This is not to deny – far from it – that theory, including those particular strains that I have criticised here, has a proper and legitimate place in musicological discourse. So it does, to be sure, in all areas or disciplines of thought where a refusal to theorise most often betokens either

sheer intellectual laziness or (as the deconstructors would claim) an unthinking adherence to received ideologies whose own theoretical content is passed off as straightforward, natural, or common-sense wisdom. Besides, it follows from my brief excursion into the field of cognitive psychology that our experience of music can often be affected – significantly changed or enhanced – not only by the reading of perceptive music analyses but also by acquaintance with certain theoretical ideas, among them (quite possibly) those advanced by deconstructive musicologists. (On this topic more generally, see Aiello / Sloboda 1993; Deutsch 1999; Dowling / Harwood 1986; Sloboda 1985.) Thus, for instance, our understanding/appreciation of Beethoven's late quartets (or the Brahms piano pieces discussed by Alan Street) might well stand to gain through our taking account of those features that hold out against any overly 'organicist' interpretation. Indeed, this idea that musical value may have to do precisely with the conflict or tension between background norms of structural unity and other, more disruptive foreground elements is one that finds favour even with critics, like Leonard Meyer, who are often pilloried by the New Musicologists as slavish adherents to the old formalist paradigm. (See for instance Meyer 1965.) Yet it is hard to see how such an argument could work, or such values apply, were it not for those same normative expectations – of structural development, thematic contrast, tonal progression, and so forth – which constitute a point of reference and departure for whatever strikes the well-attuned listener as marking a break with established modes of compositional practice.

Still less could it work on the curious premise – one shared, be it noted, not only by de Man but also by a high formalist like Kant – that any taint of sensuous experience in our thinking about issues of aesthetic worth or (in the present context) of musical structure and meaning must betoken, as Kant puritanically puts it, a 'pathological' admixture of motives or desires at odds with the purely disinterested character of true aesthetic evaluation (Kant 1978). While the New Musicologists are pretty much united in rejecting Kant's claims for aesthetic disinterest, formal autonomy, 'pure' as opposed to 'impure' modes of judgement, and so forth, they are oddly in accord when it comes to his deep mistrust of that whole dimension of aesthetic experience where the pleasures of sensuous apprehension are closely bound up with those of cognitive understanding and structural grasp. What this gives us, in effect, is the worst of both worlds: an approach whose foregone theoretical commitments enjoin us to renounce (or at any rate to treat with the greatest suspicion) not only the sensuous experience of music but also the heightened pleasure and appreciation that comes of an informed musical understanding. I have suggested that such thinking takes rise from a number of erroneous premises, chief among them the idea that structural analysis must always entail the subscription to some kind of doctrinaire organicist creed, thus revealing the grip of an aesthetic ideology that naïvely conflates the realm of linguistic signification with the realm of natural processes or forms. However this idea is itself the result of a drastic and unwarranted conflation. That is to say, it extrapolates directly from the domain of literary theory – which of course has to do with linguistic texts and where the argument thus has a certain force against the more naïve and perhaps ideologically-loaded sorts of naturalistic fallacy – to the domain of music criticism where altogether different considerations apply.

Along with this goes the claim – with its primary source, again, in de Man's writings – that any appeal to the sensory-perceptual experience of music is likewise suspect by reason of that same delusory grounding in those natural phenomena (e.g., the tonal system or overtone-series) that constitute the essence of musical meaning and value. To be sure, such notions if pushed to an extreme have shown themselves amenable to ideological uses, as for instance in Schenker's chauvinist application of them and in kindred claims for the hegemonic status of

the 'mainstream', 'classical', i.e., Austro-German musical tradition. They are also quite explicit – ironically enough, given his life-history and fervent opposition to any such creed when deployed to overtly nationalist ends – in Schoenberg's idea of the dodecaphonic system as ensuring the continued pre-eminence of that same tradition through its progressive exploration of harmonic resources that didn't so much break altogether with tonality as move further out along the overtone series or circle of fifths (Schoenberg 1984 and Schoenberg 1995). However it is absurd to suppose that there always must be some deep-laid ideological bias at work whenever critics, analysts, or musically-informed listeners betray some adherence to the notion of music as gaining much of its expressive power through the affinity that exists between certain tonal or harmonic structures and certain modes of listener-response. Still less can it be warranted to take this as grounds for rejecting the idea that analysis might play a useful, pleasure-enhancing, even (at times) transformative role in making the process more readily available to conscious, reflective understanding.

Empson got it right, I suggest, when he remarked in *Seven Types of Ambiguity* that poetic 'appreciation' has nothing to fear from exposure to verbal analysis since good poetry can only benefit from intelligent and perceptive close reading while the pleasures it affords are sufficiently robust to withstand other, less sensitive or tactful approaches (Empson 1930). The same is true of musical analysis and moreover – be it said – of music theory just so long as it doesn't invent a whole range of counter-intuitive and misconceived grounds for rejecting what analysis can fairly claim to offer, not only as a matter of formal demonstration but also in terms of heightened appreciative yield. After all, as Empson puts it, 'normal sensibility is a tissue of what has been conscious theory made habitual and returned to the pre-conscious, and, therefore, conscious theory may make an addition to sensibility' (Empson 1930: 254). And again: 'the act of knowing is itself an act of sympathising; unless you are enjoying the poetry you cannot create it, as poetry, in your mind' (Empson 1930: 253). It seems to me that these claims are strongly borne out by a good deal of recent work in cognitive psychology as well as by the way that a critic like Rosen – one with a wide range of philosophic as well as literary, cultural-historical, and of course music-analytical interests – can provide such a depth of musical insight as to render any charge of 'aesthetic ideology' (in his case at least) just a tedious irrelevance. Where theory works to best, most telling effect is not so much by advancing wholesale diagnoses in the deconstructionist mode but rather by promoting a more reflective awareness of how music relates to the various discourses – those of analysis and historiography among them – which undoubtedly inform our perceptual responses yet not to the point of though-and-through ideological conditioning envisaged by some current thinkers.

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Musicology as an Institutional Discourse: Deconstruction and the Future of Musicology

Muzikologija kot institucionalen diskurz: dekonstrukcija in prihodnost muzikologije

Ključne besede: dekonstrukcija, Derrida, institucije, Lacan, Laclau, Mouffe, glasba, muzikologija

Keywords: deconstruction, Derrida, institutions, Lacan, Laclau, Mouffe, music, musicology.

POVZETEK

Spis analizira muzikologijo kot institucionalen diskurz, kot kolektivno in družbeno prakso, ki se ne proizvaja in preoblikuje v določenih institucionalnih mrežah, temveč jo te mreže temeljito oblikuje. Z vztrajanjem na protislovnem statusu lastnega dela v razmerju do institucij, Derrida ponuja muzikologom izhodišče za pogajanje s strukturami in tradicijami, ki sočasno omogočajo in zamejujejo njihovo delo. Problematiziranje muzikoloških ustanov pa zastavlja vprašanja, ki presegajo neposredno vsebino dekonstrukcije in objemajo tako različna polja, kot so psihoanaliza, politična filozofija, sociologija in, med drugim, retoriko humanističnih ved.

ABSTRACT

This essay analyzes musicology as an institutional discourse, as a collective and social practice that is not only produced and transmitted within particular institutional networks, but is also profoundly shaped by those networks. By insisting on the paradoxical status of his own work vis-à-vis institutions, Derrida might provide an opening for musicologists to negotiate with the structures and traditions that simultaneously enable and constrain their work. The problematizing of musicological institutions, however, raises questions that go beyond the immediate purview of deconstruction to embrace fields as diverse as psychoanalysis, political philosophy, sociology, and the rhetoric of the human sciences, among others.

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As a musicologist, I am a parasite, or at least I aspire to be. A major concern of my recent work involves analyzing humanistic disciplines, including musicology, as institutional discourses, as social and collective practices that are not only produced and transmitted within particular institutional networks, but are also profoundly shaped by those networks, by their traditions and expectations, their communal desires, and their criteria for success. Academic musicology is a cultural industry that generates discourse about music in a variety of genres both oral (lectures, seminars, conference presentations, oral examinations) and written (dissertations, monographs, scholarly editions of music, articles, conference abstracts, books reviews, and so on). Yet this proliferation of words, which is only likely to increase with the growing professionalization of the field, is not without its problems. Rose Rosengard Subotnik, for example, who is certainly among the most astute observers of the current scene, describes "doubts, even a pervasive anxiety, about the status and future of writing" within the field today. This anxiety is part of what is driving what she calls "the Next Paradigm," in which the stakes involve "not just the legitimacy of any individual scholar's work but the future of musical scholarship itself" (Subotnik 2004: 291-92). Given these concerns, it would seem urgent to examine musicology as a site of textual production.

By taking discourse about music as my object of study, to see how an academic discipline frames music as a discursive object, my work is parasitic upon existing scholarship; it is musicology of the second order. In this respect, my project has obvious affinities with various modes of deconstruction, and particularly with Derrida's practice, since "his work is always carried out in relation to texts by others, in their singularity" (Bennington / Derrida 1993: 84). Thus I am less interested in "applying" deconstruction directly to the analysis of musical compositions than in learning how to read musicological texts for something other than their informational content. Although Derrida is certainly not my only point of departure here, what draws me to him is his ability to integrate bold conjectures with patient fidelity to textual details. Lacan sometimes compared the work of psychoanalytic interpretation to pulling a rabbit out of a hat (Lacan 1992: 284), but such wizardry resembles the familiar drawing of a duck that becomes a rabbit when looked at awry, disclosing what was hidden in plain sight. And this quality is what I admire in Derrida's exegeses (or in Lacan's, for that matter).

Just as recent work in political philosophy, at least since the groundbreaking work of Laclau and Mouffe, (Laclau / Mouffe 1985), has recognized the problem of language as central, so understanding what we might call the politics of disciplinarity must also foreground language. But these problems must not be understood in the narrow sense of quibbles over words, but as problems of discourse, which I follow Lacan in regarding as "a social link founded on language" (Lacan 1998: 17). Here Lyotard's understanding of culture as "an expanded field of language games" also provides a valuable orientation (Readings 1991: 109). If we situate musicology within this expanded field, it can be productively viewed as a collection of overlapping language games, related by what Wittgenstein calls "family resemblances," and overlapping with innumerable other language games, including not only less academic ways of talking about music, but also with other cultural practices and forms of life. This allows musicology to embrace things like oral traditions of musical pedagogy, and to acknowledge the performative aspects of its own writing, the moments when musicology shades into poetry. Non-verbal behavior associated with music also belongs to this expanded field; applause at concerts, for example, is a cultural practice that can take on different meanings depending on the ensemble of language games into which it is integrated. Reconstructing musicology in these terms offers an anti-essentialist approach to disciplinarity, keeping the object of the discipline open. Since

defining "music" is itself a language game, there is not need to limit what music is or might become, or for that matter to limit the scope of musicology.

Foregrounding the language games of musical scholarship does not by any means entail ignoring musical sounds, or abandoning the traditional concern of musicology with musical experience. Here we must recall that Wittgenstein's breakthrough was to integrate language with its social environment, combining "*human beings*, a *world-setting*, and *language*' into a single complex of meaning" (Finch 1995: 44; emphasis original). In Wittgenstein's well-known example of the builder and his apprentice, the bricks and slabs that the builder demands are an integral part of the language game, as Laclau and Mouffe correctly insist (Laclau / Mouffe 1985: 108). Musicological discourse often cites musical events, whether simply by mentioning them, or by quoting them in whole or in part. In the classroom, for example, teachers may punctuate their lectures with live or recorded performances, perhaps singing or playing the piano, playing CDs, or writing examples in musical notation on the blackboard. In publications these examples often appear in musical notation, although more and more books now have CDs attached to them, and with the increase in internet publishing the use of recorded examples is likely to increase. These musical examples are an integral part of the language games musicologists play. But sound is reframed and recontextualized in musical scholarship; the range of meanings changes as sounds are grafted into new contexts. If we follow the Stoics (as Deleuze and Guattari do) in dividing the world into bodies and incorporeals, one might say that the body of musical sound undergoes a series of incorporeal transformations in musical discourse (Deleuze / Guattari 1987: 86).

The realization that statements about music are events within an ongoing disciplinary and cultural conversation without which they cannot fully be understood forces us to confront institutional questions of the sort that Derrida increasingly posed in his later phases, particularly as issues of ethics and politics came to the foreground of his attention. Just as philosophy cannot be separated from its writing, so it cannot be detached from the concrete circumstances of its production and circulation; in dismantling philosophical oppositions, deconstruction "immediately concerns, just as much and just as radically, the institutional structures founded on such oppositions" (Derrida 2002: 33). His awareness of these systemic factors was certainly enhanced by the prejudices that shaped the reception of his work, including not only the resistance to deconstruction but also the sometimes giddy embrace of certain curious distortions of it. He was irked, for example, by the often rigid barriers between the so-called Continental and analytic traditions in philosophy, and by the related prejudice that classified him as a predominantly literary rather than a philosophical figure, and that interpreted his persistent interrogation of the limits between philosophy and literature as a confusion of the two, or as a rejection of such distinctions (Derrida 2005: 142).

Musicology may reproduce some of the same institutional prejudices that plagued Derrida (while introducing some new ones of its own). Consider, for example, recent developments in the field of the cognitive psychology of music, which has produced a distinguished a body of work, including the contributions of Fred Lerdahl, Larry Zbikowski, Gavin Chuck, and others. An important strain of this research has drawn on the insights of the philosopher Mark Johnson, both in his independent work and his collaboration with George Lakoff, on such topics as the so-called embodied mind, image schemata, cross-domain mapping, and so forth. Within an American context, the originality of Johnson's work may well depend on his receptivity to both analytic and Continental perspectives, and he even admits that "it will be obvious that some of my most important claims are anticipated in the work of philosophers who might legitimately claim allegiance to phenomenology of the post-Husserlian varieties" (Johnson 1987: xxxvii). Yet

the musical reception of his work has taken place within an institutional framework largely if unconsciously dominated by Anglo-American empiricism in method and philosophical outlook, so that Johnson's Continental affinities and debts have been overlooked by his own most passionate readers. As a further irony, Johnson himself seems constrained by the audience he envisions for his work, so that his range of references is dominated by the analytic tradition, and his debt to phenomenology is rarely addressed or made explicit. And here we see the greatest danger posed by institutional prejudices: far from being merely external differences, the opposition between factions often appears as an internal blockage or impediment within a single school of thought (Korsyn 2003).

By insisting on the paradoxical status of his own work vis-à-vis institutions, Derrida might provide a model for musicologists to negotiate with the structures and traditions that simultaneously enable and constrain their work: "*Deconstruction is an institutional practice for which the concept of institution remains a problem*" (Derrida 2002: 53; emphasis original). For me this formulation recalls Heidegger's statement that "Dasein exists as an entity for which, in its Being, that Being is itself an issue" (Heidegger 1962: 458). Institutions, whether we consider the family, the state, the university, law, religion, literature, or whatever, are our collective modes of being in the world, our collaborative ways of being human, and Derrida seeks to problematize them rather than destroy them, so that their authority remains permanently in question. Musicology has a rich legacy of institutions, including not only the basic infrastructure of academic departments, professional organizations, and publishers that supports scholarship, but also a sophisticated network of investigative methods and genres of writing that exert an institutional force. Since there can be no organized study of music–or of anything else, for that matter–without institutions, it would be absurd to simply jettison them and start over. What we can do, however, is to foster institutions that resist their own authority.

A deconstructive musicology, then, if we can imagine such a thing, might seek the same sort of relationship with academic musicology that deconstruction seeks with philosophy, a relation of neither complete identity nor complete difference, neither inside nor outside existing institutions, operating in the margins between discourses, and parasitic upon existing scholarship.

2

Here it is urgent not only to examine the various institutional spaces within which musicology has historically functioned, but also to identify potential conflicts among those spaces, since these can produce contradictory demands on disciplines. Such contradictions have little to do with the flaws of individual scholars; here it is a question of recognizing what Barbara Johnson calls the intentionality of systemic, institutional discourses [...] to analyze the functioning of different, sometimes incommensurable, *kinds* of intentions (Johnson 1994: 48; emphasis original).

Such analyses may reverse the relation between margins and center in academic discourse, calling attention to factors that might seem peripheral from the standpoint of someone who wants to read musicological texts for purely informational content.

One potential source of conflicting values in musical research may be the sometimes awkward perch it occupies between the university and the conservatory, the one committed to the pursuit of knowledge, the other to the cultivation of music as an art, craft, or practical activity. The slow and begrudging acceptance of music as an academic discipline, epitomized by the remark attributed to a president of Harvard in the nineteenth century that "there's no such thing as musicology, one might as well speak of grandmotherology," continues to produce effects.

Many in the field, for example, wonder if musicology will always be a "belated discipline," and such anxieties can produce all sorts of imaginary rivalries and identifications as musicologists try to establish their academic legitimacy. Yet the discipline also remains vulnerable to charges that it is irrelevant to the activity of practical musicianship. These conflicting demands can produce a see-saw effect as musicologists alternately try to satisfy the demands for academic rigor and musical spontaneity (Korsyn 2003: 64).

The double institutional location of musicology recalls the special position of philosophy that Derrida finds in Kant's plan for the university, in which philosophy is both one department among others but also the discipline that interrogates the grounds of all disciplines (Derrida 2003: 106). Although contained within the larger whole of the university, philosophy is also a part that exceeds the whole. In similar fashion, as an academic department with ties to musical practice, musicology is both inside and outside the university. This sort of conflict can produce both positive and negative effects, and I have argued that musicologists should embrace their marginality and exploit it.

One factor that might turn marginality into an advantage is that the university is itself a divided institution, a structure that may lack an obvious center, in part because its traditional alibis, the narratives that once justified its mission and gave unity and purpose to its separate activities, no longer compel assent. We seem to inhabit what Bill Readings calls "the university in ruins" (Readings 1996). Readings traces a series of models that have provided a rationale for the university beginning with what he calls the Kantian University of Reason, through the University of Culture, which he associates with Wilhelm von Humboldt's widely imitated plan for the University of Berlin in the early nineteenth century, up to the contemporary University of Excellence, which he links to the global economy and the increasing professionalization of the academy. Although he sees this pursuit of a vaguely defined "excellence" as the dominant model today, the earlier visions of the university continue to exert an influence, if sometimes only in the form of nostalgia for an idealized past.

The coexistence of these models exposes the university to any number of competing institutional pressures, from the state to the global economy. In the University of Culture, for example, the mission of the university was to produce a national subject or consciousness by assimilating a particular culture, so that national literatures became central to the curriculum. This effectively prepared a place for musicology long before it became a university department at most institutions, and the emphasis that German musicology has often given to describing national styles is a predictable consequence of its trying to adapt to the University of Culture. One source of unease among scholars may be their pursuit of such a research agenda after the cultural consensus underlying it has collapsed, particularly as the global information economy forces universities to look beyond their national horizons.

The problematizing of musicological institutions raises a number of questions that go beyond the immediate purview of deconstruction to embrace fields as diverse as psychoanalysis, political philosophy, the sociology of knowledge, and the rhetoric of inquiry, among others. Some of the most pressing questions involve psychoanalytic questions of identification, anxiety, fantasy, desire, and jouissance. How, for example, do individuals come to identify with particular institutions? How do institutions arouse and sustain desire? How do identifications with academic institutions relate to our lives outside the academy? How do these affect the type of knowledge that is produced? And what about the passions? Musicological discourse is replete with avowals of love for music, and it is tempting to idealize the discipline as a pure search for knowledge, driven by selfless love. But Lacan spoke of love, hate, knowledge, and ignorance as the four passions. What role might the passion for ignorance play in academic

institutions? I do not mean the bone-headed type of ignorance, of course, but the carefully cultivated ignorance of those who defend their knowledge with indefatigable industry. And what if musicologists hate music as much as they love it? Might musicology be a defense against the overwhelming jouissance in music?

These questions of identification and the formation of groups lead rapidly to questions of a political nature: How do academic institutions legitimate themselves? How do they resemble or differ from other political institutions? How does the antagonistic structure of society affect musicology? It is significant, for example, if seldom remarked on, that professional organizations in the humanities operate according to democratic principles, resembling miniature republics with constitutions and by-laws, elected officers and boards. As I have shown elsewhere, their attempt to provide a forum for an ongoing disciplinary conversation tends to reproduce what Chantal Mouffe calls "the democratic paradox," involving an irreducible tension between the liberal desire for individual rights and tolerance and the democratic desire for equality and the rule of the people. The ideal of blind peer review is an attempt to articulate the democratic desire for free and open discussions in which equality among the participants will prevail with the liberal desire for tolerance and respect for individual differences. As in society at large, the demos must be constituted through exclusions, since many conference proposals are rejected; in this disciplinary democracy, only experts may participate. At the same time, however, the constitution of the peer review group is open to challenges, to arguments that decisions have been made unfairly or differences have been ignored. This has been the case, for example, with the participation of women in the American Musicological Society, as Suzanne Cusick has shown. The formation of that learned body in the 1930's involved the forceful exclusion of women, and the gradual recognition of women within the organization resulted from liberal challenges to the constitution of the community (Cusick 1999: 471-72). But what constitutes difference at any given time, or which differences matter, is subject to debate, because such disagreements may involve what Zizek calls "metadifferences," differences about the nature of differences. In the case of Christianity and Islam, for example, they do not simply disagree; they "disagree about their very disagreement" (Zizek 2000: 315).

A distinctively deconstructive approach to these questions might begin by exploring the conditions of possibility–which for Derrida are also the conditions of impossibility–for institutions to take the forms they do. Since all disciplines tend to define their objects of study through a series of exclusions, the potential arises for musicology to reproduce the pattern of hierarchical oppositions that Derrida finds in Western metaphysics. In attempting to differentiate music from what it is not, for example, musicians have often invoked a contrast between sounds of definite pitch and those without definite pitch. By classifying the latter as noise, scholars have often tried to draw a boundary around music, excluding or at least regulating the use of noise. This is what Rameau does, for example, when he begins his Treatise on Harmony with a succinct definition of music: "Music is the science of sounds; therefore sound is the principal subject of music" (Rameau 1971 [1722]: 3). This definition already implies a disciplinary space for any future musicology, separating musical sound from noise to delineate a clear object of study, and differentiating science from non-science to provide a method. (There is a science of noise, but for Rameau this is not music.) By contrast, consider Jacques Attali's definition of music as "the organization of noise," a definition that effectively dismantles Rameau's hierarchy between sound and noise and gestures toward a possible deconstruction (Attali 1985: 1). (See Korsyn 2003: 125-30 for a fuller discussion).

One might consider any number of other binary oppositions that circulate in discourse about music, including those between musical sound and musical notation, Western versus

non-Western music, individual composition versus historical context, and so on, all of which can provide a foothold for institutions. The subdisciplines of music theory and music history, for example, rely on the text/context distinction to differentiate their primary objects of study; theorists generally privilege the individual composition, while historians privilege the context. But as I have shown elsewhere, this opposition is vulnerable to deconstruction (see Korsyn 1993, 1999, 2003, 2004).

3

The need for us to rethink the nature of musicological institutions becomes urgent given the deadlocks and impasses that seem to prevail in contemporary musicological discourse. To amplify this point, it may be helpful to see how one thoughtful musicologist perceives the state of the discipline today. Here is how Mitchell Morris begins a recent article:

> Musicological tempers were short in the 90's, and only recently seem to have settled into a sullenness that still occasionally flares into rancor. Many thoughtful and serious scholars hold incommensurate points of view with great conviction and vehemence, and find little success in persuading opponents or often even in eliminating smaller disagreements between their own positions and those of their philosophical allies. Journals, newsletters, internet sites, even some of the (quasi-) mass media, all register this intellectual conflict, and AMS presidents and others have frequently spoken out in attempts to reconcile the various segments of the field, or at least to establish more moderate tones of discussion. As society has gone, so has the Society: everyone's feelings, it seems, are especially delicate around the turn of the millennium (Morris 2004: 48)

Although Morris considers the advantages of conflict as a lever for progress in generating competition and debate, he also identifies conflict of a different and more disturbing order, an intractable sort that stifles debate because the practitioners disagree about fundamental values. He concludes that "it is incumbent upon us as scholars to seek some way out of this dilemma" (Morris 2004: 49).

Morris's diagnosis of an ethical dilemma in musical scholarship circa 2004 independently supports a position I had advanced in a book published the previous year, in which I spoke of a Tower of Babel, a fragmentation of musical research into ever smaller factions, each characterized by its own language and value system, making communication outside of one's area of specialization more and more difficult. Although the proliferation of languages in the Tower of Babel has a liberating potential, there is also a danger that it will turn into its opposite, because of the pressure towards uniformity and standardization within the managed university (I call this tendency toward uniformity the Ministry of Truth, a name I adopt from the propaganda ministry in Orwell's 1984). It is difficult for some musicologists to face these problems, and Morris notes that his suggestion that "our discipline would benefit from deliberate attempts to invent (or at least revive) some varieties of moral criticism" has often been greeted "with some variety of skepticism, dismissal, and even disgust" (Morris 2004: 49).

Faced with such a dilemma, a radical rethinking of musicological institutions that includes some aspects of deconstruction might enable us to see the frequent complicity of opposing positions, in which the apparent conflict between different schools of thought often masks an internal impediment or blockage within each single position. By analyzing the effects of participating in conflicting institutional discourses, we might better learn to manage these effects.

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In(-)formations The Meaning of Paratextual Elements in Debussy's Syrinx

Ključne besede: dekonstrukcija, paratekst, dihi, Syrinx, Debussy, Genette, Derrida, ornamentacija, naslovi, priložnostna glasba, binarne opozicije, Pan.

Keywords: deconstruction, paratext, breath marks, Syrinx, Debussy, Genette, Derrida, ornamentation, titles, incidental music, binary oppositions, Pan.

POVZETEK

Po Gérard Genette je mogoče paratekstualne ravni opredeliti kot nekaj, kar je nasproti, ob ali dodano k 'samemu' tekstu (partituri). V tem pomenu je paratekst vselej podrejen 'svojemu' tekstu. Paratekst je vse drugo razen 'dejanskega' teksta in je tesno vezan nanj; platnica, avtorjevo ime, naslov, predgovor, ilustracija, note itn. Lociran je med *notri* in *zunaj*, v prostoru med *še vedno* in *še ne pripadajočemu* k tekstu. Članek v prvi vrsti obravnava, kako so paratekstualne ravni (zlasti cezure) potrebne za glasbeni tekst (v tem primeru: za Debussyjev *Syrinx* za flavto) s (časovnim) pomenom in kako uravnavajo možne interpretacije. Nadalje članek sugerira tudi to, da 'sam' glasbeni tekst vselej že vsebuje parateks (na primer: ornamentaija). Pri skladbi *Syrinx* so meje med tekstom in paratekstom izredno krhke, ponujajoč vredna vprašanja in pomikanje hierarhije ravni identificiranja teksta.

ABSTRACT

According to Gérard Genette, paratextual elements can be defined as that what comes against, beside, and in addition to the text (a score for example) 'itself'. In that sense, they are always subordinate to 'their' text. The paratext is all material other than, though very closely connected to, the 'actual' text: the cover, the author's name, the title, preface, illustrations, notes, etc. It is therefore located in the space between inside and outside, the space between still belonging and not yet belonging to the text.
This essay first of all investigates how paratextual elements (especially breath marks) are necessary to provide a musical text (in this case Debussy's *Syrinx* for solo flute) with a (temporary) meaning and how they direct possible interpretations. Secondly, this essay also suggests that within the musical text 'itself', paratext is always already present (for example in ornamentation). However, in *Syrinx*, the borders between text and paratext are remarkably porous, creating a noteworthy questioning and shifting of hierarchies.

1

... It all starts with the A and B (not) resolving on the A flat in the very first bar ...

First in(-)formation. What is the status of this remark? What is 'the truth' of this statement, if there is any? Let's start (But didn't we already start? Hasn't it started yet? Wouldn't it be better to write "let's continue," not only here, in this particular case, but always? I must return to this line of thought in more detail in a moment) with some objections, some comments to put this blunt opening sentence into perspective, that is, provide it with a frame, because the borders of any context open out wide.

One of the most obvious limitations that can be applied is, of course, the score, that piece of paper offering an indispensable reference, according to which, in this case, it would be immediately clear how wrong my first sentence is. For, preceding the aforementioned interval, a B flat will be discerned, this note being the 'actual beginning' of the piece. It is not with the interval A-B but with the B flat that the composition opens, even fastening itself down on this tone as the tonal center for at least one beat (if not for the majority of the bars). However, if you allow me to dwell upon this for a moment, the question is legitimate: whether this tone effectively marks the commencement, or, more broadly speaking, if *any first* tone indicates the border between inside and outside, between that belonging to the composition, the aural artwork, and that which is excluded from it. According to Edward Cone, for example, the frame separating music from its external environment is silence. This silence, preceding or coinciding with the musician's first gesture or breath, serves as a call to attention; it focuses the listener toward what will follow. However, Cone speculates that "perhaps some of the silence immediately before [...] a composition is actually a part, not of the frame but of the work itself" (Cone 1966: 17-8). In other words, Cone is suggesting here that silence, initially presented as a frame around music, that is, not belonging to the music 'itself', sometimes becomes part of it. Some confusion arises between inner and outer, between frame and framed; the borders seem to be porous.[1] Projecting this idea on the work I am discussing here could lead to the conclusion that it does not seem 'to start' with a B flat (either) but with a silence, a silence that can never be total as it is always already permeated by sounds, by noise, if only because the performer must inhale in order to commence playing. This immediately triggers the question of what exactly we mean by 'a work' or 'a composition', as these words still seem to assume discrete boundaries and fixed identities.

2

Second in(-)formation. Already right from 'the start', we seem to be going from bad to worse, we seem to enter places, following traces, we would rather ignore. Let us therefore go back, back to the safe site of the score, back to the written part, where the beginning of a piece of music is clearly indicated. At least so it seems ... Because, where does the score begin? Simply with the first note, in this case the B flat? The score, a simple copy of Edition Peters, lying here next to the computer, contains a plethora of information before the B flat note: the time (3/4), the key (five flats, indicating D flat or B flat minor), the clef (treble or G), a concise

[1] See for an extensive discussion of this topic Littlefield 2001, especially Chapter 3 on silences as musical frames.
There are many examples where the border between music and not-yet-music is blurred. For *Sequenza III* (1966), for example, written for solo female voice, Luciano Berio prescribes that throughout the welcoming applause while the performer walks onto the stage, she should be rapidly muttering fragments of words as if she was not thinking about her performance at all. The audience is unsure if the composition has started already? And when exactly? Perhaps her murmuring already began in the dressing room, perhaps even days before the performance. Or should one decide that the mumbling has to be excluded from the composition? But then, where does the work begin? We are confronted here with a complex theme of undecidability, all the more complex because the *Sequenza III* example makes us also aware that any opening silence is always already permeated by an, in principle, infinite number of sounds.

tempo indication ('Très modéré', very moderately), the name of the composer as well as his year of birth and death (Claude Debussy, 1862-1918), the instrument for which the piece is written ('Flûte seule', solo flute), a dedication ('à Louis Fleury'), and, between these last two, in capitals, the title of the composition (Syrinx). And this enumeration even ignores the cover, which includes – in order of importance, judged according to the size of the letters and the position on the page – the title of the work, the composer's name, its year of production (1912), for which instrument it is written (in three languages) and by whom it is edited (Erich List).

Gérard Genette would probably call these indications and signs *paratext* – what comes against, beside, and in addition to the text (the score) 'itself'.[2] Paratextual elements are always subordinate to 'their' text, they are devoted to the service of something else, and this functionality, he writes, determines the essentials of their characteristics and of their existence (Genette 1991: 269). The paratext is all material other than, though very closely connected to, the 'actual' text: the cover, the author's name, the title, preface, illustrations, notes, etc.; in short, the elements which surround the text – already textual but not yet 'the' text.

However, a score rarely appears in its naked state, that is, without the reinforcement and accompaniment of a certain number of paratextual elements of which one cannot always be certain whether they should be considered as belonging to the text or not. In any case, they are there precisely in order to present the score, that is, to make it present, to assure its presence in the world, its possible performance and reception (Genette: 261). These elements do not leave the score untouched and as such form an integral part of it that cannot be easily separated from the body of the work, the text 'itself', the 'pure' score. In fact, the paratext is the fringe of the text which, in reality, controls the whole reading. In the case under consideration, this is especially true with regard to specifically musical signs: time, key, clef, and dynamic signs, but also with regard to slurs and breathing indications. It would be very difficult to maintain that these elements are, as Kant would call them, *Nebengeschäfte*, things that come as an extra, exterior to the proper field. In fact, they immediately and necessarily intervene in the interior. One is compelled to establish that the notes on the staff need these supplements. The effect is clear: the borders between 'text' and 'paratext' blur.

Of course, all this applies somewhat less in the case of the editor, the composer, and (even) the title of a composition. But, in Genette's words, they form the 'vestibule' which offers performers and other readers the possibility either of entering the score or of turning back (Genette 1991: 261).[3] In this sense, they provide the composition with a more or less necessary context (this applies especially to the indication of which instrument is to be played), a context which itself is always already textualized.[4] But these elements, too, are quite difficult to detach. Without them, something would be lacking, lacking in the very interior of the work; and changing them will lead to different meanings of the text, different performances, different readings, different interpretations. Title, dedication, year of realization, the name of the composer: they are separated from the integral inside, from the body proper. However, they are also divided from the outside, from other works by the same or another composer, and then, step by step, "from the whole field of historical, economic, political inscription in which the drive to signature is produced," in short, the general text (Derrida 1987: 61). With respect to the notes themselves, these paratextual elements merge into the general text. With respect

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[2] Actually, Genette would probably reserve the word *peritext* for this kind of information that finds its place *around* the text/score 'itself'. Besides peritext, paratext consists of *epitext*, all kind of messages that are situated *outside* the physical object in which the text/score appears (Genette: 264). In this text I will not make this (in itself problematic) distinction and simply use the more general term paratext.

[3] A vestibule is a hall or a lobby from which doors open into various rooms (OED), stemming from the Latin *vestibulum*, meaning entry or gateway. A host welcomes his guests in the vestibule before leading them into the more private rooms in his house. The vestibule could be called a *para-site*.

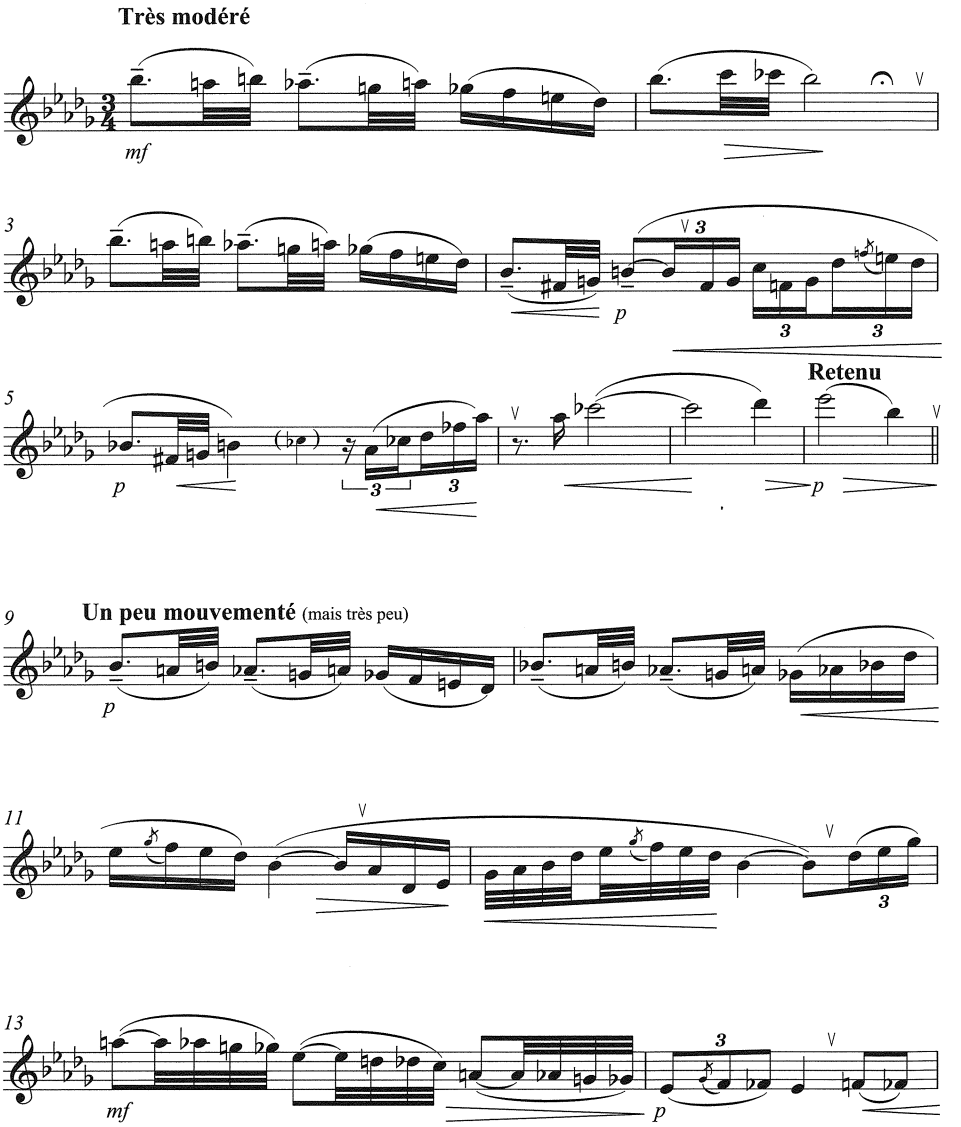
[4] Derrida points out that in French 'context' can be heard as 'ce qu'on texte', that which one puts in text, that which one textualizes.

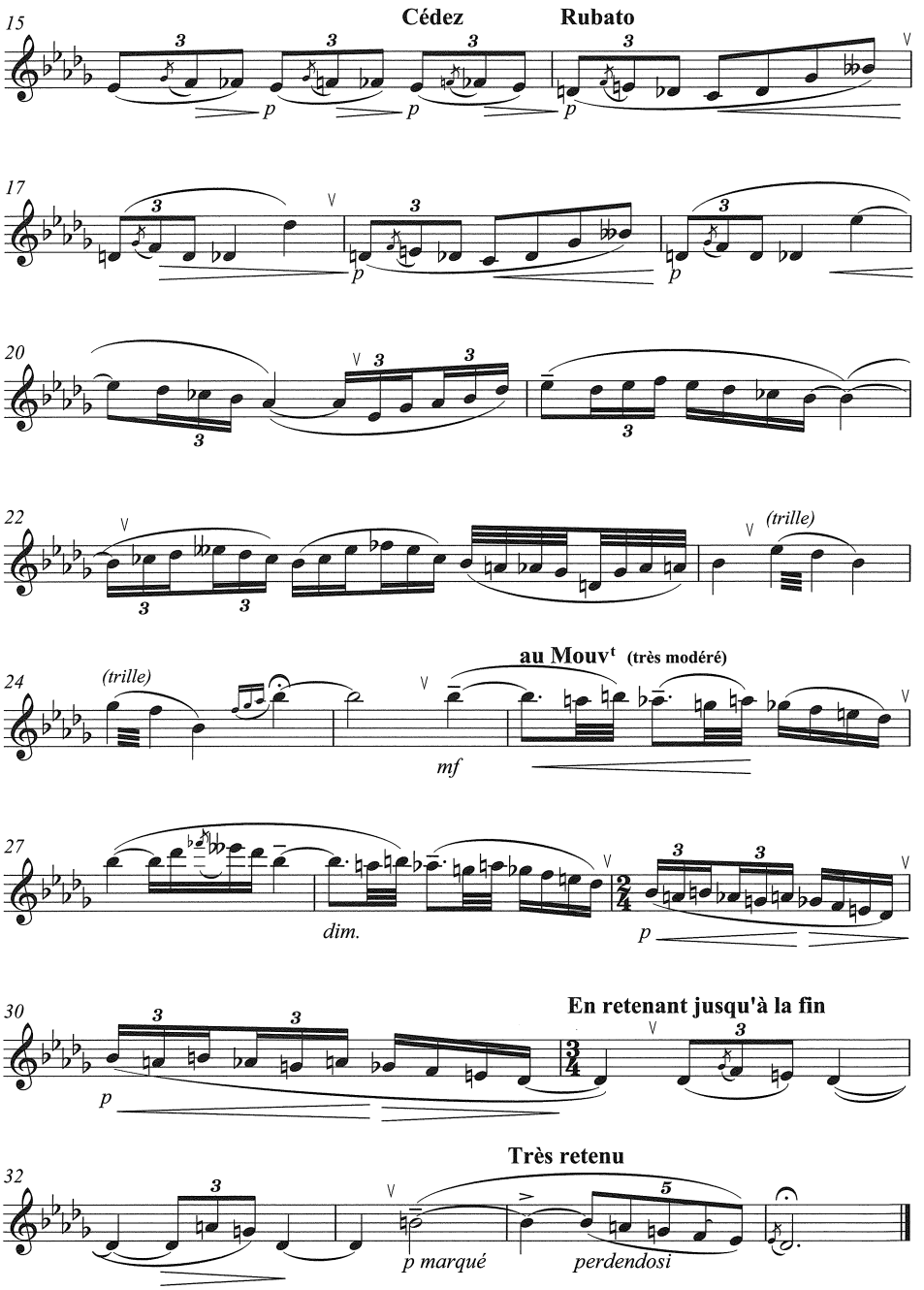
A Louis Fleury

SYRINX

Flûte seule

Claude Debussy
(1862 -1918)




15
Cédez
Rubato
p
17
20
22
(trille)
24
(trille)
au Mouvt (très modéré)
mf
27
dim.
p
30
En retenant jusqu'à la fin
p
32
Très retenu
p marqué
perdendosi

to the background, what the general text is, they merge into the work proper which stands out against the general background (Derrida 1987: 61).[5]

3

The fundamental undecidability of the exact verges that separate text and paratext – an undecidability which ultimately traverses and thwarts the foundations of our Western thinking based on hierarchically organized binary oppositions (as, for example, the prefix 'para' clearly shows) – at least also undermines the status of my opening sentence. Neither the 'music itself' nor the 'score itself' gives rise to the idea that the A-B interval in the first bar can be considered a beginning. This becomes all the more evident when we dwell upon one particular (para)textual element of the score: the title.

Third in(-)formation. *Syrinx.* Assuming that a listener already knows the title before hearing the music or discovers it after a first introduction, this title immediately leads him or her to 'another beginning', another world outside of the score, outside of music even.

Almost obviously, and perhaps primarily, the title *Syrinx* refers to that little instrument consisting of a set of small pipes bound together typically in a row, arranged from smallest to largest, set into musical vibration by blowing across the top of the pipes. These days the instrument is better known as panpipes. Pan's pipes. The pipes of Pan, son of Hermes and the nymph Dryope, god of the woodland and flocks. Although still connected to music – after all, Pan is a god of music as well – we are also entering the realm of literature and cultural history here; the domain of Ovid for example. He provides the main literary source of the dramatic confrontation between Pan and the most celebrated of all the hamadryads of Mount Nonacris in Arcadia, Syrinx. Pan, also a god of sensuality and sexuality, tries to seduce her. Unfortunately for him, Syrinx has proclaimed herself a virgin for life and immediately flees at the first signs of his lustful advances until she is trapped by the calm waters of the sandy Ladon River. Desperately, she begins to pray frantically to the water spirits in the hope that they will save her from the arms of her approaching persecutor. The water nymphs answer her pleas and, just at the moment Pan wants to pounce, they transform her into a bed of marsh reeds. When Pan tries to seize her, he finds in his hands only a river reed. While he is lamenting his loss, the wind, moving across the reeds, releases a clear, plaintive sound. The beauty of the sounds moves Pan to construct an instrument by plucking a handful of reeds, cutting them into different lengths and fastening them together with wax. This instrument made of reed pipes now bears either his name or the name of his forever-lost love.

Playing the pipes, gently touching the reeds with his lips, being charmed by its sweet tones; that way of communing with Syrinx is all that is left to Pan. In his reading of the myth of Pan and Syrinx, as it is told in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Ernst Bloch locates, in the basic human condition of yearning, one of the oldest impulses of music. The sounds of the pipes themselves effect a consolation in Pan by bringing the presence of the nymph to him, even in her absence: "This pipe-playing is the presence of the vanished; that which has passed beyond the limit is caught up again by this lament, captured in this consolation. The vanished nymph has remained behind as sound, she adorns and prepares herself within it, plays to need. The sound

[5] "Para is an antithetical prefix which indicates at once proximity and distance, similarity and difference, interiority and exteriority, something inside a domestic economy and at the same time outside it, something simultaneously this side of a boundary line, threshold, or margin, and also beyond it, equivalent in status and also secondary or subsidiary, submissive, as of guest to host, slave to master. A thing in 'para', moreover, is not only simultaneously on both sides of the boundary line between inside and out. It is also the boundary itself, the screen which is a permeable membrane connecting inside and outside. It confuses them with one another, allowing the outside in, making the inside out, dividing them and joining them," writes J. Hillis Miller (Miller 1999: 219).

comes from a hollow space, is produced by the fecundating breeze and still remains in the hollow space which it causes to resound. The nymph became the reeds, the instrument, like her, is called syrinx" (Bloch 1986: 1060).

Syrinx is present in her absence, audible without speaking, visible without showing herself, tangible although her body is not there anymore. Audible silence, visible invisibility, palpable absence. (Making) music represents not only the desire for a presence which is unfortunately eternally postponed; playing the reed pipe comforts Pan and forms, as it were, a substitute-conjunction with the nymph who is thus both present and absent.

Thus, (this) music seems to help us catch a glimpse of a deconstruction of traditionally opposite pairs, terms that previously seemed to exclude one another, concepts that were radically incompatible. By means of music, or even through music, we are invited to leave, at least for a moment, our age-old logocentrism.

Let's return once more to Genette's (para)text: "The temporal situation of the paratext may also be defined in relationship to that of the text. If one adopts as point of reference the date of appearance of the text, that is to say that of its first, or original, edition, certain elements of the paratext appeared (publically) at an earlier date" (Genette 1991: 264). Some paratextual elements may emerge prior to the 'actual' text. Genette mentions as examples prospectuses, advertisements that a text is forthcoming, and elements linked to a prepublication in a newspaper or review.

From the foregoing it seems obvious that certain elements of *Syrinx*' paratext appeared at an earlier date. Unmistakably, the title leads us back to earlier times, the times of Ovid, and before him, the times when the gods still visited humans and seduced nymphs on a regular basis. In fact, *Syrinx* takes us to an untimely or timeless era, as Pan's mythical world does not belong to our calculations of time, to our chronometry, to our calendar. *Syrinx* takes us to a time that is out of joint. Music and title, collaborating, each one in its own specific way, carry us away from our familiar time scale.

But, at least with regard to this composition, certain elements of the paratext appeared not only at an earlier date; the opposite is also true. That is, certain paratextual elements can also turn up at a later date, posthumous. For example titles. For example *Syrinx*. In 1927, the year after Louis Fleury's death – the flutist to whom Debussy dedicated the work – the publisher Jean Jobert printed the piece, presenting it under the title *Syrinx*. A falsification of history? In any case, this is not the name with which Debussy adorned one of his few compositions for theatre. *La flûte de Pan* was to be performed as part of a scene from *Psyché*, a dramatic three-act poem by Gabriel Mourey. Thus, *La flûte de Pan/Syrinx* was conceived as incidental music.[6] Mourey's poem recounts the myth of *Psyché* as told by the Latin author Apuleius in his *Metamorphoses*, inserting the story of the death of Pan, according to Plutarch's version, in the third act. The program also indicates the inclusion in Act III of a composition for flute titled *La flûte de Pan* by Debussy. So, not Debussy but Jobert named it *Syrinx*. The alteration may have been made by the publisher in order to avoid confusion with another Debussy piece, also published by Jobert; 'La flûte de Pan' was the title of the first of the three *Chansons de Bilitis*, for voice and piano.

[6] In a letter to Mourey, dated 17 November 1913, Debussy writes: "Please tell me, very precisely, after what lines the music starts. After several attempts I think that one should stick to the Pan flute alone, without any accompaniment. This is more difficult but more [logical – crossed out in the autograph] according to nature."
The request for the precise placement of the music suggests that the genesis of *La flûte de Pan* evolved in close association with Mourey's corresponding text.

So, another nymph is involved, another one at stake. Not Syrinx, but an anonymous naiad, a river nymph. In Pan's grotto, she meets an oread, a mountain nymph, who encourages her to listen to the sound of Pan's flute. Like Syrinx, the naiad is fearful of Pan, but the oread assures her that she will no longer be afraid once she has heard him playing. And indeed, as Pan begins to play, the naiad is seduced by the music and surrenders herself without fear. Only a few notes dissolving into a warm night, full of brilliant stars, are sufficient to change the attitude of the naiad completely; she cannot help but become inebriated and overcome by Pan's music. The sound of Pan's flute weakens the naiad's resolve not to give in.

This is the mythical world evoked by Mourey's play, relying freely on Apuleius and Plutarch. It is into this story that Debussy's composition for solo flute is inserted. Though Mourey lets the naiad and the oread refer to the confrontation between Pan and Syrinx in their conversation, in this play, in the music that accompanies it, Syrinx has no actual role.

Of course, although with the best of intentions, Jobert's act is far from innocent. As the frame – the context, that what surrounds the text, but also always already an undetachable part of it – changes, the meaning of the text 'itself' alters; the reading of the text 'itself' is heavily influenced. As such, a title offers guidance, attempts to control the reader's or listener's approach to the score/music. No title leaves him or her unaffected or fails to influence. Modifying the title thus immediately and indisputably affects the meaning of the prescribed notes and, therefore, their performance. The same applies to the fact that *La flûte de Pan/Syrinx* is incidental music, composed to accompany in a certain way a poetic text, a theater play, a mythical story (re)told by a symbolist poet.[7]

If, thus, the context is contributing to and, to a certain extent, determining the meaning of a text, one could state that 'everything begins' with the context. But, assuming that a context is never fully determinable, never totally closeable (in the same way that a text is never a complete whole), its boundaries always porous – assuming that a context is always already framed by other contexts which in their turn are limitless, and so ad infinitum, how can we ever conclude that something 'begins'? It has always already begun. Hence nothing begins. Also this third in(-)formation seems to belie the claim of the opening sentence that it all starts with the A-B interval in the first bar.

4

And yet ... something always begins, something is always in the state of beginning. In a way, beginning is unending. We are always beginning again, always setting out, always starting afresh. However, this endless beginning must not be confused with origin. On the contrary, beginning, which is never original, marks and remarks the constant disappearance of origin (Taylor: 97).

As a non-original beginning; that is how my opening phrase should be understood. Something has always already begun, but simultaneously that same something is always

[7] It should be clear that this short in(-)formation regarding the context within which Debussy's work for solo flute first appeared, does not lead one to the one and only truth on *La flûte de Pan/Syrinx*. Of course, it is evident that a context can never establish a univocal and fixed meaning of a text, although, as Derrida states, it seems that the field of ambiguity or polysemy permits itself to be reduced massively by the limits of what is called a context. However, relying on the context as a protection against what Derrida calls 'dissemination' provides no watertight guarantee. First, as Derrida makes very clear, the prerequisites of a context are never absolutely determinable: any given context is always already open to further description. Second, a written sign always already carries with it a force of breaking with its (original) context. Every sign, linguistic or nonlinguistic, as a small or large unity, can break with every given context (this becomes evident with citations), and engender infinitely new contexts in an absolutely nonsaturable fashion. Derrida warns us that through the values of 'conventionality,' 'correctness,' and 'completeness', the quest for an exhaustively definable context, for an absolutely full meaning that is master of itself, for intention as the organizing center, is lurking (Derrida 1982: 307-330). Here, I only want to emphasize how context is at least also constitutive for a certain meaning. In Genette's words: "I do not say that one must know it; I only say that those who know it do not read in the same way as those who do not" (Genette: 266).

already just beginning (again). It is not so much a step further as a return, a renewed paying attention, an *andenkendes Denken* as Heidegger would put it, as opposed to a forgetting in the sense of disregard or negligence.

Fourth in(-)formation. "It all starts with the A and B (not) resolving on the A flat in the very first bar." How to read, how to understand this sentence? Or, how to underline the deconstructive force of this interval, here at this position, in this com-position, stuck between a B flat and an A flat, but also at work later on within the piece in a more generalized form?

In the same way that the C and C flat in the second bar lead (back) towards the half note B flat, the thirty-second notes A and B of the first beat in bar one could be initially regarded as leading tones of the B flat. After all, the embellishment of a tone usually leads to a confirmation or reinforcement of that tone, endorsing it as a (temporary) tonal center. Here the listener, armed with this theoretical baggage, is immediately put on the wrong track. The putative ornamentation of the B flat leads precisely away from this tonal center. If the A and B should still be called an embellishment, exactly what are they embellishing? With their (non)resolution on the A flat, they become immediately more or less independent, at least partly disposed of their marginality or supplementary character. Their relation with the B flat is not one of ornamentation and (therefore) of mere subordination.[8] However, this does not directly imply that B flat on the one side and A and B on the other are fully equal; their respective positions in the bar as well as their lengths still justify the opinion that the B flat is more important than the other two. However, these last two notes are not simply in the service of the former one.[9]

A and B present a movement to 'something else'. What this 'something else' is, is as yet unknown. But a corner of the veil is raised when the rest of the first bar is taken into consideration. On the basis of the strong beats an outline can be descried as progressing from B flat through A flat and G flat to E (this last one on the first level of the pulse division, the eighth notes): part of a whole tone scale. Simultaneously, the remaining notes of the bar form a complementary whole tone scale: B – A – G – F, ending on what can in retrospect be called the subsidiary tone center D flat. All the more, this seems to undermine the idea that the notes on the weak parts of the beat merely embellish the others. However, as stated before, each member of the first whole tone scale has rhythmical prominence over the complimentary one – something even reinforced by the *tenutos* on B flat and A flat – thus articulating the primacy of B flat as the tonal center.

Could we assert that the A and B set an irrevocable process in motion? En route to the end of *La flûte de Pan/Syrinx,* the signs are already audible: bars 29 and 30, for example. The tone material is identical with the very first bar, but the change in rhythm is significant. In bars 29 and 30, the A and B (as well as the G and A) – thirty-second notes in bar one – are equal in length to the B flat and A flat – dotted eighth notes with *tenutos* in the first bar – thereby giving greater prominence to the complementary whole tone scale, something also endorsed by the tie linking D flat at the end of bar 30 with the first beat of bar 31. D flat, the terminus of the melodic descent in bar one, is fully revealed as the primary tone center in the concluding measures of the composition. Like B flat in the opening measures, D flat is stressed dura-

[8] In fact, the choice of the B already indicates that this is not a (mere) matter of ornamentation. If Debussy really intended simply to embellish the B flat, he would have most probably chosen to write a C flat instead.

[9] What I am contending here with regard to B flat, A, and B in the first beat of bar 1 (as well as bars 3, 9, 10, 26, 28, 29, and 30) applies, mutatis mutandis, to the A flat, G, and A of the second beat.

tionally in bars 31 and 32 and definitely corroborated as tonal center in the final measure where it becomes the pitch with the longest duration in the whole piece.

Gradually but unrelentingly, a shift takes place in *La flûte de Pan/Syrinx*, a shift from one center of gravity to another, not a shift to the relative key as the transposition from B flat to D flat might suggest, but a shift from one whole tone scale to another, to *the* other, to the *wholly* other, as the two whole tone scales have no pitch in common. Everything the whole tone scale on B flat had to exclude in order to be 'itself', in order to keep its specific characteristics, maintain its own identity, presents itself in full splendor in the last five bars, though soft, modest ('très retenu'), and gradually dying away ('perdendosi') at that, as if the inversion that has taken place should not be audible. The secondary or supplementary notes of the first bar(s) – Could we perhaps call them, paraphrasing Genette, *para-notes*? – become the dominant or primary notes in the last bars, but without claiming all attention; after the self-confident return of the initial theme in bar 26, preceded by a repeated sounding of B flat in bars 24 and 25, the take-over happens whisperingly, almost inadvertently. Though we could say that the original hierarchy is subverted, it is not the resounding victory of the underdog; it is as if this 'other' wants to offer the possibility to the listeners to remember, to (re-)hear in the inner self, what play between two scales, what dance between two forces, has formed this outcome. As if it becomes clear, in retrospect, that the A and B in bar one were never actually subordinate to the B flat, but necessary for the whole motivation of the musical process; that 'the other' was always already an indispensable part of 'the same', serving the narrative plot, prompting the initially dominant part to act, to leave its cozy nest, in order to risk a confrontation or, less polemically, an encounter.

The play of the varying tonal centers, the dance of the scales, supplemented with chromaticisms and tritone relationships, permeates the whole piece and serves to undermine the tripartite division, a division upon which almost all analysts agree in recognizing on a macroformal level.[10] The appearing and disappearing of the respective scales or tonal centers forms a withdrawal from the straitjacket of the most natural division A (bars 1-8) - B (bars 9-24) - A (bars 25-35). For example, B flat, arguably a very important note in bars 1-11, is lacking in bars 13 – 20. From bar 20 on, the B flat becomes more important again (it emerges more frequently, on strong beats, and is sustained longer). However, it decreases again in significance from bar 29 on before disappearing completely from bar 31 on. Analyzing the course of this tone immediately leads to a transection of the proposed macroform; it disrupts the proposed analysis of form, traversing the projected boundaries like a nomad crosses borders.

The obstacles to maintaining clear-cut divisions brings Luisa Curinga to the remarkable conclusion that "probably the best thing would be to perform the piece as a single unbroken discourse, a long fluid phrase in which divisions are instrumental, useful to give the player a mental picture, but to be highlighted the least possible in the performance" (Curinga 2001).

It is on the basis of an ostensibly lost manuscript that it seems legitimate – at least according to Curinga – to consider the piece as an unbroken melodic line. Though her idea is based

[10] In 'Parallel Paths ...', Luisa Curinga shows that in the main analyses of *La flûte de Pan/Syrinx* considerable differences can be found in the formal segmentation, obviously due to different approaches and to completely different analytical methodologies used. Nevertheless, most analysts at least agree that new sections begin after bar 8 and bar 25, thereby arriving at a tripartite division A (bar 1-8) – B (bar 9-24) – A (bar 25-35) (Curinga 2001). Should one consider this a Classical sonata form, consisting of an exposition, development, and recapitulation, the last section would surely strike the eye (ear) the most. During the recapitulation in Classical form, a piece returns to reestablish both the original tonic key as well as the original theme. The materials of the exposition are repeated, but the secondary key must now conform to the protagonist's tonic key area. It is absorbed, its threat to the opening key's identity neutralized (McClary 1991: 69). In the third part of *La flûte de Pan/Syrinx*, the original theme is transformed in such a way that the complementary whole tone scale manifests itself more prominently than before. The threat has become real; the opening key's identity is subverted. No (re)capitulation!

on and informed by the problems that occur when an attempt is made to subsume the capricious course of the melody under a macroformal division, bringing in this recently discovered manuscript displaces the attention again to a paratextual element of Debussy's composition as set down in the score: the breath marks.

5

Fifth in(-)formation. The *Syrinx* score, published by Jean Jobert in 1927, was edited by the eminent flutist, Marcel Moyse. It is most likely that he added the bar lines in order not to frighten amateur flautists who wanted to perform the piece. Perhaps he also inserted some slurs. But the most important change Moyse made was in the number of breath marks.

How do we know this? Research in the early 1990s brought to light a manuscript, signed and dated November 1913, which may be the score from which Louis Fleury played at the December 1913 performance.[11]

The manuscript presents some differences with respect to the Jobert edition, differences regarding dynamics, agogics and breathing, and is therefore very significant in connection with a reading of *La flûte de Pan/Syrinx*. In the manuscript there are only three breath marks: at the end of bar 2 and in the middle of bars 4 and 14, while in the Jobert edition there are as many as seventeen breath marks.[12] The breath marks added by Moyse became conventional, given that all the editions that followed each other over the years (until the one by Ljungar-Chapelon and Stegemann of 1992 which is based on the manuscript instead) follow, at least on this point, the Jobert version. This is perhaps also due to the fact that, as flutist Trevor Wye asserts, Moyse initially refused to allow his name to appear as editor of the piece, declaring that he had only clarified some inconsistencies. This may have induced subsequent editors and flute-players to think that the breath marks of the Jobert version were directly emanating from Debussy himself. Only many years later did Moyse reveal that several breath marks (for example, those at the end of bars 16 and 25) were added by him because of his own personal difficulties (see note 11). In the explanatory notes to 'his' edition, Wye quotes his old teacher Moyse: "I remember Debussy asking me not to breathe here, but I couldn't do it. [...] For me it's not possible." So, though, again according to Moyse, he greatly appreciated the breaths at the end of bars 28 and 29, Debussy disapproved of the 'pause' in bar 25. It appears that Debussy desired a more relaxed, uninterrupted melodic movement, a more fluid and less fragmentary performance. By avoiding this breath mark in bar 25, a continuity in tension is produced between the repeat of the initial motif in bar 26 and the preceding part ('en animant peu à peu'), a tension that is increased by the lengthening of the B flat (Curinga 2001).

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[11] The manuscript, inscribed with cues from Mourey's poem, was located in Brussels in the private collection of Madame Hollanders de Ouderaen and found by Swedish flute player Anders Ljungar-Chapelon and German musicologist Michael Stegemann. However, the handwriting does not resemble the ones found on other Debussy manuscripts, so it probably does not concern the original text here. According to Stegemann, the inclusion of excerpts from the Mourey text, indicating the exact point where the piece should occur within the body of the scene, suggests that the manuscript may be a copy most likely penned down and used by Louis Fleury. The manuscript itself contains lengthwise folds as though it may have been fitted into a flute case. Unfortunately, no documented manuscript in Fleury's handwriting is available to verify his possible authorship (Ewell 2004: 3-4).

[12] Three remarks, all related to the significant difference between the breath marks present in the manuscript and the Jobert edition should be made here. First, in his scores for wind instruments, Debussy did not mark every breath, only those most meaningful musically. The commas in the manuscript may even refer to a purpose other than simply indicating an in-breath. The first comma at the conclusion of the second bar is inscribed together with a *fermata*, most probably articulating the musical significance of the first two measures. The remaining two commas in bar 4 and 14 are placed at points of alteration in rhythmic motives, separating a duple from a triple motive. Second remark: there is an explanation for the almost excessive number of breaths that Moyse indicated: he had a personal breathing problem contracted in his childhood, and so prepared the edition to match his own limitations (Curinga: online). Third, the breath mark at the end of bar 8 in the Jobert edition seems to be quite valid. In the theatrical version, the acting intervenes at precisely this point with the Oread who, without any accompaniment, says her lines "Tais-toi, contiens ta joie, écoute" [Be silent, contain your joy, listen]. There, the music actually breaks off, corresponding to the conclusions of the analysts with regard to the formal divisions. To make a short pause at that point is also confirmed by the double bar in the manuscript.

The performance of the piece as a single unbroken discourse, as advocated by Curinga – a discourse that should only be interrupted by the oread summoning the naiad to silence (after bar 8: see note 11) – thus seems to be lent support by Debussy's preference for long phrases unbroken by breathing.[13]

Are we entering a discussion about Truth? About the genuine intentions of the Author? About authentic and false interpretations? About the necessary quest for origins? Though we should never be exonerated from searching for and examining detailed information and reliable historical sources, the discussion I am taking up here is not immediately translatable to questions about truth, intentions, interpretations, and origins. The question that arises while dwelling upon Debussy's composition, while (re)reading the score and investigating the intertextuality of *La flûte de Pan/Syrinx* is first of all related to the heart of Western thinking, formed by hierarchically ordered binary oppositions. What is questioned here, through analyzing *La flûte de Pan/Syrinx*, is analysis itself, as it has taken shape in the dominant canon of music theory, favoring the visual and the measurable at the expense of unanticipated but relevant bodily experiences. What comes to mind is an excerpt I recently reread in Suzanne Cusick's essay 'Feminist Theory, Music Theory, and the Mind/Body Problem'. In this excerpt, she briefly touches upon a passage from the chorale prelude on *Aus tiefer Not* in Bach's *Clavierübung*, Part III (BWV 686). The most physically challenging moment in this church organ piece, the moment where neither foot nor hand can rest long enough to balance the body, appears at the phrase "Send me the grace my spirit needs". Neither harmonic nor contrapuntal analysis would identify this short passage as critical to the work's meaning. Yet, it is (inaudibly) marked by the performer's body's craving for a place to balance and thereby absolutely meaningful. Cusick concludes that traditional musical analysis often negates the possibility of performers as receivers of meaning: "To deny musical meaning to things only the performers of a work will know implicitly denies that performers are knowers, knowers whose knowledge comes from their bodies and their minds [...]. To deny musical meaning to purely physical, performative things is in effect to transform human performers into machines for the transmission of mind-mind messages between members of a metaphorically disembodied class, and, because disembodied, elite" (Cusick 1998: 48-9).[14]

Breath marks: paratextual elements occurring in the margins of a musical text; supplements, neglected by most theorists, at least as regards *La flûte de Pan/Syrinx*.[15] Neglected because writing on music is (too) often writing on ideas: musico-technical (melodies, harmonies, form), institutional (classical music versus jazz, pop, and 'world music'), historical (Early Music versus Modern Music, Baroque versus Romanticism), dialectical (music characterized as an art in time versus a spatial art); in short, music is usually presented as flowing in a bodiless world. Such a discourse leaves some of music's most profound characteristics untouched: its embodiment, or, better still, the fact that music has something to do with air, with vibrating air, with breath

[13] It should also be remembered that Fleury, the dedicatee of the piece, was famous for his ability to play very long phrases.

[14] It is exactly examples like this one taken down by Cusick that legitimate something like *Practice Based Research* (PBR), the opportunity of a PhD degree afforded to artists. Cusick's description of the activities of 'performers as knowers' precisely opens up a space for interpretation and musical meaning that is usually foreclosed for music theorists and musicologists. More than that, the latter often obstruct this way of analyzing music, pre-occupied as they are with scores instead of performances. It is exactly here that the surplus value of PBR as well as its necessity shows itself. It seems like the 'traditional' analysts are not concerned with the possible repercussions of their work on performances.

[15] The only theorist who writes about them is Jean-Jacques Nattiez in a famous analysis of *Syrinx* in his *Fondements d'une sémiologie de la musique* from 1975. The problem with this analysis, however, is that Nattiez – basing himself on the Jobert edition – calls all the breath marks 'pauses' and asserts they are fundamental for the segmentation of the piece (Nattiez: 340). This segmentation at least seems to contradict Debussy's preferences and the instructions in the manuscript.

Music is the art of breathing.[16] Music is born out of breath, breath that Indian thought calls life (*prana*). Music thus springs from the breath of the living body. Music, in fact, is this living and breathing itself. Breathing therefore deconstructs the border between music and not-yet-music (silence?). Breathing (also) deconstructs the border between sound and silence: breathing is the moment where sound and silence coincide. It is nearly without sound, but it is never soundless, never motionless. What is heard is the birth of music. And how can the birth of music not be part of music, of 'itself'?[17]

6

Sixth in(-)formation.[18] Six times around music, around *La flûte de Pan/Syrinx*. Six times turning merely around it, proceeding along its outskirts, engaging in its surroundings: title, silence, discourse, theater ... and breath marks. Like the others, both outside and inside, neither outside or inside Debussy's composition for solo flute. And, like the others, undoubtedly influencing its meaning.

Breath marks. They appear to be essential for marking the rhythm of the musical speech in that they underline moments of continuity or discontinuity. They (too) determine the unfolding of the (musical) story, creating emphasis on certain elements, marginalizing others. As such, they also reinforce the relation between music and poetry.[19] What before was just a means to construct forms and structure, now becomes an 'essential' feature.

And is it not at this point of arrival, this point where we all turn into Pans, groping around in the vacuous void, confronted with permanent reversals and dislocations, not precisely the (in-)form(ation) of *La flûte de Pan/Syrinx*? This music first of all oscillates between ornamentation – as it accompanies a theater play, a poem – and being ornamented itself – by that same poem or at least by its title. The one informs the other, gives it its proper place, frames it. Second, could we state – impudently and imprudently perhaps – that everything (which means: nothing) 'within' *La flûte de Pan/Syrinx* becomes ornament? The ornaments of the first few bars, the whole tone scale with D flat as the tonal center, seem to become ornamented themselves by that other whole tone scale (with the B flat as its tonal center) at the end of the piece. This music only consists of ornaments, that is, of inessentials, of secondary materials. The one

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[16] In *Between East and West*, Luce Irigaray criticizes the whole Western culture of its *l'oubli du souffle* or 'breath oblivion' and tries to find the way back to a source that is called breath; not a concept of breath, but a practice. Irigaray shows how Westerners remain passive when it comes to breathing. She calls and defends an active way of breathing, a respiration in full consciousness.

[17] So, also from a phenomenological point of departure, one should conclude that *La flûte de Pan/Syrinx* doesn't begin with the A-B interval; it begins with breathing.

[18] Heedful of one of its meanings, I am (perhaps) obliged by now to offer some information about the main title of this essay, a title that consists of a word (or actually several words) that also functions as a mark for the various, quasi-detachable sections presented here.
First of all, this essay in some way or another informs; it gives information, primarily about a composition for solo flute by Claude Debussy but also about several (literary and philosophical) connotations that haunted and inspired me while writing around it and listening to it. Second, however 'open' I would like this essay to be, I am perfectly aware that it also forms, that is, provides structures of talking to/with music; in short, without expending too many words, every writing also disciplines. But this disciplining dimension is never complete, never all-embracing. In the forming informing, something unformed (*in-forme* in French) remains or escapes, a rest, a redundancy, a noise (a rustling reed perhaps?), a supplement: *ce qui reste a force de la musique*.

[19] According to Laurel Astrid Ewell, Debussy appears to correlate poem and music in *La Flûte de Pan/Syrinx* by the incorporation of music whose characteristics illustrate the literal meaning of certain phrases or words: "The resulting interaction between the two entities generates an intensified dramatic presentation in which the music adds to the interpretation and understanding of the poem" (Ewell 2004: 56). As an important example she mentions the breath following the fermata tied to a half-note in bars 24–25 because it articulates the conclusion of a larger compositional process and a section of illustrative music, metaphorical of the poetry. Additionally, the pause after the first B flat in bar 24 also represents the conclusion of the music depicting the four nymphs.
Although I agree with Ewell that Debussy was definitely searching for a music that would match Mourey's poem (his letter from November 17, 1913 seems to prove this as he writes: "So far I have not found what is needed ... because a flute singing on the horizon must contain its emotion all at once! That is, there is no time for repetitions, and exaggerated artificialness will coarsen the expression since the line or melodic pattern cannot rely on any interruption of color. Please tell me, very precisely, after what lines the music starts. After several attempts, I think that one must stick to the Pan flute alone, without any accompaniment. This is more difficult but more [logical – crossed out in the autograph] according to nature."). I'm not sure if her examples are convincing as they seem to contradict the emphasis Debussy gives on long, uninterrupted musical sentences (see above). My alternative, however, to thinking the relation between poem and music will remain here rudimentary, tentative, and circumspect.

for the benefit of the other, continuously changing places, an endless reversal of hierarchies. Third, in *La flûte de Pan/Syrinx*, the art of hinting, indicating, and beckoning is taken to an extreme limit. Instead of long-drawn-out melodies, only some arabesques and decorations emerge, resolving the (Classical and classical) musical syntax, finally arriving at the simple appearance of a single tone.[20] What before was a means to build – a melody, a harmony – now becomes 'the matter itself' (Hirsbrunner, p.197).[21] Fourth, some words should be spent on the aspect of repetition. In his correspondence to Mourey, Debussy writes: "Je veux dire, qu'on a pas le temps de s'y reprendre." There is no time to propose repetitions, which is of course a limitation, a 'containment'; the piece can be nothing else but short, being constrained by the temporal margins set by the poetic text (Curinga 2001). And yet, one only has to listen superficially or glance at the score to experience a profusion of (varied) repetitions, both melodically and rhythmically. (In footnote 9, I already indicated that the opening motif B flat-A-B is repeated 7 times.) What Debussy was denied on a macro scale infiltrates the piece on a micro level. The piece is a recurrence in itself, constantly resuming certain motifs, often proposing new sequels, quenched in one breath. However, as Debussy preferred *La flûte de Pan/Syrinx* as a (more or less) single unbroken discourse, the repetitions cannot simply be considered renewed beginnings, new onsets, fresh starts. His preference for long-breathing phrases lets every recurrence appear as a non-equal equality: with the absence of (intended) breathing spaces, its differences, its transformations, its developments are emphasized. Appearing in a different context, appearing in a context already permeated by 'repetitions', the repeated motifs also emerge 'for the first time'.[22] They sound in a space between repetition and difference, between identity and alteration. On one hand, a certain self-identity is required to permit recognition and repetition. Certain consistencies must be maintained in order for a motif to be identifiable as a motif. On the other hand and at the same time, the possibility of repetition never permits a certain musical motif to be a unity identical to itself. Because its context is always different, it is never absolutely the same: "repeated, the same line is no longer exactly the same," Derrida writes (Derrida 1978: 296). Alteration is always already at work within the inner core of the motif when the identical is repeated.

Binary logic, thinking in hierarchical relations and clear opposites, and logocentrism break down in and on *La flûte de Pan/Syrinx*. Deconstruction. Deconstruction in music.

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Hors d'oeuvre. In Plato's *Symposium*, Eryximachus dismisses the (female) flute-player so that he can have a profound conversation with his (male) guests. After all, the 'voice of the flute' – a non-discursive sonority – drowns out the voice of the Logos, of a logocentrism characterized by clear-cut, hierarchically organized, oppositions. The flute impairs the ethical powers and causes one to lose oneself in an orgiastic flush. In the desire for transparency, sound (music) disturbs the relative quiet in which Eryximachus and his friends want to think or philosophize. The flute produces (mimics) a human voice without logos, and the moment a

[20] "Thanks to the arabesque, which has an open structure and derives from a decorative, ornamental and figurative conception, that of *Jugendstil*, music can overcome the mechanical stiffness and achieve that 'free' art, the result of the spiritual correspondence between art and nature, at which the French composer aimed" (Curinga: online).

[21] More in general one could state that the articulative modes of expressing meaning of the Classical musical syntax – the elements of sentence, period, and hybrid – are significantly modified in the (later) works of Debussy through his use of modal-chromatic language and persistent preference for asymmetrical and open-ended phrase structures, marked with half-cadences. Debussy's musical gestures suggest new interpretations of formal function and expressive import.

[22] Derrida speaks in this respect about iteration or iterability (the *possibility* of iteration). The stem 'iter' means 'again'. But, at the same time, Derrida suggests that this word 'iter' comes from the Sanskrit word 'itara', meaning 'other'. Along this line, we enter a paradoxical logic that ties repetition to alterity.

human voice is without logos it becomes demonic and abysmal; it emanates a heterogeneous power.

Logocentrism, on the contrary, has no sound. Its voice is silent; it is not acoustic, it has no spatiality.[23] Logocentrism can, otherwise, be understood as the repression of the corporeality of sounds; it is an oppression of music, of breathing, of the non-formed or *informe*. Indeed, all this has a disruptive effect on the ideality, the unambiguousness of meaning.[24] There is no room for sonority, a sonority that mainly excludes Logos as it interferes with the ideality of the intended (homogeneous, transparent) meaning (*vouloir dire*).

By accommodating the phenomenal aspect of sound (of sounds simultaneously outside and inside the realm of music), Debussy's work gives a voice to the unsaid, the heterogeneous, the *informe*. *La flûte de Pan/Syrinx* gives deconstruction a real voice. The flute is welcomed and has something to say: it speaks of the unspeakable. As it interrupts many familiarities, it speaks disorderly, 'out of tune'. Do we allow ourselves to become seduced by its voice like the anonymous river nymph, or are we still descendants of Eryximachus? In either case: beware of the consequences!

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[23] Rarely have philosophers made themselves known as sound enthusiasts. In addition to Plato, others have condemned music and/or sound. "*Danger in the voice.* Sometimes in conversation the sound of our own voice confuses us and misleads us to assertions that do not at all reflect our opinion," Nietzsche writes in *Human, All Too Human* (aphorism 333).
In this respect, I would also like to refer to a poem by John Keats: 'Ode on a Grecian Urn'.
Depicting the figures on an old vase, the beginning of the second strophe seems to refer to the picture of a musician or a music instrument: "Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard are sweeter; therefore, ye soft pipes, play on; not to the sensual ear, but, more endear'd, pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone." Keats' noble thought that the silence of a flute (player) is great because it allows for so many different sounds, an inexhaustible source of new compositions, seems deceitful to me. If an inaudible reference to music is preferred above the actual sounding of an instrument or voice, music is silenced. Confined to the subject's interiority, innocuous to the ear and the rest of the body, music is refused, because it might disrupt the perfect sounds of the mind. (Is Keats approaching Plato here?)

[24] See for a more extensive and intensive discussion of this topic Byung-Chul Han's essay 'Derrida's Ohr' (in: *Musik & Ästhetik,* Heft 4. Stuttgart, 1997) and my online dissertation (Cobussen 2002: section 'Derrida's Ear').

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Critical Questions About Deconstruction or About De-Centring Of The Relation Between Philosophy And Music

Kritična vprašanja o dekonstrukciji ali O razsrediščanju razmerja med filozofijo in glasbo

Ključne besede: dekonstrukcija, glasba, muzikologija, filozofija, estetika, *difference*, pravia do filozofije, pravica do glasbe, kanon

Keywords: Deconstruction, Music, Musicology, Philosophy, Aesthetics, *Différance*, Right to philosophy, *Right* to music, Canon

POVZETEK

Povsem različna prizadevanja problematiziranja kanoničnega poziioniranja glasbe, muzikologije, estetike in filozofije skozi samo-umevanje *dela-kot-vira hoc et tunc* je peljalo h kritiziranju dekonstrukcije 'samo-umevanja' in 'objektivne avtonomije' glasbe kot umetnosti in glasbenega dela kot nosilca ali osrediščenega vira glasbe kot umetnosti. Te redke pristope je mogoče določiti pri Adornovi kontekstualizaciji kritične teorije, razvijanju teorije izmenjave pri Jacquesu Attaliju in kritikah Nove muzikologije, usmerjenih k študiju kulture, kot so ga podali Richard Leppert, Susan McClary ali Rose Rosengard Subotnik, ki poudarjajo avtonomijo glasbe in jih je mogoče prepoznati v psihoanalitski teoretizaciji materialistične funkcije/učinka glasbe in opera, denimo pri Mladenu Dolarju in Slavoju Žižku. Po nauku dekonstrukcije filozofa Jacquesa Derridaja so posredno ali neposredno izpeljani povsem različni pristopi in aplikacije, ki zadevajo hibridna in pluralna dejanja interpretiranja kanon-

ABSTRACT

Entirely dissimilar endeavours of problematizing a canonic positioning of music, musicology, aesthetics and philosophy through self-comprehensiveness of a *piece-as-a-source hoc et tunc*, have led to criticism or deconstruction of 'self-comprehensiveness' and 'objective autonomy' of music as an art, and of a music piece as a carrier or a centred source of music as an art. Those scarce approaches can be specified from Adorno's contextualization in critical theory, Jacques Attali's developing the theory of exchange, to the New Musicology critiques oriented towards studies of culture, such as those of Richard Leppert, Susan McClary or Rose Rosengard Subotnik, which emphasize autonomy of music, or can be recognized in the psychoanalytical theorization of materialistic functions/effects of music and opera, such as of Mladen Dolar and Slavoj Žižek. From the teachings on deconstruction of the philosopher Jacques Derrida, directly or indirectly entirely different approaches and applica-

ičnih pozicij glasbe, muzikologije, estetike in filozofije.
V nadaljnjevanju se ukvarjam z identificiranjem in interpretiranjem problemsko zasnovanega pristopa h kanoničnim razmerjem med glasbo, muzikologijo, estetiko in filozofijo.

tions are drawn, concerning hybrid and plural acts of interpretation of the canonic positioning of music, musicology, aesthetics and philosophy.
In the further text I shall dwell on identifying and interpreting of a problem-oriented approach to the canonic relation of music, musicology, aesthetics and philosophy.

A problem and performing a problem

An entirely traditional and therefore stabile relationship between philosophy and music has been established in the European cultural tradition, from Hanslik, then Schenker and Adler, Busoni, Janklevich or Focht, almost to our days. This relationship is based on aesthetical and musicological centring of a musical piece as a determining sensual source in the midst of an autonomous and self-comprehensible – yet always anticipating – context of the Western music art. A canonic relation of a quadrangle: music, aesthetics, musicology and philosophy, is certainly founded in, one could say, phenomenological emphasizing of objectivism (Lippman 1992: 393-436) of a musical piece – e.g. as in the famous statement of Eduard Hanslick:

> Music consists of scalar and other figures and shapes composed of notes, and these have no other content but themselves, again recalling architecture and dance, both of which similarly present us with pleasing relationships that have no definite content. Everyone is free to experience and describe the effect of composition in his own individual way; but the actual content of the work is nothing but musical shapes, since music does not simply speak by means of notes; it also consists of nothing else but notes. (Hanslick, quoted from Bujić 1988: 34.)

Or, as in a poetically projected performance of a modernistic vision of *music as music,* by Ferruccio Busoni:

> music is music, in and for itself, and nothing else, and [...] it is not split into classes (Busoni 1965: 21).

Or, as in a philosophically self-annulling relation of knowledge in the name of uncontrolled fascination with music, by Vladimir Jankelevich:

> Let's conclude: music is not beyond law, nor is it spared from limitations and dependence which are inseparable from a human position in the world, and if ethical nature of music is a verbal illusion, the metaphysical nature of music is very close to being but a rhetoric figure. (Jankelevič 1987: 40.)

Entirely dissimilar endeavours towards problematizing a canonic positioning of music, musicology, aesthetics and philosophy through self-comprehensiveness of a *piece-as-a-source hoc et tunc*, have led to criticism or deconstruction of 'self-comprehensiveness' and 'objective autonomy' of music as an art, and of a music piece as a carrier or a centred source of music as an art. Those scarce approaches can be specified from Adorno's contextualization in critical theory (Adorno 1968), Jacques Attali's developing the theory of exchange (Attali 1985), to the new-musicology critiques oriented towards studies of culture, such as those of Richard Leppert, Susan McClary (Leppert / McClary 1987) or Rose Rosengard Subotnik (Subotnik 1991), which emphasize autonomy of music, or can be recognized in the psychoanalytical theorization of materialistic functions/effects of music and opera, such as those of Mladen Dolar and Slavoj Žižek (Dolar / Žižek 2002). From some teachings on deconstruction (Subotnik 1996; Hofman 1997: 11-17; Mikić 2005: 113-117; Cobussen 2002) of the philosopher Jacques Derrida, directly or indirectly entirely different approaches and applications are drawn, concerning hybrid and plural acts of interpretation of the canonic positioning of music, musicology, aesthetics and philosophy.

In the further text I shall dwell on identifying and interpreting a problem-oriented approach to the canonic relation of music, musicology, aesthetics and philosophy.

An inherited fashion/procedure

We always depart from the found – the inherited. I am / we are already caught in the world/language which existed before me or us. In this found-ness a fatale and promising *always* is performed, which is non-existent outside the individual intervening act of *différAnce* on the found fragments of the actuality: to be caught among traces whose edges aren't sharp, whose surface is not quite transparent, and whose presence is disturbingly uncertain. If a deconstruction exists everywhere, wrote Derrida, *it* exists as well, wherever there is something[1]; so, there's nothing left for us to do but to think what is happening in our world today, in our contemporaneity, when deconstruction is becoming a motive with its meanings, its privileged themes, its mobile strategy etc.!? Derrida couldn't give a simple answer to this question, an answer that would formalize it all. All his attempts may be explicated by this extraordinary question and the uncertainty which initiates this question of an époque of a *being-in-deconstruction.*

There was, though, one privileged moment for the deconstruction, when *it* was in fashion, which means that *it* produced uncertainty, *it* was open to interpolations and prone to transfiguration of *atmospheres* of intervenient performing in different hybrid contexts of society, primarily of culture, in fact of art. Deconstruction was a kind of a flourishing fashion or a set of fashions between theoretical post-historicism and political globalism. Therefore there are greatly different interpretations of deconstruction. Jacques Derrida operated with this term in various situations, or simultaneously in different ways disturbing its defining with potentialities of interpretations: "One of the main roles of what in my texts is called 'deconstruction' is exactly

[1] *It* is not limited to only a thought or a text, in a casual or a literary sense of the last word.

the limiting of ontology, and in the first place of this the present indicative of the third person *S is P*" (Derrida 1988: 1-5). Avoiding a precise definition of deconstruction is performed for two reasons: (1) deconstruction can be interpreted as a form of translation (transferring, decentring, exchange, substitute) of language and textual representations of the concepts of Western metaphysical ontology, in which way it (ontology) also transforms in a conceptual way, or gets *différAnced* or disassembled through representation and the offer of different textual advocacies of thinking and writing, and (2) deconstruction is not explicitly an explanatory model of a philosophical discourse, but it is also an accelerated productive (quasi-epistemological) model of practices which constitute worlds of philosophy, theory of literature and art history, partly taking over the functions of productive social work, whose outputs are not only explanatory-epistemological, but also aesthetical, literary, behavioural, i.e. culturally intervenient. Deconstruction is argued as practices of intervention within the Western philosophical rhetoric, and as productive offers of new or different rhetorics. Derrida has explicitly set the interventionism of deconstruction: "Deconstruction, I have insisted on this, is not *neutral*. It *intervenes*" (Derida 1993: 87). Characterization of deconstruction is establishing relations of rhetoric and aesthetic outputs of performing of the writing and the text, within the complex contexts of representing and *différAnce* of the traces of other writings/texts. Derrida wrote that deconstructing presents a simultaneous structuralistic and anti-structuralistic act (behaviour, performing, practice, action, intervention). It displays hybridity and ambivalence of every cultural order in its arbitrariness and the motivations for arbitrariness. When an order in its self fragmentises, decomposes, relocates in a trans-figural way, divides into layers, decentres, marginalizes, hegemonizes, centres, homogenizes, in other words when it disassembles, differentiates and deposits – then an order displays laws (presuppositions, hypothesis, regularities) and an atmosphere of an order as a complex archaeology of alluvia and strata of cultural synchronic and diachronic meaning. In that sense, deconstruction is the philosophy of *alluvia* or *strata* of meaning, but as well a philosophy which concerns layers of traces resisting to meaning:

> But the paradox, as far as the effects of the deconstructive jetty are concerned, is that it has simultaneously provoked in the last twentieth years several absolutely heterogeneous types of 'resistance to theory'. In trying to classify their 'ideal types' I will try to conceptualize both what 'theory' means in that context and what is here the strange and disconcerting logic of resistance.
> There is to begin with, I would say, the *destabilizing* and *devastating* jetty itself, a 'resistance to theory'. It is a resistance which produces theory and theories. It resists theorization *first* because it functions in a place which the jetty questions, and destabilizes the conditions of the possibility of objectivity, relationship to the *object*, everything that constitutes and institutes the assurance of *subjectivity* in the indubitable presence of the *cogito*, the certainty of self-consciousness, the original project, the relation to the other determined as ecological inter-subjectivity, the principle of reason and the system of representation associated with it, and hence everything that supports a modern concept of theory as objectivity. Deconstruction resists theory then because it demonstrates the impossibility of closure, of the closure of an ensemble or totality on an organized network of theorems, laws, rules and methods. (Derrida 1994: 85-86.)

Texts which can be classified under the term 'deconstruction' do not only have a task to bring a new understanding of order and its decomposition or reconstruction on the base of traces of decomposition or relocating, but also –performatively and interveniently – to demon-

strate the manner of disintegration and integration of writing of the Western metaphysics, by which texts enter a problem of the basic form of writing, more basic than the philosophic writing: writing in literature or writing as art. Deconstruction obtains characteristics of a post-philosophical activity, though it does not renounce philosophy as an open field of certain rights. Derrida very decisively speaks of the right to philosophy (Derrida 1993: 62-65) though he disproves the seemingly *natural* permeating of philosophy and science, problematizing the non-self-understood *naturalness* of an episteme by releasing textual potentials of literary and any other artistic writing.

Let us focus on a transition from a verbal writing (*écriture*) to an auditory (acoustic and, then, musical) system of writing (a *sound* and then a *music image as writing*). In the premises of deconstruction, potential analogies of the writing and the musical can be noticed. Presupposing an auditory and, later, a music-image as a field of confrontation of texts of different character, a deconstructivist debate: (1) locates a network discourses which are different, and which appear in an audible record, and (2) interrupts normalized signifying (linguistic) economies, displaying how meanings become constituted and transformed, producing *différAncies* (structural and temporal relations). In deconstruction the illusion is problematized, of a self-comprehensible, metaphysical or nominalistic determination of hybrid relations of the signifier and the signified of an acoustic and, then, a musical image and of music as practice. As a matter of fact, through a deconstruction of a compatible team of philosophy, aesthetics, musicology and music, we cease to protect music from the world. We violate its specificity, i.e. we deconstruct the epistemology of *music itself*, in the name of external epistemologies of music, being concerned at the same time not to lose the 'power' of understanding music through its real or potential structural order. This position of obvious transgression and concern, with all potential contradictions, was provoked by Rose Rosengard Subotnik, who brought us back to confrontation of 'external' and 'internal' discussing of music:

> All of us who study music are caught in the Western dialectic. To an extent, all of us in the West who study anything are caught in that dialectic. Against the values we can protect by insulating abstract modes of thinking from the contingencies of concrete experience, we have to measure the risk, well symbolized by Schoenberg's paradoxical career, of coarsening through over-refinement our sensitivity to other responsibilities of knowledge. But music offers a special opportunity to learn, for it confronts us always with the actuality of a medium that remains stubbornly to strategies of abstract reduction. In this respect, it provides an ideal laboratory for testing the formalistic claims of any knowledge against the limits of history and experience. To ignore such opportunity is to handicap musical study needlessly, and to consign music itself to a status of social irrelevancy that it does not deserve. (Subotnik 1996: 175-76.)

Which stands quite close to the Derrida's constantly developed belief that renouncement of metaphysics is impossible, that it is only deconstruction which is possible, of the relation between the centre and the margin in regard to the prevailing and hegemonic metaphysics which enables us to systematize knowledge, values, even the anticipated expressions through tactics of *différAnce*. In philosophy, aesthetics of music and musicology, the deconstructivistic quest for differences of textual (and with them analogous visual, acoustic, spatial, temporal) aspects and characterizations of an auditory and then music image, becomes a discursive production of meanings, i.e. a production of 'differences' and '*différAnces*' which are consequences of the confrontation of complex and arbitrary, culturally led discourses of Western

music (metaphysics of a musical piece as a constituent of music art). Let us inspect a characteristic case: John Zorn's composition *Spillane* (for a mixed orchestra, after a text by Arto Lindsay, 1987, duration 25:12). Zorn is 'inspired' by a film-performed character of the private detective Mickey Spillane. But his inspiration is based not on his inner impression of the one who precedes music, but on an analytic archive of the traces of culture which enable anticipation of a concept of the detective's character as a source of *inspiration* for music. Zorn writes:

> Because I write in moments, in disparate sound blocks, I sometimes find it convenient to store these 'events' on filing cards so they can be sorted and ordered with minimum effort. After choosing a subject, in this case the work of Mickey Spillane, I research it in detail: I read books and articles, look at films, TV shows, and photo files, listen to related recordings, etc. Then, drawing upon all of these sources, I write down individual ideas and images on filing cards.
> For this piece, each card relates to some aspect of Spillane's work, his world, his characters, his ideology. (...) Sorting the filing cards, putting them in the perfect order, is one of the toughest jobs and it usually takes months. Picking the right band is essential because often just one person can make or break a piece. (Zorn 1987.)

What are the *filing cards* of Zorn's and what is their relation to the *sound blocks*? According to the early works (Derrida 2002) of Jacques Derrida, it is possible to distinguish a relation of a *trace* or an *erased trace* or a *preceding trace* in the locus of a subjective experience of a composer. As if a composer sees himself on the *scene of writing* which precedes an experience itself, being a set of selected and moved traces which promise a drama of writing, performing and listening to music which appears after the film, i.e. from the film as an erased and thus of a *différAnce*:

> The trace is the erasure of selfhood, of one's own presence, and is constituted by the threat or anguish of its irremediable disappearance, of the disappearance of its disappearance. An unerasable trace is not a trace, it is full presence, an immobile and uncorruptible substance, a son of God, a sign of parousia and not a seed, that is, a mortal germ. (Derrida 2002: 289.)

A film, photographic, verbally-narrative, journal character of detective Spillane disappears in Zorn's music. This disappearance is not total disappearance, but erasing by moving, where crossing from one medium into another causes a listener to become a kind of archaeologist rather than a phenomenologist. To reconstruct traces, connect them into a momentary and apparent whole. To walk through a character who is transferred from verbal descriptions or visual presentations of a figure into a music course of hybrid sounds.

Asymmetry of the right to philosophy and the right to music

Definitely, here will be discussed what is missing, what is already lost, and what seams entirely impossible, or, unnecessary. Music misses philosophy – *it* is sung and played without words that seek justification in thoughts about presence and existence (*being*). The 'playable' or 'singable' music creates an illusion that it doesn't need philosophy, that it exists as a joyful or sad event (of performing) of the music itself in space and time of a human body. As an

'essential' activity within the philosophical, music was lost for philosophy even before Socrates and Plato, in that horrific, alienating and traumatic post-Pythagorean partition of myth, man and universe, from which the culture of the West originated. Music lacks a 'voice' which becomes 'theoretical speech'. Music lacks a 'voice' which would state its rights to what stays outside music (emotions, nature, humanity, sexuality, politics, religion, everyday life), and philosophy lacks what the voice of utilitarian speech (linguistically centred presentation of thoughts by speaking and writing) fails to provide to an *ornamental* (decorative) singing voice that still needs to become music[2]. The fatal discrepancy of philosophy and music, or, fatal attraction of music and philosophy, is clearly demonstrated by the pianist Glenn Gould in his numerous versions of striving to confront a hypothetical and ever synthetic 'will' of a composer (Bach, Mozart; Gould 1990: 22-28 and 32-43) with an intervenient and ever analytical 'intention' of a performer (pianist). Those two incompatible *texts* have become a problem for him: a border line of confrontation with a border line of textual hypothesis which promise an abundance of human experience, and, what is even more important, of transferability of human experience through music performance which becomes an act of constructing on the voids of the absence of a composer and the ephemeral presence of a pianist.

Why should one create problems *hic et nunc,* and wonder about a hypothetic deficient right of music to philosophy, and an absolutely possible, yet remote, alienated right of philosophy to music? The response is simple, almost infantile: *a man is not a bee* (Derrida 1993: 87). Relations of music (art) and philosophy (theory) are not just there, without me or us who are in a certain local time and space of knowledge or ignorance within or outside music and philosophy. Relations between music and philosophy are set and displayed 'via' an iterative activating of local knowledge which needs to:

(i) Be carried out from music into the field of social theories (as well as of philosophy) in order for the music technique to display itself in relation to concept, ideology or just to intuitions which are its unavoidable surrounding; and

(ii) Provoke from philosophy – focused on a certain 'broad' field of generality (of entirely obvious speculative systemic hierarchies of interpretation and debate) – some uncertainties of particular localizations of music which are incomparable to other arts, formations or effects of culture, that is – philosophy activates from its generality, systemic nature and universality, potential of *local knowledge* from the field of music which appears vis-à-vis its promised hierarchical edifice of sense, meaning and values.

And as in the tradition of modernism (ideal of autonomy of disciplines), asymmetry of the right of music to philosophy and the right of philosophy to music appeared as a determining argument for understanding how unnecessary a discussion on the relation of music and philosophy was, today the heterogeneous views on local potentials or non-potentials of that relation identify the problem of asymmetry as a departing point for a discussion. The core reason is activating of local knowledge which builds a heterogeneous *field of differences* and which produces an effect of asymmetry of the right of music to philosophy and the right of philosophy to music.

Let us consider those questions of the right and asymmetry once again.

A 'rough' and 'coarse' question of interrelating of music and philosophy is posed, considering approaches which lead or resist leading from music towards philosophy and from philosophy towards music. It is an asymmetric relation through which two entirely different rights are being realized and thus two entirely different authorities being established:

[2] To become an instrumental sound, i.e. *music of music* in its autonomous sense: *absolute music.*

(a) The right of philosophy – by its interpretative and speculative capacities – to present and represent music for philosophic knowledge and every other possible knowledge of sciences;
(b) The right of music – by its particular musical means – to stand in relation to the texts of culture which externally provide its musical and extra-musical sense, meanings and values as a particular 'social event'.

To speak of asymmetric rights of philosophy to music and of music to philosophy, does not mean to project a unique 'joint' (contact, stitch, seam) between philosophy and music, but to take interest and engage in:

(i) Philosophy of music when music itself is immediately absent from its discursive presence, and
(ii) Music '*of*' philosophy when philosophy is immediately absent from, for example, its exclusively instrumental (absolute music) presence as an event of tones.

We mean to say by this that a philosophical discourse about music does not require the presence of music, not even a memory of concrete music (of any particular piece of music). Philosophy can speak about music constituted from a philosophical hypothesis (conceptual model, abstract experiment, speculative constructions of a music piece, world of music and a system /style/ of music). Philosophy is in some way critical concerned with music, the musical or the art, though it has no concrete references to such-and-such music. *It* creates a concept of music (it wonders about it "What is music?" or "What is music for?"). Philosophy is established exactly through such questions as "What is music?" or "What is music for?": (i) philosophy wonders about music by means of philosophical constructs of an intentional concept of music, (ii) philosophy wonders about music by means of specific sciences or theories of music, and (iii) philosophy wonders about music in order – indirectly, in a 'relation of interchange' – to pose the questions "What is philosophy?" or "What is philosophy for?". On the other hand, music does not need to manifest in its auditory phenomenon and presence during the performing (or in a note writing of a sound order) that 'it' is of certain relations with philosophical suppositions (metaphorically speaking – with discursive *substances*) in order to claim uncertain right to philosophy. Music does not pose such questions as "What is philosophy?" or "What is philosophy for?". It does not inquire by musical or philosophical means within music (musical piece) "What is music?" or "What is music for?". Music creates an illusion that it is just music and that therefore it makes redundant all possible questions about music, philosophy or the world (nature and culture). But that is, actually, a stand which has its historical and local geographical reason. That is not an answer applicable to all historical and geographical music. On contrary! Music is the only art that, if we consider the history of European civilization, in the very beginning was philosophy (birth of music and philosophy from the Pythagorean cosmogonies, i.e. from myth and ritual). In the Middle Ages music was constituted as a science – the term 'music' signified the science of harmony. The 'birth' of modernity has simultaneously separated music as a skill of singing and playing from a scientific knowledge about music or the universe. Afterwards, music was established as an art, constituted as a relation of institutions of creation (music as an art of invention /composing/ and performing) and of institutions of displaying (systematizing, formalizing and interpreting).

This story from the side of philosophy looks somewhat different. Philosophy poses a question of its right to music in order to speak, in the first place, about the right to philosophy itself (philosophy is a single object of any philosophy – which means of advocating any individual knowledge for the thought about the general). It is only afterwards, indirectly from the discourse about philosophy and philosophy of music, that philosophy approaches music in its

hypothetical or historical sense. Philosophy speaks about what is outside philosophy in order to question and constitute what is inside it, but then, paradoxically, what it speaks about, however, is of philosophy, because prior to any question about philosophy being posed from philosophy, for the subject of philosophical disciplines it already exists as philosophy. This last statement is made in the sense in which Jacques Lacan claims that language exists before the subject crosses its threshold (Lakan 1983: 151). Music does not pose a question of its right to philosophy; it even apparently seems as if it conceals this right. For the sense of listening and for the body, music displays what is exclusively musical. For the possibility (motivation) of a discourse external to music to be constituted by music itself, it is necessary that the musical alone confronts the texts of philosophy, and then subsequently, through itself, to confront other texts of culture (to be in the field of inter-textual potentials). For, texts of culture are something existent prior to music and prior to philosophy in constructing one 'intimate' atmosphere where, in an utterly artificial way, both philosophy and music appear as separate worlds which have certain utterly different (asymmetric) rights. Therefore, resistance manifested by music towards philosophy, which demonstrates, *beyond* classical style, its particularity (autonomy, unspeakable-ness, absoluteness, objectivity), is not rejecting the right of music to philosophy. In the modern times music itself by its inner formally-technical structure rejects and prevents music as an art from being a function (or, more precisely, an auditory or sound illustration) of philosophy in a way it used to be a function or an illustration (from utilitarian to advocating, and from advocating to allegorical) of nature and the mythic in antique civilization, or of theology in the Christian epoch. Therefore, a critical right of philosophy (it is critical because it takes place on the very edge of the blade of a potentiality of *différAnce*) and the uncertain right of music (it is uncertain because it displays itself as a multiplicity of fragmentary and local potentialities in constituting one and the same piece as a religious, political, entertaining or autonomous artistic music) are not set and given rights once for all, conquered by philosophy or by music, they are changeable (in motion, mobile) rights which depend upon moving along the historical (stylistic, contextual) and geographical (contextual, functional) axes of potentialities.

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Music in the Thought of Deconstruction / Deconstruction in the Thought of Music (For Joseph Dubiel)

Glasba v misli dekonstrukcije ali Dekonstrukcija v muzikologiji (Josephu Dubielu)

It has been observed, particularly in birds, that the precision of hearing is in direct proportion to the obliqueness of the tympanum. (Jacques Derrida, *Margins of Philsophy*, xv)

Ključne besede: dekonstrukcija, poststrukturalizem, metafizika, romantizem, Kant, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Adorno, Derrida, resonanca, *différance, Mehrdeutlichkeit*, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Cage, Babbitt, Lachenmann, Andriessen, Ligeti, analiza glasbe, poslušanje

Keywords: Deconstruction, post-structuralism, metaphysics, romanticism, Kant, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Adorno, Derrida, resonance, *différance, Mehrdeutlichkeit*, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Cage, Babbitt, Lachenmann, Andriessen, Ligeti, music analysis, listening

POVZETEK

Članek kritično pretresa vozlišča podobnosti in različnosti, po eni plati, muzikološke spise in glasbene prakse, ki jih predstavljajo, in, po drugi plati, postopke dekonstrukcije (opredeljene v smislu razlikovalne strukture našega obvladovanja prisotnosti in obilja). Besedilo prinaša dve prominentni napačni razlagi derridajevske dekonstrukcije v okvir pisanja o glasbi (Subotnik, Korsyn). Sledi kratek opis svojske skladnosti glasbe z Derridajevim modelom jezika – argument, ki je razpet nad poljem zgodovine sodobne filozofije (prek Kanta, Schopenhauerja, Nietzscheja, Adorna). Sklepni del članka se ukvarja z vprašanjem, kako se notranji tok glasbenih del (ne) prilegajo dekonstrukciji; proces, ki podaja dekonstrukcijo kot način *poslušanja*. Primeri vključujejo dela Mozarta, Beethovna, Schuberta, Babbitta, Cagea, Ligetija, Lachenmanna in drugih.

ABSTRACT

This article critically speculates on points of affinity and difference between, on the one hand, musicological writings and the musical practices they attempt to represent and, on the other, the operation of deconstruction (defined in terms of the differential structure of our grip on presence and plenitude). The article outlines two prominent instances of misreading Derridean deconstruction in the context of musical writing (Subotnik, Korsyn). This is followed by a brief description of music's peculiar resonance with Derrida's model of language; an argument that will be crafted across the terrain of music's modern philosophical history (via Kant, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Adorno). The last section of the essay considers how the internal movements of actual musical pieces can (and cannot) articulate with deconstruction; a process that will figure deconstruction as mode of *listen*ing. Examples include moments in Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Babbitt, Cage, Ligeti, Lachenmann, and others.

1. Prelude to an Idealization

> For what is put into question is precisely the quest for a rightful beginning, an absolute point of departure, a principal responsibility. (Derrida 1982: 6)

The musicological reception of the philosophical figure of deconstruction has been belated, paradoxical and short-lived. It is true that silences, contradictions and gaps in musicological discourse (especially those that have been structurally excluded from it) speak more prominently today than they once did, but this general shift rarely registers the precise workings of deconstruction. Instead the shift of attention reflects a general "post-structuralist" turn in America in the late twentieth century, which resonates with the demands of multicultural relativism in a time of changing American demographics. Hence, under the general rubric of deconstruction, we find musicological inquiries that value demonstrations of interpretative pluralism, foreground unique subject positions, critique meta-narratives, and so on. Deconstruction thus tends to be associated with everything from mediation analysis and cultural relativism to epistemological imperfection and contra-normative structures. Without wishing to dismiss the progressive tendencies of such inquiry, this essay will argue that much of the play of deconstruction in musicological parlance is based on a misreading of the term.

Of course, the charge of misreading is foolishly in danger of presupposing the "proper" coordinates of the deconstructive maneuver, as if these can be *aprioristically* established. In his reflections on the relevance of philosophical limits, Derrida, whose prose is consistently elusive, elliptical and mischievous, warns against the appropriative dimensions of such commitment to *le sense propre*:

> To insist upon thinking its other: its proper other, the proper of its other, an other proper? In thinking it as such, in recognizing it, one misses it. One reappropriates it for oneself, one disposes of it, one misses it, or rather one misses (the) missing (of) it, which, as concerns the other, always amounts to the same (Derrida 1982: xi).

Here Derrida associates "the proper" with both literal correctness and legal ownership, thereby playfully suggesting how, in its attempt to correctly locate its own limits, philosophical thought unknowingly annexes and controls its margins. Beyond the philosophical text, for Derrida, "there is not a blank virgin, empty margin, but another text, a weave of differences of forces without any present center of reference" (Derrida 1982: xxiii). Where *Margins of Philosophy* concerns itself with opening philosophy to its unguessed-at dimensions ("an inexhaustible reserve, the stereographic activity of an entirely other ear"), my insistence on the proper reading of deconstruction hopes paradoxically to constrain its field of operation (Derrida 1982: xxiii). On the other hand, by launching my inquiry from the vantage point of a narrow, and idealized, understanding of deconstruction, I hope to salvage some specificity for this increasingly vacuous theoretical construct, which in its widespread circulation has come to mean anything from critical overturning to diagnostic analysis.

Deconstruction marks the differential structure of our grip on presence and plenitude. Derrida invents the term *différance* to capture the peculiarities of this differentiating operation in language. Instead of serving to distinguish/divide an organic unity with stable referents, *différance* draws attention to the activity producing difference within the sign itself – "the non-full, non-simple, structured and differentiating origin of differences" (Derrida 1982: 11). The

incorrectly spelled term *différance* is precariously suspended between two distinct modes of difference production; that is, *différance* at once *defers* and *differs*. On the one hand, differences are produced by way of a detour or a delay – a mediation that suspends the fulfillment of the conceptual desire for closure. Hence, supplementary criteria, outside of its spatial and temporal immediacy, become basic to the concept under investigation. On the other hand, differences are produced by way of non-identity – an intimate other that haunts the security of the concept. Hence, the opposition engendered by a concept turns out to be more basic to its functioning than either of its poles in themselves.

Consider, for example, Ernesto Laclau's deconstruction of the political concept of *toleration*: Laclau's analysis begins by stripping away the term's practical contexts and then shuttles between the duality produced by the operation of differing and deferring.[1] On the one hand, if toleration – to accept practices and beliefs one finds morally disagreeable – is understood as a self-sufficient category without limit, one could logically accept its intimate opposite. Here absolute toleration could paradoxically institute a wholly intolerant society. On the other hand, if toleration is mediated by supplementary criteria – a moral principle that would limit the contradictory emergence of intolerance, say – the term risks becoming meaningless; it risks becoming structurally dependent on terms independent of it. Here unfettered moral criteria could paradoxically parade as toleration. Deconstruction, by marking the contradictory antipodes of a term's logical horizon, opens the possibility of negotiating its antagonistic demands. Deconstruction demonstrates the term's fundamental lack of a necessary content, and thereby reveals its undecidable conditions of possibility and impossibility.

It is in the context of this narrowly idealized construal of deconstruction that this essay critically speculates on points of affinity and difference between musicological writings and the musical practices they attempt to represent, on the one hand, and the operation of deconstruction, on the other. The essay will begin with a description of two prominent instances of misreading Derridean deconstruction in the context of music. This will be followed by a brief description of music's peculiar resonance with Derrida's model of language; an argument that will be crafted across the terrain of music's modern philosophical history. The last section of the essay will briefly consider a sampling of how the internal movements of actual musical pieces can (and cannot) articulate with deconstruction; a process that will figure deconstruction as mode of *listen*ing.

2. Critique

> Whereas ... language arose when the noise produced by the mouth of the lips had become a letter, it is accepted from now on that language exists when noises have been articulated and divided into a series of distinct sounds. (Foucault 1973: 286)

Despite its substantial presence in the humanities at large, deconstruction has only made a scattered appearance in musicological and music theoretical writings in the last two decades. One prominent example of a musicological excursion on the terrain of deconstruction is Rose Rosengard Subotnik's book *Deconstructive Variations: Music and Reason in Western Society*. Here Subotnik draws on the notion of *différance* to launch two distinct analyses of Chopin's

[1] See Laclau 1996: 47-67. For a fuller discussion of Laclau's deconstruction and its relation to a certain brand of music theory, see Scherzinger 2004.

A-Major Prelude.[2] For Subotnik, deconstruction draws attention to a kind of empirical limit at the heart of all musical interpretation. She emphasizes the perspectival, even subjective, nature of our observations about music, which, for Subotnik, are rooted in a specific historical and cultural context at odds with the music's original context. The strength of deconstruction, in Subotnik's lexicon, is its humbling effect on critics:

> Precisely by insisting on the irreducible distance between initial and subsequent meanings, the notion of *différance* keeps us honest. For while acknowledging limits on what we can know, this notion also precludes us from characterizing as adequate any reading that answers solely to our own personal circumstances. [...] By pushing a conception of 'text' based on *différance* to the center of criticism, and thereby forcing sensitivity to the problematical aspects of such notions as an 'actual' text, poststructuralist movements such as deconstruction have done a good deal to encourage our integrity as critics. At the very least, these movements have made it more difficult for us to disregard the limiting effects of our own historical and cultural perspective on our access to one another's texts (Subotnik 1996: 56).

Following the post-Kantian idea that epistemological certainty is irreducibly inaccessible (that there exists an uneliminable "gap between our idea and the thing itself"), Subotnik advances deconstruction as a safeguard against the myth of absolute or objective knowledge (Subotnik 1996: 53, 56).

Subotnik associates deconstruction with a particular brand of hermeneutic pluralism. She writes: "Characteristically, a deconstruction results in at least two coherent readings of a single text that coexist but cannot be reconciled with each other. In deconstructionist terminology, the relative weight of these two readings is 'undecidable'." (Subotnik 1996: 66) Far from registering the *contradictory* poles of a *specific* concept's logical conditions of (im)possibility, Subotnik's undecidable moment registers the paradoxical *coherence* of *multiple* interpretations of a text. Deconstruction, in this argument, serves as a mechanism to ensure that neither interpretation comes to dominate the other: "From this standpoint, all knowledge is ultimately acknowledged as at best a very sophisticated version of fiction, or as a metaphysical metaphor" (Subotnik 1996: 66). Acknowledgement of the epistemological limits of one's own position is thus given pride of place in Subotnik's account. Interestingly, despite the empirical limit inscribed in *all* musicological inquiry, Subotnik later advances "stylistic listening" – a concept of listening that reckons with music's cultural and historical determinants – as a privileged mode of interpretation. In contrast, "structural listening," defined as "a method which concentrates attention primarily on the formal relationships established over the course of a single composition," is considered ideologically deceptive, for it discounts "metaphorical and affective responses based on cultural association, personal experience, and imaginative play as at best secondary" (Subotnik 1996: 148, 170). Since stylistic listening is favored by the "majority of people," structural listening can become "socially divisive" and "limit the benefits of musical education" (Subotnik 1996: 170). Here Subotnik integrates a commitment to a (demographically-oriented) democratic educational system with a particular methodological orientation.

Without taking exception to Subotnik's set of core principles, which are laudable in my view, the role played by Derrida and other philosophers in constructing the case for democratic relativism is confusing. In 'Toward a Deconstruction of Structural Listening' the problem

[2] See Rose Subotnik 1996. For a fuller, and slightly differently nuanced, examination of the limits of Subotnik's argument, see Scherzinger 2004.

begins with Subotnik's use of Nietzsche to question the supremacy of "structural listening" in educational systems in America. Subotnik writes,

> it has become easy to 'forget,' **in Nietzsche's sense**, that the object of structural listening, a structure that is in some respect abstract, constitutes only one pole of a more general, dialectical framework in which modern Western conceptions of music have been developed (emphasis mine, Subotnik 1996: 148-149).

While it is true that a limited brand of music analysis became established as a norm in centers of advanced study in the U.S. through the course of the twentieth century, how does Nietzsche's sense of forgetting function in this observation? In an early essay, Nietzsche ironizes the impulse to truth by insisting on a generalized experience of the impossible:

> What indeed does man know about himself? [...] Does not nature keep secret from him most things, even about his body [...] so as to banish and lock him up in proud delusive knowledge? Nature threw away the keys [...] and [...] man, indifferent to his own ignorance, is [...] hanging in dreams on the back of a tiger (in Derrida 1976: xxv).

Similarly, in *Gay Science*, Nietzsche argues that man's truths are no more than man's irrefutable errors (Nietzsche 1974: 39-174). For Nietzsche, these errors are not easily corrected or revised because they constitute the very possibility of life.

Thus Nietzsche's discussion of "forgetfulness" is double-edged: On the one hand, forgetfulness shields humanity from the insight that "truths" reside in the operations of habit and convention, but on the other hand, forgetfulness opens up the affirmative act of *choosing* to suspend this insight in service of social or cultural advancement. In *On the Genealogy of Morals*, Nietzsche writes:

> Forgetting is no mere vis inertia as the superficial imagine; it is rather an active and in the strictest sense positive faculty of reason [*Hemmungsvermögen*]. [...] To close doors and windows of consciousness for a time; [...] to make room for new things, [...] so that it will be immediately obvious how there could be no happiness, no cheerfulness, no hope, no pride, no present, without forgetfulness. (Nietzsche 1989: 57).

Productive forgetting, in the Nietzschian sense, is a warning against the impulse to "situate," "contextualize," and "historicize" knowledge. In *On the Advantage and Disadvantage of History for Life*, Nietzsche claims that

> the historical sense makes its servants passive and retrospective; and almost only from momentary forgetfulness, at a brief period of inactivity of that sense, does the man struck ill by historical fever become active (Nietzsche 1980: 45).

Forgetting therefore involves an actively repressed "will to ignorance" that paradoxically creates a provisional space for social action. For Nietzsche, "action requires illusion" (Nietzsche 1967: 60). Within the deliberately framed "forgetfulness," the critic is able to advance a polemic without lapsing into generalized doubt or relativism. With this provocative and strategic sense of forgetting in mind, Subotnik's "structural listening" could become a site of active repression that makes possible a certain kind of social action. However, Subotnik does not examine the

active figure of forgetting, emphasizing instead a passive view, whereby our memory lapse is a case of neglect. We have neglected to attend to other modes of listening, forgotten the importance of "stylistic listening".

This problem is analogous to Subotnik's later attempt to "deconstruct" the notion of "structural listening". She writes,

> Recognizing a hierarchical opposition between structure and medium as fundamental to the concept of structural listening, I have in effect tried to reverse the conventionally assumed priorities in this hierarchy, to undercut the distinction between the poles by presenting the mode and object of structural listening as a function of (or in Derrida's sense as a 'supplement' to) those of non-structural listening, and to expose some of the concealed ideological assumptions which the concept of structural listening reflects (Subotnik 1996: 149).

Once again, without dismissing the undoubted value of Subotnik's critique of structural listening, it is a curiosity that structural listening is placed here in *supplement* to non-structural listening. In Derrida's terms, this, in effect, claims that "structural listening" is the subordinate term marking the inadequacy of, yet paradoxically making whole, the sign "non-structural listening". In other words, the asymmetry in this opposition is the converse of the asymmetry narrated in the argument as a whole. According to Derrida, an opposition is rendered non-pertinent when *différance* intervenes, because, for the former term to be truly itself, the supplement becomes an essential condition[3]. Thus, transposed to Subotnik's argument, for "non-structural listening" to be truly itself "structural listening" is an essential condition. But this amounts to the unwanted deconstruction of *non*-structural listening.

Subotnik uses the term "supplement" again in a way that does little to allay this unintended consequence. "For Adorno," she writes "...metaphorical criticism of the characteristics, choices, and relationships that embed music in one or another socio-historical context is not a 'supplement,' in Derrida's sense, to the possession of detailed structural knowledge but rather the very means of getting to the heart of such knowledge" (Subotnik 1996: 165). I take this to be a negation of the following scenario: A "contextually sensitive" knowledge (to use a shorthand for Adorno's "metaphorical criticism") is a supplement to "structural" knowledge. This means that the hierarchy presented by the scenario is false. Instead, (the truth is that) the "contextually sensitive" knowledge "get[s] to the heart of such knowledge". Has the principal deconstructive maneuver been missed here? By marking the supplementary term, *différance* reveals the differential undecidability of our hold on the primary term. In this way, the supplement has the negative privilege of illuminating the exclusion that has defined the metaphysical) enclosure of the concept under scrutiny. In a deconstructive setting the supplementary term is not ostracized but affirmed as central to that enclosure. Subotnik's supplement, in contrast, has no such affirmative privilege. The supplementary term in her scheme is absolutely subordinate; it inhabits what Derrida might call "a place of death and disease in general". In contrast, the primary term ("contextually sensitive" knowledge) "is *not* a supplement," but "the very means of getting to the heart" of knowledge (italics mine, Subotnik 1996: 165). But the supplement, construed as entirely subordinate, produces an unnecessarily hierarchical opposition between the two modes of hearing. It does not undercut as much as reverse a prevalent historical opposition.

Subotnik's challenge to the discipline is also a commitment to an actual state of social affairs – a final resting place, as it were, for truth – that appears as an underlying motif throughout

[3] For Derrida's account of the workings of the *supplement*, see Derrida 1976: 141-164; and for his account of *différance* see Derrida 1982: 1-27.

her book (under rhetorical signs like "in actuality" (Subotnik 1996: 157, 169), "in fact" (158), "originating norms" (163), "the heart of" (165), "conclusively" (168), "source" (169), "rests finally" (170), "at bottom" (172), "in its original sense" (169), and so on). I will comment on the last of these gestures. Subotnik writes, "Ever since the crystallization of the notion of 'Art' in the early nineteenth century, it has become a truism of Western culture that the proper evaluation of any structure as 'Art' requires the perspective of time" (168). In this section of the argument, Subotnik claims that "insiders access" to an artist's meaning becomes impossible with a time lapse, because such an access demands, by implication, that the interpreter "understand the full import of those changes [or meanings] at the time they were made" (168). Drawing on Derrida, Subotnik inserts the formula "always already" to emphasize this impossibility. In other words, when time passes we inevitably lose the original (authentic?) meaning of an artwork.

But Derrida's "always already" marks the irreducibility of the supplement (fissure, accident, accessory, spacing, etc.) within the origin of the structure of knowledge itself. In his critique of Rousseau's writings on speech and song, for example, Derrida comments on the "always already" (Derrida 1976: 200-201): First, this is not about the loss of the "full import" of meaning because of a "time lapse" but about a fissure (supplement) that has been "inscribed [...] *from its birth and in its essence*" (italics mine, Derrida 1976: 200-201). Likewise, in his essay "Différance," Derrida writes, "*Différance* is the non-full, non-simple, structured and differentiating *origin* of differences" (italics mine, Derrida 1982: 11). Second, and perhaps more important, the fissure/supplement is that accessory "without which, strictly speaking, the [structure] would not have come into being" (Derrida 1976: 200). In short, the fissure is an "originary accessory" or "essential accident" that inaugurates the *possibility* of thought.

In contrast, Subotnik version of the "always already" makes us notice the *impossibility* of thought. This is a misreading of deconstruction, and leads to the odd conclusion that "this condition of difference and delay, which Derrida has termed *différance*, calls increasing attention over time and distance to the irreducibility of style [...] as a source of signification" (Subotnik 1996: 169). Besides the fact that Derrida is less concerned with proliferating *such* differences than he is with disconcerting certain regularities, Subotnik here locates "style" at the "source" of signification. This momentary construction of a "source" cannot be accommodated in the terms of a thoroughly deconstructive argument. Furthermore, there is another (more embedded) "source" that has been axiomatically posited in the argument. This "source" is the "truth" that has been lost during the "time lapse". This is the not-spoken-about "original sense" that must exist, albeit as absence, to make possible the impossibility of a full understanding. Subotnik insists that "invoking our own cultural disposition [...] after a certain time-lapse is no proof of an acquired ability to hear musical structure in its original sense" (Subotnik 1996: 169). The "source" I mark here is the "original sense" that we can never "prove".[4] This is an ultimate source, figured as absence, which gives all interpretation the slip: "If anything," the argument goes, "we remain excluded as interpreters from the original inner dynamic of most music" (Subotnik 1996: 169). Forever "outside" of this source, or "fallen" from the original truth, our "reading itself becomes an inconceivable act" (Subotnik 1996: 169). It is possible to contest this reading of Derrida by reciting the latter's resistance to French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan's transcendental signifier. More pressingly, however, how do we now gauge Subotnik's appraisal of "stylistic listening" in this argument?

Having outlined a state of affairs in which any assertion is but a simulacrum of an original truth, it is difficult to grasp this appraisal: "Only something akin to 'stylistic listening' would

[4] This is a kind of signifier (signifying all knowledge as absence) that takes the place of all signifiers; a transcendental signifier in the order of Jacques Lacan's phallus, or Edgar Allan Poe's letter in his *Purloined Letter.*

permit contemporary listeners to exercise any prerogatives they might have as cultural insiders" (Subotnik 1996: 170). The problem is that "stylistic listening" gets closer to that "original significance" that, scarcely three paragraphs before, had been described as inherently "unrecoverable," "always already impossible," an "inconceivable act" (Subotnik 1996: 168-9). There are neither reasons advanced as to why *any* reading becomes suddenly possible/recover able/conceivable, nor why such a (now recoverable) reading is necessarily, and only, a "stylistic" one. Besides the point that the only listening that is being "discounted" is "structural," one is forced to conclude that "stylistic listening" gains its credibility by virtue of its privileged access to the "original inner dynamic" – replete with historical, cultural, stylistic resonance – of the music under investigation (Subotnik 1996: 169). Subotnik is implying here that "stylistic listening" gives us access to the reality of music, an argument that ultimately has the effect of bestowing a preferred mode of hearing with epistemological authenticity. The point is that deconstruction cannot be claimed to have produced this kind of priority. Without rejecting the many virtues of its particular positions and insights, I hope to have shown that Subotnik's *Deconstructive Variations* is *not*, in the final analysis, properly deconstructive.

Deconstruction has appeared in music-theoretical writings as well. One exemplary text is Kevin Korsyn's *Decentering Music: A Critique of Contemporary Musical Research* (Korsyn 2003), which sets out to alter the very coordinates of what goes as musical scholarship in our times. The book has transformative ambitions; in Korsyn's words, it is a book that "seeks to change musical scholarship by addressing a crisis confronting us today." The crisis, argues Korsyn, is grounded in "discourse," understood here in the Lacanian sense as "a social link [*lien social*] founded on language." (Korsyn 2003: 5) Because language, under recent French philosophical lights, is prior to individual utterance and expression, it always exceeds (and escapes) our grasp. Korsyn argues that the practice of music scholarship is likewise bound up in socio-cultural forces that lie beyond its immediate control. Korsyn's book includes discussion of programmatic constraints on musical discourse no less than institutional rigidities, right down to the nitty-gritty of the tenure process and the dynamics of program committee selection.

He diagnoses a symptomatic dialectical impasse. On the one hand, the splintering of scholarly dialogue into specialized branches of study ("crisscrossed by [...] antagonisms, which divide the field into ever smaller units") has produced a kind of "radical disengagement" between factions of a discipline, which nonetheless bears the marks of hierarchically-imposed exclusions (Korsyn 2003: 6, 15). In short, musical research, under current professional pressures, is becoming a hierarchized "Tower of Babel" (Korsyn 2003: 16). As remedy, Korsyn aims to retrieve and engage the marginal and excluded domains that ground the very possibility of the discipline (Korsyn 2003: 16). On the other hand, the very "corporatist" model that divides scholarship into sub-disciplines simultaneously mandates "increasing uniformity" within these disciplines (Korsyn 2003: 6, 26). Korsyn isolates key features of scholarly standardization *vis a vis* the commodity form: abstraction, efficiency, quantification (Korsyn 2003: 20-25). Here he draws a tantalizing link between the "ideology of the abstract," which issues the professional "tendency toward uniformity," and the broader economic sphere of Fordist economics, which governs the way the university operates (Korsyn 2003: 24-25, 182). In short, music research, under current professional pressures, is becoming an Orwellian "Ministry of Truth" (Korsyn 2003: 25). As remedy, Korsyn aims to imagine new forms of musical community no less than to restructure the university system. Ultimately, he seeks scholarly heterogeneity without lapsing into Babel-esque relativism or imposing Ministry-esque consensus.

For all its wealth of insight, Korsyn's use of deconstruction to support his argument is limited. In "The Objects of Musical Research (I)," for example, Korsyn uses Derrida as a guiding figure in theorizing his argument about compositional identity (Korsyn 2003: 91-100). With incomplete success, Korsyn tries to bend Derrida's analysis of our uncertain hold on self-presence to the identity of musical phenomena. In particular, Korsyn takes his cue from Derrida's notion of iterability to discuss *musical* repetition. Korsyn quotes Derrida – "the presence-of-the-present is derived from repetition and not the reverse" – and correctly notes that the sign depends on a kind of "originary repetition" (Korsyn 2003: 93). But the translation of Derrida's philosophical values into his music analyses is weak, incongruous even. For example, Korsyn discusses musical repetition in the context of traditional ideas about phrase rhythm in a work by Mozart. The Piano Sonata, K. 283, opens with an expansion of the first ten measures via near-repetition of mm. 5-10 in mm. 11-16. For Korsyn this is a case of "*originary repetition*" because, instead of following one another consecutively in time, "repetition and expansion appear together" (Korsyn 2003: 93). Moreover, argues Korsyn (following William E. Caplin), the ten-bar prototype of this expansion is itself an expansion of an "eight-bar norm," figured as an "absent prototype" (Korsyn 2003: 95). Likewise, Korsyn interprets Chopin's B Minor Prelude as "an expanded repetition of *itself*: it is an expansion of a sixteen-bar prototype that is nowhere given." Korsyn continues, "To establish the identity of this piece once and for all it would be necessary to say here is the original, there is the expansion, establishing a hierarchy between the two. Instead, however, the piece exemplifies what Derrida calls *différance*: it differs from itself – its identity is deferred. It is precisely because the identity of the piece is uncertain that we need analysis" (Korsyn 2003: 96).

This is an odd argument, for Korsyn collapses general and particular levels; namely, the workings of "repetition" between pieces and "repetition" within a piece. The absent norm he identifies in K. 283 hinges on the idea that "nothing precedes it that might constitute a prototype" (Korsyn 2003: 95). This claim is overdrawn. "*Norms*," whether they describe average sizes of modern American families or lengths of classical musical phrases, are "absent" only in a limited, literalistic, sense; they are the *result* of empirically-oriented experience seeking to grasp the general characteristics of things. (In scientific empiricism this can involve the use of surveys and statistics). For Derrida, the irreducible undecidability of *différance* is not the result of some empirical imperfection, but rather a trace of contingency lodged within the logic of any structure (at its origin). Likewise, the "phantom existence" of the eight-bar prototype in Chopin's Prelude shares no kinship with Derrida's "absence" prior to the sign's repetition. Derrida is not addressing the absence of some kind of abstract plenitude (like "2.3 children" per household, for example, or "eight measure units" of music), which guides the signification process. On the contrary, *différance* marks the differential structure of our grasp on presence and plenitude. Far from marking the sign's normative background, the operations of *différance* foreground its irreconcilable dialectical extremes. In the deconstructive analysis there is no doubt about the sign's ordinary meaning; indeed, the movement of deconstruction illuminates the conditions of possibility and impossibility in which such ordinary meaning is instituted. In Korsyn's analyses, in contrast, the "identity of the piece is *uncertain*," indeed the uncertainty prompts the "need [for] analysis" (Korsyn 2003: 96). In sum, where the deconstructive account renders undecidable the certainty of the sign, Korsyn's account clarifies the uncertainty of the music's identity.

This is not to say that Korsyn's broad argument is not plausible; but that the figure of deconstruction is employed in a limited way in this text. Nor is this to say that Derridean deconstruction, which establishes language (speech, writing, etc.) as its central referent, is out

of place in the context of sounding music and thought about music. Although it is not the thrust of Korsyn's argument, it is possible, for instance, to configure music as a performative dramatization of Derrida's theory of language formation; an idea that resonates with music's privileged position in Continental philosophy of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

3. Music in the Thought of Deconstruction

> Music is the diachronic version of the pattern of non-coincidence within the moment. (Jean-Jacques Rousseau, in: Man 1983: 129)

Derrida writes:

> It is because of *différance* that the movement of signification is possible only if each so-called "present" element, each element appearing on the scene of presence, is related to something other than itself, thereby keeping within itself the mark of the past element, and already letting itself be vitiated by the mark of its relation to the future element, this trace being related no less to what is called the future than to what is called the past, and constituting what is called the present by means of this very relation to what it is not: what it absolutely is not, not even a past or a future as a modified present. (Derrida 1982, 13)

This description of language is strikingly *musical.* Instead of emphasizing its referential specificity, Derrida draws attention to the play of differences inscribed in language. As it is with music, linguistic signification is irreducibly temporal, caught up in a network of "retentional traces and protentional openings" that make possible the sign that is said to represent the thing itself. In a general way one may surmise that music — the art that prominently foregrounds a kind of "playing movement that 'produces' [...] differences, [...] effects of differences" – dramatizes Derrida's model of language.

Do the endlessly suspended melodies of Wagner's *Tristan,* achieved by way of hyperbolic appoggiaturas that chromatically slide toward cadential non-closure, not *différer* in Derrida's sense? Do they not take recourse, that is, "in the temporal and temporizing mediation of a detour that suspends the accomplishment of fulfillment of 'desire' or 'will'" (Derrida 1982: 8)? Does Brahms's uncanny invocation of Beethoven's *Ode* in the last movement of his first symphony, an invocation that comes out of the workings of his own developing variations, not destabilize the thing for which it ostensibly stands? Is the reference, that is, not like a mirage, "constituted 'historically' as a weave of differences" (Derrida 1982: 12)? Do the misplaced perfect cadences in the last movement of Mahler's seventh symphony not radically open the contextual horizon of their musical function? Does the familiar but flawed cadence, that is, not sound like "the mute irony, the inaudible misplacement" of Derrida's misspelled *différance* (Derrida: 1982: 3)? At this level of generality, the list of resemblances between deconstruction and music goes on and on.

It should not be surprising that Derrida's deconstructive excursions are historically linked to a philosophical tradition that grants the figure of music pride of place. Music, in this tradition, was figured as ineffable, beyond the logic and grasp of representational language. In the shad-

ow of an imagined failure of language, music was often granted the capacity for elevated epistemological claims *qua* music. Already in Kant, whose views about it were otherwise outmoded, music had the capacity to "agitate the mind *more* diversely and intensely" than poetry, which, for Kant, was the highest form of the arts (italics mine, Kant 1951: 198). While unable to conceptualize, and hence lacking the capacity to expand the power of judgment, music was nonetheless able to express "the aesthetic idea of a coherent whole of an unspeakable wealth of thought, and to express it in conformity with a certain theme that is the prevalent affect in the piece" (Kant 1951: 199). Concepts, for Kant, could be raised to the level of ideas when they transcended their "natural determination" by way of the imagination (Kant 1951: 196). Poetry, which shared with music the ability to "set the imagination free," could offer us "from among the unlimited variety of possible forms that harmonize with a given concept, though within that concept's limits, that form which links the exhibition of the concept with a wealth of thought to which no linguistic expression is completely adequate, and so poetry rises aesthetically to ideas" (Kant 1951: 196). Interestingly, to rise aesthetically to ideas, concepts had to be illuminated by the very "unspeakable wealth of thought" that characterized both poetry and (even more so) music. What distinguished poetry from music in Kant's comparison was poetry's capacity to harmonize its "unspeakable wealth of thought" within the limits of a given concept. While exhibiting the imaginative play so crucial to idea formation, music's refusal to be reined in by determinate thought rendered it secondary in Kant's evaluation; "mere entertaining play;" patterned air (Kant 1951: 197). And yet, Kant's recognition of music's unbounded wealth of thought opened the door to a radical revision in the nineteenth century of music's metaphysical aspirations.

It was precisely music's *unspeakable* wealth, detached from all conceptual determination, which became its greatest advantage in the imaginary of nineteenth-century metaphysics. This idealization of music took many forms. For Wilhelm Heinrich Wackenroder, for example, music hovered angelically above the debased workings of the actual world. Likewise, for Søren Kierkegaard, music best exemplified the boundless erotic striving of the pure unmediated life force. Arguably, the quasi-religious appeal to notions of genius and inspiration in the age of romanticism were an attempt to detach the art of music from the realm of ordinary signification. August Wilhelm von Schlegel's account of the "origin and spirit of *romanticism*" rested on a religious dimension that "aspired to a higher perfection than that which could actually be achieved by the exercise of [one's] own faculties" (italics Schlegel's, in: Huray / Day1988: 196-198). Romantic art required the intervention of a "superior wisdom" if it was to transcend the limited perfection which Schlegel attributed to the art of the ancient Greeks and offer us instead (via "contemplation of the eternal") insight into "our real existence" (Huray / Day 1988: 198). For Gottfried Johann Herder too, the defining moment in the emancipation of music from outside constraint (from "spectacle, dance, mime, and even from the accompanying voice") was "*religious awe*" — a condition best approximated by voiceless, gesture-free, wordless and pure "*sounds.*" (italics Herder's, Huray / Day 1988: 192). Far from a condition of self-identical autonomy then, the artwork required this extra "*something* [to] free [it] from all external control" (italics mine, Huray / Day 1988: 192).

Paradoxically, the exemplary romantic artwork was thus incomplete in itself, even giving an "appearance of imperfection" in Schlegel's language, and the necessary supplemental dimension (or "mysterious alliance") could not be captured in ordinary terms (Huray / Day 1988:198). In short, the aesthetics of autonomy were deeply implicated in a new principle of anagogic transformation on the levels of both composition and reception, and it was music's apparent insufficiency that secured its autonomy. Even in Eduard Hanslick's late nineteenth-century formalist aesthetics, apparently shorn of religious dimensions, we read about the meta-

physical and symbolic significance of music in its "reflection of the great laws of the world." (Bond 1997: 415) Interestingly, references of this sort were omitted in subsequent editions of *Vom Musikalisch-Schönen*, so that Hanslick's later musical work began to exist in an abstract realm of self-sufficient signification. But the logic of the argument – the effort to avoid music's reduction to ordinary referential terms – remained the same.

How did the metaphysical elevation of music in the nineteenth century function philosophically? In his *The World as Will and Representation* Arthur Schopenhauer posits music as the closest of all possible analogies to the endlessly striving will. Far from figuring music's inability to conceptualize as a weakness, Schopenhauer diminished the very role of concept-formation to the "objectification" of the will, and thereby raised the value of music's peculiarly independent expressive mode to new metaphysical heights. By granting the will a foundational metaphysical status, Schopenhauer shifted the traditional theory of truth-by-correspondence to one of truth-by-revelation, best embodied in the flow of music. In Schopenhauer's view, "music does not, like all the other arts, exhibit the Ideas or grades of the will's objectification, but directly the will itself" (italics in original; Schopenhauer 1958: 448). Music's very separation from the world of representation elevated its self-generative power to disclose truth: "Far from being a mere aid to poetry, music is certainly an independent art; in fact, it is the most powerful of all the arts, and therefore attains its ends entirely from its own resources" (Schopenhauer 1958: 448). Even in the context of texted compositions (where "words are and remain for the music a foreign extra of secondary value"), music had the capacity to express "the most profound, ultimate, and secret information;" it illuminated "the real and true nature" of the feelings and actions presented by the musical drama. Music, in the final analysis, had privileged access to the fundamental truth of our lives, for in its temporal unfolding one could "hear [...] the secret history of our will and of all its stirrings and strivings with their many different delays, postponements, hindrances, and afflictions" (Schopenhauer 1958: 451). Shopenhauer degraded the referential abstractions that characterized language and prized instead the "delays and postponements" that characterized music. It was music's endless deferrals that became portals for understanding our essential nature.

In his early works, Friedrich Nietzsche too would subordinate the epistemological status of language against that of music. The concepts of language are "the separated shell of things; thus they are strictly speaking *abstracta*;" in contrast, music "gives the innermost kernel which precedes all forms, or the heart of things" (Nietzsche 1967: 102). For Nietzsche, language is reductive and abstract, while music is generative and creative. Hence, language cannot capture the spirit of music: "Language can never adequately render the cosmic symbolism of music, because music stands in symbolic relation to the primordial contradiction and primordial pain in the heart of the primal unity, and therefore symbolizes a sphere which is beyond and prior to all phenomena" (Nietzsche 1967: 55). In agreement with Schopenhauer, then, Nietzsche argued that words rendered musically, and even feelings expressed in music, were distracting "externalities" to music's essence:

> What we call *feeling* is, in relation to th[e] will, already permeated and saturated by conscious and unconscious representations and hence no longer directly the subject of music (Nietzsche 1967: 111, 112).

On the *Ode* in Beethoven's ninth symphony, Nietzsche polemically claimed that the

> music blinds us totally to images and words and *we simply do not hear anything of Schiller's poem* (italics in orginal; Nietzsche 1980a: 113).

Against Schopenhauer, on the other hand, Nietzsche was suspicious of our ability to access, even by way of musical analogy, the workings of the will. And yet, although we "can never get beyond representations," Nietzsche distinguished "two major species in the realm of representations," one of which recapitulates the will's primordial "becoming and willing" (Nietzsche 1980: 108). On *this* species of representation, Nietzsche wrote, "The primordial manifestation, the 'will' with its scale of sensations of pleasure and displeasure, gains an ever more adequate symbolical expression in the development of music" (Nietzsche 1980: 109). For the early Nietzsche, then, music's origin remained "beyond all individuation;" and the will remained music's proper "subject" (Nietzsche 1980: 110-111).

It was music's non-individuated Dionysian strain, representing the rapturous frenzy that destroyed the veils of *maya,* and thus liberated us from conventions, images, rules and constraints, which Nietzsche granted profound philosophical agency in his *The Birth of Tragedy in the Spirit of Music.* Music's "most powerful" function lay in its capacity to "invest myths with a new and profound significance," for it prevented myths from lapsing by degrees "into the narrow limits of some alleged historical reality" (Nietzsche 1980: 75). Music's ability to disclose truths was thus achieved in negative terms. It revitalized myth by inhibiting its historical tendencies toward ossified factuality. Following the example of Socrates, philosophy had long neglected music's creative impulse in favor of a rationalist dialectic. Just as music once gave "birth to myth" it could once again revitalize it:

> Th[e] dying myth was now seized by the new-born genius of Dionysian music; and in the hands it flourished once more with colors such as it had never yet displayed, with a fragrance that awakened a longing anticipation of a metaphysical world (Nietzsche 1980: 103, 75).

By musicalizing philosophy, Nietzsche sought to reinvigorate its creative and critical potential. Music illuminated the mythical dimension of the orthodoxies by which we lived; it served as a discursive site for speculation on the limits of philosophy, knowledge, and meaning. A central metaphor for that which resisted epistemological certainty, music in this kind of philosophical discourse thus functioned as a kind of discourse of the unsayable *par excellence.*

The negative privilege accorded music in nineteenth-century German metaphysics is no longer obvious in current writings grounded in philosophical tropes of negation. While some German philosophy in the first half of the century, ranging from Ernst Bloch's reflections on music, which emphasized the open-ended and refractory qualities in music, to Theodor W. Adorno negative dialectics, which prominently explore the role of truth-formation (via relentless self-abnegation) in musical experience, the explicit reference to music has receded in most post-structuralism. And yet, post-structuralism bears some prominent resonances with these predecessors. As it is with nineteenth-century philosophical figure of music, deconstruction, for example, exposes the slippery movement of conceptualization, and menaces the poles of ossified historical oppositions. Deconstruction, like music, marks a philosophical limit. Following Hegel's dialectical method of marking the non-identities grounding all conceptualization, the deconstructive account emphasizes the structural irreducibility of that which is excluded from discourse. Like Schopenhauer's music, for example, deconstruction emphasizes the detours and delays that condition the world of representation. And like Nietzsche's music, for example, deconstruction at once resists the closure of ordinary discourse and revitalizes its horizon of possibility. Music's resistance to the grasp of self-evident perception dramatizes what deconstruction sets out to demonstrate.

Though it has generally been canceled out of post-structuralist thought, music sometimes reappears in a way that is in keeping with this historical legacy. Roland Barthes's discussion of the "grain" in the operatic voice, for example, draws on the historical idea that music – its visceral materiality – escapes the scope and authority of predicative language (Barthes 1985: 267-77). Likewise, Julia Kristeva's non-representational theory of language is distinctly musical; here the "tone" and the "rhythm" of the pure signifier reverberates as if in musical space (in Eagleton 1983: 188). Derrida too elaborates the already-discussed notion of the *supplement*, which marks the absent, yet necessary, term constituting the possibility of conceptualization, through an investigation of Jean Jacques Rousseau's discussion of melody in the *Essai sur l'origine de langue* (Derrida 1976: 141-64). And yet, these references to music are rarely about music itself. They are about a theory of language-as-music. To maneuver somewhat crudely through the historical genealogy, one might say that Schopenhauer vividly divided the (debased) world of abstract language from the (elevated) world of dynamic music; that Nietzsche drew this distinction into the workings of language itself (reconfigured in terms of its Dionysian and Apollonian tendencies); and that Derrida collapsed these modalities of representation altogether, effectively drawing musical dynamism into the nature of language as a general economy.

Nonetheless, discussion of actual music in Derrida's considerable *oevre* is conspicuous by its absence. On the one hand, Derrida frequently laments his personal lack of competence when it comes to the subject of music. On the other hand, he describes his philosophical aspirations in overtly musical terms. For Derrida, close attention to the inherent multiplicity of "voices" in a text is linked to an ethics of empathy with the other. This is an empathy less borne of identification than interruption; an ethics of opening to the unanticipated threads at work in a text, which in turn liberates its full resonance.

> There is first of all the plurality of voices as plurivocity – *Mehrdeutigkeit*.
> Already when a word has several meanings – and this plurality is irreducible – you can hear in it, or it lets you hear ..., several meanings and thus several voices. There are several voices already in the word. One can give this plurality of voices in the word itself its freedom, more or less freedom. There is another experience that consists in organizing a text in such a way that several voices take it over. (Derrida 1995: 393)

Here Derrida attempts to withstand the appropriative closures inherent to all reading/listening by offering a writing strategy that, to unleash a free play, advances "in several voices". As a safeguard against mastery the writing is thus led away from its own suppositions and toward the radically unassured:

> One is not sure of one's direction precisely because it is the other who is leading the march or the discourse. To walk on one's own head [Derrida borrows the phrase from Paul Celan] means of course to look at the sky ["as an abyss," in Celan's terminology], but also to walk upside down, to do the opposite of what one thought one wanted to do. And to lose one's voice or let the other speak is always in a certain way to walk on one's head (Derrida 1995: 393).

Derrida describes this art of "walking on one's head" – like a "madness" that keeps "watch over thinking" – in terms of *musical resonance* (Derrida 1995: 363, 394). It is not so much a matter of writing "*about* ... the multiplicity of musical voices" in a text as it is about letting its music *resonate* (italics in original; Derrida 1995: 394).

And yet, in Derrida's lexicon, musical resonance cannot be adequately facilitated by ordinary prose. Following Nietzsche on this point, Derrida associates the origin of philosophy with the death of music:

> But I wonder if philosophy, which is also the birth of prose, has not meant the repression of music or song. Philosophy cannot, as such, let the song resonate in some way (Derrida 1995: 394).

In spite of this necessary failure, his aim, nonetheless, is to let

> the multiplicity of voices in music [...] take over – and keep – speech through me, without me, beyond the control that I could have over them. [...] I try to let them speak (Derrida 1995: 394).

For Derrida, the polyvalence of a text is here associated with the art of musical listening – an act of allowing the already-present threads distributed in the text to appear, and link up, in unforeseen ways. While absent as a direct object of Derrida's philosophical inquiries, music therefore metaphorically embodies the art of suspending the assurance of referential self-presence. It is music's many-voiced resonance that resists the saturating taxonomy of its themes in ordinary prose. The point is to listen.

4. Deconstruction in the Thought of Music

> The tympanum squints. (Derrida 1982: xv)

Does music itself issue forth deconstructive resonance? Not always. The weakness in Derrida's metaphorical figure of music is its lack of specificity. At first glance, it seems, we may speak of resonance as characteristic of a sounding tone in general. Paraphrasing Derrida, that is, there are "several voices already" in the tone itself. The musical consequences of this resonance have been pondered for centuries (from Pythagoras to Joseph Sauveur to Arnold Schoenberg). While I cannot take up this lengthy history here, it is worth noting that current schools of compositional thought, such as the French school of "spectral music," for example, have congealed around creative attempts to unleash, in all its unheard complexity, this pregiven resonance – an unleashing which, in turn, has menaced the traditional distinctions between harmony and timbre and even harmony and rhythm. And yet, to talk about the compositional systems that derive from the rigorous formalizations guiding spectral analysis of acoustic phenomena as a case of *deconstructive* resonance is in error. More likely, the spectral approach is deconstruction in reverse. Far from opening into the radically unstable experience of resonance issued by a particular musical tone, spectral music is premised on an already-secure general theory of both the acoustic tone and its cognitive perception. The tone, as it were, is already an inmate of this theoretical logic, it is already ontologically secured; and the individual composition is no more than a proof of the ontology.[5] In Derrida's terms, one might

[5] The following passage in defense of the spectral school of composition is typical: "The tonal system is governed by a set of harmonic rules that embody a compromise between the will to modulate among keys, the system of symbolically notating music, the available set of instruments, certain laws of acoustics, as well as many other concerns. This imposing edifice was patiently constructed by an accumulation of experience and benefited from a slow, cultural maturation. But the bases of this edifice were shaken in the evolution of contemporary music by recent developments in our relation to sound: previously of a fleeting and evanescent, ungraspable nature, sound has been captured and manipulated by way of recording technology. The theory of signals, associated with the computational power of modern computers, has made it possible to analyze sound, to understand its fine structure, and to fashion it at will" (see Pressnitzer / McAdams 2005).

say, the "strange and unique" properties of the music's resonance is secured by the "discourse that organizes the economy of its representation, the law of its proper weave, such that *its* outside is never its *outside*, never surprises it, such that the logic of its heteronomy still reasons from within the vault of its autism" (Derrida 1982: xvi). Of course it is possible to deconstruct the logic of this compositional endeavor, or even to unhinge the center of the implied perceptual field; but it is not possible to attribute to this figure of musical resonance *per se* a deconstructive ambition. *As such*, its heteronomy has been "spatialized" into a general economy of the same; the horizon of what is hearable has been pre-planned. The ethics of tonal resonances, one might say, are not equal.

How, then, can music behave deconstructively? Can musical resonance open into internally differentiated temporalities that are not ambushed by the general strategies of hearing meant to explain them? Here, at first glance, it seems that the serial music of the post-Schoenberg school, with its irreducibly polysemic permutational networks which necessarily annul the self-present perception of its resonating tones, becomes a musical site of deconstruction. In Milton Babbitt's paradigm, for example, "all-combinatorial" twelve-tone sets (whereby complementary hexachords are produced under all operational transformations of the set) open music into a vast network of connections reducible to no self-evident musical sense. As it was for Schoenberg, the ordering of the row is a crucial springboard for reflecting inner motivic resemblances no less than subtle mutations. Babbitt writes, "I want a piece of music literally to be as much as possible". In Babbitt's view, the modern composer has been "obliged to recognize the possibility, and actuality, of alternatives to what were once regarded as musical absolutes. He lives no longer in a unitary musical universe of 'common practice,' but [rather] a variety of universes of diverse practice". Only when this general compositional multiplicity is congealed into the very workings of a particular piece can music open into "as much as possible" (Babbitt 1978: 244). In his song *Du*, for example, hexachord-formation can be projected in a number of directions at once (i.e., at the note-for-note attack point level, the registral articulations of linear projections, the voice part alone, the vertical combinations of registral dispersals, and so on), thereby generating a network of associations that is maximally dense. As it is with the conceptual sign under deconstructive pressure, Babbitt's differential musical weave disconcerts our ability to fasten securely onto a fixed musical event. The single tone's *Mehrdeutigkeit* is its essence:

> principles of relatedness, upon which depends immediate coherence of continuity, [...] evolve in the course of the work [rather than being] derived from generalizable assumptions (Babbitt 1978: 246).

And yet the irreducibly propulsive mobility of *Du* – a scene of wall-to-wall *deferral*, whereby polyphonic threads actively jostle for syntax-formation – is not deconstructive *to the extent* that the paths of its many transformations culminate in a pattern that is crafted pre-compositionally. If, as Babbitt's language sometimes implies, the omni-temporalized threads must be "accurately" grasped as "functions" that, however much they have been "multiplied," ultimately secure the "coherent structure" of the compositional whole, then our hearing must rein in the unforeseeable places that overflow and crack that "total structure" (Babbitt 1978: 245).[6] For

[6] This argument is an extension of the central argument of Adorno's *Philosophy of Modern Music*, which consistently associates the twelve-tone music of Schoenberg, and especially Webern, with the failure of reified and undialectical thought. Through the rigid application of the rules of the row, Webern's music "designates the liquidation of counterpoint," which, for Adorno, "has the right to exist only in the overcoming of something not absorbed within it, and thus resisting it, to which it is 'added'" (Adorno 1973: 95). In other words, by making the contrapuntal ideal of formal integration absolute, Webern evacuates the recalcitrant subjective dimension that makes this integration dialectically significant. Absolute variation, in short, recapitulates stasis. The difference between Adorno's position and mine is one of emphasis: in my view, the dialectic is only frozen *to the extent* that it limits itself to the promised structural coherence of the totality; it is not an inevitable consequence of the compositional procedure. In Scherzinger 2004a, for example, I demonstrate, in contrast to Adorno, cases of internally differentiated twelve-tone processes, outlining ways of listening to the music's behavior that does not acknowledge its structural *raison d'être*.

all its radical temporality under these conditions of listening, the deconstructive other of *Du* has (paradoxically) been "temporalized" into an economy of the same; the horizon of what is hearable has been pre-planned. Once again, the ethics of contrapuntal weavings, one might say, are not equal.

Derrida's reverential genuflections toward music notwithstanding, we see that music's deconstructive impulse is never assured. Even radical efforts to dissociate music from its pre-planned determinations, to sever the assurance of its syntactical teleology in the manner of John Cage, for example, will not in and of itself perform deconstructive work. The aleatorically punctured and displaced hymns by William Billings in Cage's *Hyms and Variations* (1979) – "suddenly brilliant in a new kind of way because each sound vibrates from itself, not from theory" – serve less to defamiliarize than to refamiliarize the hymns' peculiar sensuous resonance. As it is with Barthes's grainy voice, the eighteenth century hymns, recast in this unsettled setting, seem to unleash their interior, non-discursive sonorities. And yet, to the extent that this mode of hearing "the sound itself" – as unmediated engrossment – stops up its ears to the differential structure of our hold on presence, it cannot operate deconstructively. While it *may* be possible to eliminate traces of its operative syntax, the dissociated tones of *Hymns and Variations* are all already more than "themselves," acoustically and emotionally permeated by textures of embedded sense (the warm familiarity of the strings, the organic peacefulness of the tempo, and so on, which reassure the subtle process of dislodging). The musical *sound itself* cannot, to cite Adorno, "rebel [...] against the composer's own established system" (Adorno 1992: 279). Another return, one might say, of the same.

How then can musical thinking set forth deconstructive thought; set forth "on the track," in Derrida's words, "of an impossible axiomatic which remains to be thought" (Derrida 1997: 81)? Under what conditions can music "proliferate *outside* [of itself] to the point of no longer being *understood*" (Derrida 1982: xv)? When can it become a "hematographic music," no longer restrained by "prolific avarice obtuse music;" a music "without ram, or age, or ramage, and which has neither tone nor age" (Derrida 1982: xv)? In his reflections on the politics of friendship, Derrida advances as a basis for friendship the insecurity of an empathetic mode of listening. Love in friendship, or "lovence," is possible for Derrida, provided that

> you open yourself, trembling, on to the 'perhaps'. [...] That is what can take place, if one thinks with a minimum of coherence the *logic* of the *perhaps*. This is, rather what can happen to logic following the experience of the *perhaps*. That is what may happen to experience, perhaps, and to the concept of experience (Derrida 1997: 69, 70).

Derrida emphasizes the perhaps-structure of an effort to listen to the other, and in so doing also displaces the very modality of hearing at play in such an effort. Deconstruction, in the thought of music, then, is a *way of hearing*; it is the keen attention paid to a friend. Like Marion Guck's "music loving," deconstructive listening yields "to powers music has to engage and change those who become intensely involved with it;" it is a modality that attempts to hear the "unheard-of" thought in a musical experience, which in turn traces the conditions of its possibility and impossibility (Guck 1995: 1; Derrida 1982: 22). Such a mode of listening is alert to musical features, figures, shapes, events, interactions, affiliations, etc., that *fail* to line up with the music's most apparent field of operation, and, in so doing, sharpens, and even alters, the very mode that has been put into play.[7] Deconstruction in music is thus a mode of alertness.

[7] The necessary poetic metaphors – figure, shape, event, etc. – do not apply without preparation; they merely function as a foundational ruse; the faulty foothold that makes possible a musical deconstruction.

To begin with the tone: Listening to the resonance of the tone on the first beat of the fourth measure in Beethoven's piano sonata, op. 10, no. 3, can be a strange oscillatory experience.[8] Does this open chord, sparely sounding four octaves of the note A, sound like a tonic or a dominant? Or does it sound like a tonic but function like a dominant – a tonic-sounding dominant? (If so, does the sound weigh upon the function?) The strange neither/nor-yet-both/and resonance of the note comes out of a passage characterized by a short scalar descent in octaves from D to A (m. 1), followed by an arpeggiation of the D major chord (m. 2), and then a short scalar ascent to A (m. 3). A strangely sliding invertible situation; slippery because the octaves on D and A, clearly sounding as melodic/harmonic pillars in the flow, echo in a shifting rhythm across the tuneful down-and-up. This is to say that D, which first appears on the weak upbeat, appears on two successive strong downbeats; in contrast, A, which first appears on two successive weak downbeats, appears finally on a strong downbeat.[9] When the music halts on this last beat, it sounds startled, as if interrupted by a rhythmic rule of accent. It is a moment suddenly caught naked, looking askance for its garments. Stranded on an untimely tone (is it belated or premature?), the passage releases a functional phantasm. It is not that the functional context of this tone is itself put into question here; there is no question, that is, that the music is in the ringing clarity of D Major. And yet the specific character of the tone is, strictly speaking, undecidable. The equivocal reverberation of this moment is obviously not an aesthetic flaw; nor can its precise function be said to become clarified by the ensuing music (which continues with a first inversion D Major triad). On the contrary, the undecidability, which issues precisely when the pause invites us to ponder the music on the basis of a tone's *presence*, conditions the very experiential horizon of the tone. This is the unforeseen shadow dance of the music's *Mehrdeutlichkeit*.

When the music recalls the opening passage again (in mm. 17 ff.) it rides on the very ambiguity of this moment. In *this* passage, intensified by the offbeat rhythmicization of left and right hand parts, the melody travels right through the above-discussed pause on A, as if to avoid the mixedupness of such pausing, and moves ever-upward, sounding a prominent downbeat on D *en route*, towards F#. Having obliterated all traces of its exposed flirtation with a dominant function, the new pause (on m. 22) seems to emit a less ambiguous sound: the robust delivery of the tonic's third degree; a full *fortissimo* blow intoned in a measured *tempo rubato*. And yet, as if to yield, against odds, to the lingering double-meaning of arrested melodic movement, the F# too functions as both tonic and dominant – the third degree of tonic in D Major, that is, and the first degree of dominant in B Minor (in which key the music continues on its way). Arguably, the already-sounded chromatic A# serves to prepare the tonicization of B Minor to follow, which in turn grants F# its new operative ambiguity between tonic and dominant. But the earlier appearance of the chromatic A# (m. 13) served, harmonically speaking, to craft the cadence that ultimately reinforced the key of D major; while the second appearance of the chromatic A# served, rhythmically speaking, to reinforce the arrival of D on the downbeat of m. 21. As it was with A, F#s new double meaning is unawaited. So once again, the music's second pause on a single unadorned tone opens into the oblique reverberations of unanticipated doubleness. These pauses (which, aside from the literal repetition in the recapitulation, do not recur until the pause placed on the last silence closing the movement) are a summons to listen, within the music's internal temporalities, to a diversity whose resonance cannot be foreheard.

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[8] I would like to thank Joseph Dubiel for inviting me to consider the paradoxes of this musical moment.

[9] Beethoven draws attention to these shifting points of melodic/harmonic emphasis by (1) beginning the music on the note D; and also by (2) placing the ensuing D's on respective downbeats (in mm.2 and 3); and by (3) allowing A to register the boundaries of the melodic enclosure (the low point in m. 1 and the high point in m. 4), and also (4) beginning an additional layer of octave doubling on A in midmeasure (in m. 2).

It is clear of course that the peculiar resonance of Beethoven's A, no less than his F#, is heard within the context of a common practice system of functional tonality. However, far from simply shoehorning our hearing into the pre-given convention that guides it, deconstructive listening, situated within a deliberately framed and impossible present, operates at a remove from the music's normative behavior. By marking moments that fail to be fully reclaimed by their generalized traditional sense, the music issues a warning against the dubiousness of its own second-nature. It opens the horizon of what is hearable in the music of that tradition. This does not mean that the deconstructive resonance of a musical tone, or a musical sonority, necessarily fluctuates against a *fixed* tradition. Deconstructive listening, one might say, marks the undecidability of what goes as tradition, casting perspectives thereby onto its very conditioning grounds. Tradition, one might say, opens into hesitation.

The contradictory resonance of the sonority that lingers at the end of Helmut Lachenmann's *ein kinderspiel*, for solo piano (1980) dramatizes, in a very different tonal context for example, this tradition-disconcerting (deconstructive) mode of attention. The final movement, as if to encourage such a mode, is revealingly titled *Schattentanz*. At first, the music sounds like a minimalist elaboration of an unchanging half-tone dyad (C/B, in the piano's highest register) in the context of a child-like rhythmic dance. Two basic rhythmic figures appear throughout: a typical long-short gigue figure and a dotted-note figure whose initial long-short pattern can be heard as a kind of diminution of the gigue figure. The overall rhythmic pattern of m.1, presenting the gigue figure for three beats followed by the dotted figure for one beat, is itself a kind of augmentation of the long-short motif; it becomes a characteristic macro-rhythm defining the overall flow. The two basic rhythmic figures reduce to a single note value (sometimes a quarter, sometimes a dotted quarter) at three places in the movement (mm. 25-30; 61-68; 82-ff.). As it might be with an eighteenth-century gigue, the music's measures are initially patterned into simple groupings that, while never quite predictable, constellate into measure units of two, four, eight, sixteen, and so on. Internal differentiation between groupings is provided by the distributions of characteristic figures, changes in dynamics and adjustments in resonance created by the pedal as well as by silently depressed keys on an octave A in the low bass.

In this way, arrangements of metric/rhythmic emphasis shift throughout the piece. In the opening measures, for example, the grand crescendo and the dotted figure discharge a first-beat accentuation (the absence of a crescendo in m. 5 is offset by the inclusion of a dotted figure in m.6); while in mm. 9-10 the accent shifts to the second and fourth beats (emphasized by the depressed pedal on these beats), neither of which assumes strict hierarchic precedence. It is in this newly aligned period of beating that something uncanny materializes: the stratospheric cluster suddenly shades over with the mysterious designs of heterogeneous percussion. We hear in the innards of the seemingly familiar sonority a deep and unimaginable echo; it has not yet emerged but it is no longer submerged – like the haunting apparition of a colossal army on the march. This is a minimalist gigue becoming a march of the multitude. What is happening? The sound is becoming other; it is beginning, in Derrida's lexicon, "to tympanize" – musically, to "relate [...] to something to which it has no relation;" it is ceding to "hematographic music," uncovering a looming presence hidden in the shadow-dance (Derrida 1982: x, xiv, xv).

When the apparition recedes (on the second beat of m. 13?), the dotted-note figure of the music's first rhythmic pattern seems to arrive too early. Seduced by the looming left-right-left-right that we strain to resist, our sense of temporal proportion has been bewitched; a beat has been forgotten. Shortly after this, the dotted figure seems to arrive too late because the gigue-like beating begins, as an upbeat, early (mm. 20-21). (Did we find the lost beat?) These passages oscillate precariously between the two fields of accentuation presented thus far (first beat

accentuations in mm. 13-16 and 21-24; and second and fourth beat accentuations in mm. 17-20 and 25-30). It is in this last passage that the dance figures have whittled down into single notes, and the compound-time gigue steps fully yield into and become grim marching. It is as if the march, which once loomed in the shadows, has now *subjugated* the dance. The shock of this moment lies in the way the shadow-timbres begin to loom large over the cluster. Viscerally overwhelming the descant dance-fragment – now whimpering, abbreviated and naïve – the shadow resonance comes alive with the booming insecurity of wavering resonance. Each inexorable boom is inflected by a hitherto unimagined multiplicity. There is drumming in the depths and tapping in the heights, there are dispersals of overtone coloration, declensions of micro-mingling echoes, peripheral sounds, residual sounds, chimera. The massive march reverberates: *mehrdeutig*.

This indirect experience, not evident when we first encountered the sonority in itself and also weirdly de-linked from the direct motor actions of the pianist, is the uncanny excess that comes into earshot deconstructively. This resonance is the missing piece/the extra piece that was aurally present all along; it is the necessary accessory that menaces the security of our hearing the descant *in itself*. After the piece makes a turn through another metric displacement, this time bringing emphasis to the third beat (mm. 22-40), we find the pianist's resonance-producing techniques themselves displaced. Here two parallel two-measure groups insinuate a different *quality* of echo; in the first (mm. 41-42 and mm. 45-46) the crescendo is spatially expanded by the left pedal, in the second (mm. 43-44 and 47-48) the crescendo is spatially expanded by the middle pedal (with the low octave on A silently depressed). A distinction between the hitherto, albeit wavering, equivalent-seeming resonance effects comes unexpectedly to the ear; a contrast that is particularly pronounced in the isolated attacks on the second beats of measures 61-68, which exchange left and middle pedals. The inner recesses of the sound, it turns out, has an oscillating residue; its qualities differentiate. At the end of the movement, the displacement of resonance from source becomes absolute. The final tones are produced by the pedal alone, which is lifted and depressed ("*marcato possible*") in march-like time. From these foot movements emanate the residue of sounds still swirling in the rattled belly of the piano. Weirdly, the noise of the pedal *release* booms gulpingly (like some phantom dominant) below the ever-clearing tonal resonance. Down-up, down-up, short-long, short-long (it goes): the long-short-ishness of the music has finally become a short-long. Has the dancing finger-music finally become the footwork of a march?

By listening to the music as an apparitional transformation from its self-present sounding (as gigue, as pitch cluster) into an entirely alien soundscape (as march, as ghostly cry) marks the differential structure of our hold on the music's self-presence. In Adorno's terms, one might say, this is the "more" that art appears to be saying:

> To wrest this more from that more's contingency, to gain control of its semblance, to determine it as semblance as well as to negate it as unreal: This is the idea of art (Adorno 1997: 78).

In Derrida's terms, one might say, the music has yielded to its intimate alterity, "the irreducibility of the aftereffect, the delay" (Derrida 1982: 21). As it is with deconstruction, the music's "metaphysical drumming" unleashes the oblique resonance of the tympanum; it "repercusses its [...] limit [...] in sonorous representation;" "attempts to think th[e] unheard-of thought" (Derrida 1982: xiii, xix, 22). Deconstruction, in music, then operates on the basis of a musical detail, figure, shape, event – to the extent that such a nominal accretion can be isolated and spoken about – that unexpectedly exceeds itself, reaching out and becoming something other than what it

takes itself to be. It begins to relate to something to which it has no immediately apparent relation, and which no theory will have been prepared to conform or translate in advance.

5. Idealization to a Prelude

> The aim of every artistic utopia today is to make
> things of which
> we do not know what they are.
> (Adorno 1992: 322)

Deconstruction, then, is an act of close listening, a modality that seeks to open the horizon of differential traces lingering in the music's internal temporalities. It does not offer a theory of music; nor even an analysis of the music under consideration. Deconstruction is *en route* to a theoretical beginning; an idealization to a prelude. It does not "apply" to some music better than to other music; nor does it only operate on the mechanism of resonance (as in my two examples above). It is true that some recent music takes as its task the very dramatization of the deconstructive mode of hearing. The strangely resounding difference tones (tones of difference?) in "Louis Andriessen's ironic *Ende* (1981), for 2 alto recorders (1 player), for example, explore resonance-effects that disfigure the naïve hold we have on the music's initial presence. Or, the chimerical tempo fluctuations in György Ligeti's first etude for piano, *Désordre* (1985), explore inherent patterns that emerge like illusions in a granulated continuum. And so on. It is even possible today to identify an assemblage of compositional thought that consciously articulates with a relentlessly critical or deconstructive mode. For Wolfgang Rihm, whose engagement with Adorno is well-known, for example, the musical work is driven by a quest for its internal "Other," which in turns opens into a presentiment of utopian freedom. Ligeti too claims to have successfully realized Adorno's negatively utopian "*musique informelle*" in his 1963 work *Atmosphères* (see Adorno 1992: 269-322). The list of self-professed deconstructive music is long.

But such aspirations notwithstanding, deconstruction is not associated with a musical genre as such. As Derrida tirelessly points out, there is a history and a tradition of deconstruction, "from Luther to Heidegger (Luther was already speaking of *Destruktion* to refer to a sort of critique of institutional theology in the name of the original authenticity of the evangelical message)" (Derrida 2005: 115). Deconstruction is less a postmodern characteristic of music and more a precarious exegesis of music's embedded enigmas. In Derrida's words, "It's what comes along [*arrive*: happens];" "It is the possibility of the impossible" (Derrida 2005: 114). Some recent music theory, albeit apparently unaware of its allegiance, in fact defines music's unique character in terms that betray a general affinity with deconstruction. David Lewin, for example, has defined musical ideas in terms of a dense transformational logic, whereby every musical event, down to the bare musical interval, is an internally differentiated trace of a radically temporalized phenomenological situation. (For a fuller discussion of the affinities between Lewin and Derrida, see Scherzinger 2004.) In Lewin's lexicon, the musical experience is an omni-temporalized text, which, like dissemination, produces boundless semantic effects, and thus disconcerts the desire to pin down an exhaustive checklist of its signifieds. Music, it seems, illuminates deconstructive thought.

When Lewin analyzes Franz Schubert's song *Morgengruß* from *Die Schöne Müllerin*, for example, he strategically frames a perception of the contents of m. 12 *as if* they could be spatialized on the basis of a self-evident positivity (Lewin 1986). Listening closely to this impossi-

ble presence disseminates into multiple temporal horizons that make possible the perception. In Derrida's scheme, dissemination/*différance* interrupts any identity of a term or concept to itself, or any homogeneity of a term/concept within itself. By marking the detour/supplement through which a concept comes to meaningfulness, *différance* submerges the concept in a signifying chain that lies beyond the immediate context of that concept. The concept is thus no longer only itself in itself. It becomes a conceptual effect, a nominal accretion produced by a complex interweaving of signifiers: a concept-metaphor. Irreducibly temporalized, then, the contents of m. 12 become non-identical transformations with no stable referent. For example, the sound is at once a kind of blues-inflected V chord (a leading-note-less dominant sensation), a propulsive sequence on the way to D Minor (a functional predominant), an aspect of a move towards C Minor (a descending chromatic journey through flattened seventh and sixth degrees), a decorative inmate of a large-scale dominant prolongation in C Major (an upper neighbor to the neighboring A-flat that prominently colors the music's basic progressions), and so on. None of these inflections, contradictory as they are, fully cancel out any other; the perceptual adjustments of attitude precisely put into play the aesthetic content of the music. There is no essence of m.12. Like *différance*, "it (is) that which not only could never be appropriated in the as such of its name or its appearing, but also that which threatens the authority of the as such in general, of the presence of the thing itself in its essence" (Derrida 1982: 26).

Likewise, when Joseph Dubiel analyzes the first movement of Mozart's piano sonata, K. 331, he strategically frames a perception of the inner pedal tone E *as if* it could be isolated as a naïve positivity (Dubiel 2006). Close attention to its persistent presence deconstructively transforms the very identity of its apparent immobility. For Dubiel, ontological complications precisely derive from the changing musical attributions we can grant E in its shifting sonorous context. Its innocuous first appearance as a harmonizing inner voice (unresponsive to the melodic moves of the surrounding parallel tenths), that is, transforms in the context of m. 2. This is not a metamorphosis based on the truism that *all* and *any* repetition is change. In m. 2, E has come, at once, to be more *peripheral* from the surrounding sonority (unflinching in the context of melodic dancing), and more *central* (providing the root for dominant harmony) than it was before. The odd second inversion constellation, a fourth plus a minor seventh (B3, E4, D5), produced on the second half of m. 2 begins, inaudibly almost, to divide the two halves of an apparently parallel measure. In m.3, this odd constellation appears again, this time a minor seventh plus a fourth (F#3, E4, A4), made odder still by the fact that it cannot be easily assimilated into an idiomatic chord. For Dubiel, the very oddness "draws out for us the less obtrusive oddness of the preceding {B3, E4, D5}, the two joining in a kind of private communication at a remove from the music's normative triads:" another *Schattentanz* that flashes up and vanishes in the disseminating resonance of Mozart's music (Dubiel 2006: 9).

It is not only that the flux constitutes the paradoxical ontological creation of the tone of our listening, but that the theory itself shifts under the sway of such listening. The grammar of the pedal point, its stasis apparently producing dissonance against shifting normative harmonies, is menaced thereby. Dubiel's analysis, that is to say, poses the question: Is the E4 dissonant against the melodic F#? Or is the F# suddenly dissonant against *it*?[10] Once again, this musical moment suddenly encounters one of its horizons of undecidability. In the words of Derrida,

> It erases itself in presenting itself, muffles itself in resonating, like the a writing itself, inscribing its pyramid in différance (Derrida 1982: 23).

[10] It is as if F# can no longer be relied upon as leading the musical action. As it was with the B3 in m.2, which did not resolve felicitously, F#s (melodic) independence is called to question.

As to the identity of the pedal point, then, one might ask: "Is it nameable, that which it is wearing itself out trying to name?" (Derrida 1997: 71).

> There will be no unique name, even if it were the name of Being. And we must think this without nostalgia, that is, outside of the myth of a purely maternal or paternal language, a lost native country of thought. On the contrary, we must affirm this, in the sense in which Nietzsche puts affirmation into play, in a certain laughter and a certain step of the dance. (Derrida 1982: 27)

To dance in music's shadows: Mozart's ephemeral other-tongue, Beethoven's unanticipated resonance, Schubert's contradictory criteria, Andriessen's disfiguration, Ligeti's acoustic illusion, Lachenmann's dispersal. These are the preludes to an ideal over which no system can gain complete control. The squinting tympanum: to listen to things of which we do not know what they are.

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Mémoire: on Music and Deconstruction

Spomin: o glasbi in dekonstrukiji

Ključne besede: estetika, alegorija, kritična teorija, dekonstrukcija, razlika, ideologija, glasba, muzikologija, teorija glasbe, analiza glasbe, organicizem, postmodernizem, poststrukturalizem, semiotika, enovitost

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POVZETEK

Raziskave pogostih poststrukturalističnih implikacij o interpretaciji glasbe so vidno prispevale k širitvi skupine diskurzov anglo-ameriške muzikologije v zadnjih dobrih dvajsetih letih. Težnja, ki se je pokazala v poznih 1980-ih, je povezana najbolj izrazito z mlajšo generacijo analitikov glasbe, ki skuša premisliti posledice postmoderne kritične misli v odnosu do uveljavljenih kanonov sistematične teorije glasbe.

Kot prikazuje vrsta prerezov od Monelle (1992), Krims (1998), Ayrey (1998) in Norris (2000), je njene najbolj produktivne rezultate mogoče kodificirati v razmerju do splošne kritike estetske ideologije. Vendar pa so bile politične posledice, utelešene v tovrstnih raziskovalnih pristopih, v 1990-ih večinoma razpršene znotraj ohlapno opredeljene 'Nove muzikologije', ko so bili učinki spremenjenosti nanovo naravnani po kritiškem programu, zasnovanem na politikah individualiziranih identitet.

ABSTRACT

The exploration of poststructuralism's likely implications for musical interpretation has formed a distinctive contribution to the expanding ensemble of discourses admitted to Anglo-American musicology over the course of the past twenty years. A trend manifest since the later 1980s, its potential was sensed most strongly by a younger generation of music analysts concerned to trace the reflexive consequences of postmodern critical thought for the established canons of systematic theory.

As acknowledged in a series of overview surveys by Monelle (1992), Krims (1998), Ayrey (1998) and Norris (2000), its most productive outcomes may be codified in relation to a generalised critique of aesthetic ideology. However, the political consequences embodied in such modes of enquiry were largely displaced within a loosely defined 'New Musicology' throughout the 1990s as the effects of alterity became realigned with a critical programme based on individualised identity politics.

Razvejevanje razlik se nadaljuje v debatah o naravi glasbene enovitosti (na primer v delih Agawuja, Chua, Dubiela, Korsyna, Kramerja, Morgana in drugih). Članek si prizadeva pokazati, da posredniški vlogi umetnostne oblike ne bi smeli dovoliti, da prikrije emancipatorično moč dekonstrukcije, kot jo je uveljavil Derrida. V tem oziru kaže razumeti uporništvo poststrukturalizma videti kot značilno za zagovor akademskega statusa muzikologije v času, ko disciplini grozi institucionalen konec.

The ramifications of difference continue to inform critical debate regarding the nature of musical unity (for instance, in the work of Agawu, Chua, Dubiel, Korsyn, Kramer, Morgan and others). However, this paper argues that the mediating role of artistic form ought not to be permitted to obscure the emancipatory capacity of deconstruction as affirmed by Derrida. In this respect, the message of resistance inscribed within poststructuralism should be seen as emblematic for the defence of musicology's academic status at a time when the discipline remains under threat of institutional closure.

In a recent summary introduction to the work of Jacques Derrida (Smith 2005), James Smith remarks that if deconstruction is an event which never takes place without love, it is also a process ineluctably aligned with the condition of mourning. On the one hand, deconstruction names an affirmative exigency that inscribes a positive response to the call of the other. Thus in speaking of his hopes in death, an event which was itself inscribed on 9 October 2004, Derrida notes, in a typically affecting musical reference, that he would want

> one thing only, and that is to lose myself in the orchestra I would form with my sons, heal, bless and seduce the whole world by playing divinely with my sons, produce with them the world's ecstasy, *their* creation. I will accept dying if dying is to sink slowly, yes, into the bottom of this beloved music. (Derrida quoted in Smith 2005: xvii)

Yet on the other, it signifies the impossibility of mourning, through the tasks of mediation and translation by which memory, in the linguistic idioms of the eulogy and the memorial tribute, is obliged to commit itself to the textual folds of narrative.

Writing in the Preface to the French edition of his Wellek Library lectures published in 1988 (Derrida 1989), Derrida also draws attention to the overlapping rhetorical patterns that link these same idioms to that of autobiography. Attempting here to give form to the relationship between music and deconstruction, such textual resonances seem to me inescapable; a series of echoes for a lost moment in Anglo-American musicology whose cultural and political implications may yet have irredeemable consequences for the discipline's academic survival. True this already belated commentary for a friend and former student at the University of Exeter will inevitably bear the negative imprints of loss and displacement attendant on the enforced closure of its Department of Music. And, as with any memorial reflection, it is bound to submit not only to the deconstructive tracing of the *mneme* of living memory by the *hypomnesis* of dead language, but also no doubt the attendant bad faith of self-absorption, self-delusion and

denial that as Pascale-Anne Brault and Michel Naas remind us (Derrida 2001) haunt the good intentions of personal testimony. However, although the I which acknowledges these failings through the figure of prosopopoeia does so under a shadow of pessimism, it also responds, as Derrida advises, with a promise 'whose opening toward the present to come is not that of an expectation or an anticipation but that of commitment' (Derrida 1989: 47).

For a British music theorist – analyst – working as a graduate student during the mid-1980s, the range of texts that engendered a curiosity towards deconstruction, were relatively small in number. The work of Jean-Jacques Nattiez was responsible for introducing a tradition of structuralist and semiotic thought. But if Nattiez's 1985 essay outlining the concepts of seriation process and plot encouraged a newly relativist spirit at the level of synchronic interpretation, it was Joseph Kerman's historicisation of the general musicological discipline that conveyed the virtue of a more thoroughgoing self-critical purpose with regard to interpretative orientation. In Kerman's long-since familiar formulation (Kerman 1985: 17), while "semiotics, hermeneutics, and phenomenology" were then being drawn upon "only by some of the boldest of musical studies", "post-structuralism, deconstruction, and serious feminism" had "yet to make their debuts in musicology or music theory". In this context, the work of Christopher Norris was gratefully received as the prime example of a literary theorist conversant not only with the full panoply of postmodern critical discourse, but also its potential extension into the high canon of Western music. Hence *The Contest of Faculties* (Norris 1985) became an indispensable guide text, and 'Utopian Deconstruction: Ernst Bloch, Paul de Man and the Politics of Music' (Norris 1988) its most potent single-essay length distillation.

The prospects for elaborating the writings of Paul de Man for a music-theoretical community still largely untouched by shared interdisciplinary concerns were nonetheless as contingent at they seemed compelling. Without the fortuitous transatlantic perception of a Yale University-centred common cause grounded in text-based close reading, any further exploration, however ultimately beneficial, would have appeared predominantly tangential. Such is the context for my own early statement in this sphere (Street 1989). All the same, a number of other music theorists were simultaneously exhibiting their own modes of hermeneutic curiosity, thereby implying a developing momentum that would continue to gather speed and range throughout the 1990s. That an inclusive – if not altogether unanimous – spirit of adventure was beginning to gain ground was in part confirmed by the publication of an essay collection, *Theory, Analysis and Meaning in Music*, under the editorial guidance of Anthony Pople (Pople 1994). Yet two years earlier, an adept codification of analytical musicology's burgeoning alignment with post-structuralism had already appeared as the concluding chapter of Raymond Monelle's single-volume survey, *Linguistics and Semiotics in Music* (Monelle 1992).

Headed *Deconstruction and Allegory*, Monelle's summary effectively triggered a small sub-genre of synoptic overview essays perhaps more notable for their synthetic rather than analytical content. Not that Monelle himself neglected to account for the critical purchase that deconstructive leverage might be capable of exerting both within the musical text and outside it; indeed, his survey remains convincing for the way in which the discursive embedding afforded by the Derridean lexicon of différance, *écriture*, trace, supplement, hymen, margin and so on is read against specific examples taken from the Western musical tradition. So, for example, the effect of the frame as the point of erasure between work and world is neatly illustrated with reference to the means by which a critical metalanguage is irreducibly folded into the autonomous structures – for instance Beethoven's Op. 18 String Quartets as glossed by Vogler and Galeazzi – it attempts faithfully to describe. Similarly, the undecidable relationship between literal and figurative meanings so rigorously examined by de Man is exemplified with reference

to Robert Samuels's reading of the topical antinomies at work in the Scherzo of Mahler's Sixth Symphony. More important, however, than the additional warnings raised against terminological appropriation – here situated on the ground of Brahms's Intermezzo Op. 118 No. 2 as contested by Samuels again, this time in relation to a reading advanced by Robert Snarrenberg – was Monelle's articulation of the further disjunction which intervenes between commentary and composition. Thus far from achieving a metaphysical point of fusion with its desired object, any interpretation instead represents

> the analyst's track through the unending codes that permit the music to be heard as a structure. Placed metonymically alongside the music, it represents an encounter between music and listener that suggestively opens the space between signifier and signified and invites the third person, who is both reader and listener, to embark on structuration. (Monelle 1992: 316)

In certain respects, this assertion carries a stronger imprint of the recommendations made by both Roland Barthes and Umberto Eco on the shift from closed work to open text than any single statement by either Derrida or de Man. Nonetheless, for a disciplinary field such as music theory and analysis still in the grip of an unreflecting concept of unity, the sense of a committed challenge to the prevailing conceptual order was eloquently reinforced. For his part, Monelle also acknowledged that the consequences of any deconstructive event should extend to a disabling of the nonconceptual order within which any conceptual framework is articulated. Yet over the six years which intervened between his survey and those assembled by Adam Krims and Craig Ayrey (Krims 1998, Ayrey 1998), it is evident that the agenda for disciplinary transformation had witnessed little in the way of decisive transformation.

If Ayrey's review article was occasioned by the most sustained text of its kind, Rose Rosengard Subotnik's *Deconstructive Variations*, Krims's essay appears to owe at least part of its inspiration to the fact that a full decade had elapsed since Snarrenberg's first venture into the deconstructive field. Taking care to contextualise the prior literary turn away from post-structuralism toward a broader-based engagement with power relations as manifest across the terrain of cultural studies, Krims registers the extent to which four music theorists, Snarrenberg, Martin Scherzinger, Lawrence Kramer and Richard Littlefield, had sought to delimit deconstructive work for the purposes of analytical close reading. Although Krims concedes Samuels's earlier criticism of Snarrenberg's attachment to a sense of self-present perception, he finds the disciplinary reflex to be equally constitutive. Consequently while Snarrenberg gestures towards some measure of interpretative defamiliarisation, his conclusions are primarily reductive; in short, Snarrenberg's naturalised acceptance of a systematic theoretical orientation means that the concept of metalanguage retains for him its essentialised status. The difference which might nonetheless make a difference is identified by the term "topicality", a concept Krims borrows from the work of Slavoj Žižek. Topicality marks the point of self-reflexive interrogation, thereby figuring the contradictory complicity of any critical discourse with its enabling frames. As Krims notes, Derrida's practice of "writing under erasure" inscribes the impossibility of a consistent topicality, of perpetual self-resistance. Yet while such a condition must remain impossibly out of reach, it also throws into relief the extent to which analytical close reading had sought to preserve the institutional status quo.

In fact Krims's highly compacted reference to Žižek's concept of the "moment" as congruent with the temporal implications of Derridean différance is indicative of his own enabling frame: less a wish to engage with deconstructive work per se than to trace the implicit ideo-

logical bias by which it has been used to sustain an established cultural practice within the academy. Hence both Scherzinger's reading of the finale from Mahler's Seventh Symphony and Lawrence Kramer's interpretation of the 'La malinconia' passage from Beethoven's String Quartet Op. 18 No. 6 are shown to pursue methodological ends without any sense of auto-critical awareness. That said, Krims's alternative analysis of bars 13-18 from the Beethoven finale Adagio perhaps discloses its own collusive irony in turn, even while the intention is to expose the foundationalist investment that Kramer makes in favour of an instrumental relationship between listening subject and textual object. Even so, this does allow Krims to make a telling point against any alternative assumption that "subjectivity as a general category" might be formed exclusively, or even primarily, "in musical experience" (Krims 1998: 315). And by proceeding to valorise Richard Littlefield's explicit probing of the notion of the music-analytical frame as a scaffold for the "ideologemes of Nature, organicism, and asethetic autonomy" (Krims 1998: 317), he is able to round out his genealogical survey by identifying music analysis as a disciplinary field as yet still reluctant to recognise its socially-constructed situation.

So far as these signs might be thought definitive, then, analytical musicology in the 1990s seemingly had little new to say about its preoccupations with either textual immanence or aestheticised perception. If various scholars had sought to elaborate a different position, then their work appeared confined to relatively isolated or abstract formulations (for the sake of illustration, I name myself here). The publication of Subotnik's two essay collections in fairly rapid succession (Subotnik 1991, Subotnik 1996) might thus have been viewed more programmatically in light of the as yet uneven context into which they were received. However, Craig Ayrey's review commentary gives a clear guide as to the promise and limitations of Subotnik's standpoint. Each of Subotnik's books attests to the breadth of her concerns, as much defined by a desire for social justice in North America as by a compulsion to explicate music's mediated character. In this respect, her own career history is itself regarded emblematically; first as the non-tenurable apostasy of a music historian turned Adorno scholar, and latterly as the promptings of a cultural relativist keen to deflect Adornian claims on behalf of aesthetic modernism towards a more inclusive sense of subjective engagement. Examined between the empathetic pages of *Music Analysis*, and by a reader as theoretically attuned as Ayrey, therefore, such factors might have been thought to take on an entirely positive value. In the event, his appraisal is generally more ambivalent, and ultimately weighted towards enhanced close reading as a predominantly formalist pursuit.

The materialist critique called for by Krims is firmly apparent in Subotnik's attempt to deconstruct the supposed cognitive valued embodied in structural listening. As Ayrey observes, Subotnik willingly confronts the modernist legacy of Schoenberg-Adorno by proposing a relativised perceptual strategy grounded in stylistic contingency. True, the attendant gains in favour of sensuous, expressive, emotional and verbalisable responses may seem thoroughly democratic in spirit. Yet as Ayrey concludes, their implications are culturally essentialist on at least two key counts: on the one hand in as much as they might debar an intentional preference *for* structural listening, and on the other in so far as they merely invert the Adornian imperative through an "insistence on the universality of immediacy" which could therefore amount to a form of complicity "with [...] prevailing social conditions" (Ayrey 1998: 348).

Such claims might also seem to fall short of any detailed evaluation of musical experience. On this point, however, Subotnik presents something more of a *tours de force*; in sum contested readings of Chopin's A major Prelude Op. 28 No. 7 that altogether run for 119 pages. Here the purpose is avowedly ambitious: nothing less than a deconstructive reshaping of the

text according to the conflicting polarities of freedom and contingency in a postmodern age. Ayrey's synoptic reading is largely exemplary, the effects of mediating structural articulation being tabulated in a parallel sequence of seven key points divided according to their objective and subjective derivations. But whereas he adjudges Subotnik to conceive of deconstruction as a means of compensating "for various types of lack of prohibition in Adorno" (Ayrey 1998: 355), even "a more gentle, less confrontational, and perhaps more immediately humane application of Adorno's dialectical method" (Ayrey 1998: 356), his response is not to question the critical cost so much as to attempt to refine the activity of close reading from within. The issue is not surrendered immediately. For instance, his recognition that Subotnik is "incorrigibly ideological" in so far as no new meaning is generated by her analysis "other than the 'subjectivity' proposed in advance" (Ayrey 1998: 363), is in turn matched at the level of the text by the suggestion that différance most likely "becomes a conceptual strategy in instrumental music only when musical culture is thoroughly implicated in the device of writing, when that culture becomes subject to a grammatology that deploys rhetoric (in the modern sense) rather than logic – say, in the early nineteenth century" (Ayrey 1998: 358). But the interpretation of the A major Prelude that he subsequently assembles, for all its elegance and ingenuity, is fatally compromised by its declared instrumental purpose. Thus in terms already interrogated by Krims, Ayrey is compelled to assert that the "crucial deconstructive operation applied to music theory as Concept [...] is to prise method from the system it exemplifies, to use method as a tool rather than as a machine" (Ayrey 1998: 376).

Still in thrall to the seemingly unbreakable spell of its ideological past, analytical musicology might be thought to have misread both its motives and capacity for engaging with deconstructive theory. Indeed in the most recent capsule summary, it is slightly surprising, even refreshing, to read that while this is "a specialised area of research [...] whose appeal is mainly to the younger generation of music theorists", its influence "is already apparent in the widespread questioning of analytical methods" (Norris 2000: 126). If Christopher Norris's dictionary entry for the second edition of *The New Grove* was bound in part to record the ways in which deconstructive work in music had followed his own prior lead, his survey also captures the most effective consequences of its autocritical potential. For if analytical practice seemed incapable of transforming its normative identity, the acknowledgement of its dependence on what de Man had termed the aesthetic ideology was far more pervasive at the level of theory. As Norris relates, a complex of logocentric meanings could be challenged by placing a destabilising emphasis on music's material and temporal – that is, metonymic – condition: the status of organicism as a master trope; the generic hierarchy sustaining the image of a privileged canon; the reduction of heterogeneous experience to purely formal apprehension; the assimilation of work to history and history to work that encourages a hegemonic belief in certain species of compositional method and style; the centralisation of the Germanic canon as the consummate expression of the nineteenth-century *Zeitgeist*; and the naturalisation of a mythology wherein spiritual truth, unity, freedom and necessity could be equated with the cultural forms of a dominant political power. In concrete terms, the performative readings conducted in this vein, Norris also notes, tended to focus on instances of textual aporia, antinomies, paradoxes and contradictions apparent within their chosen sources – in effect, the kinds of preoccupation that might have been deemed characteristic of American deconstruction in general. Nevertheless, the prospect, as Monelle recognised, for beginning to think outside the non-conceptual space within which such conceptual oppositions had been formed still lacked any surer orientation than perhaps the desire for a prolonged open questioning of the host discipline which had brought them into being.

None of which is to suppose that the early 1990s seemed anything other than an exciting and energising time for a music-theoretical tradition gradually becoming more aware of its expanding critical horizons. Indeed, poststructuralism seemed only the most prominent representative among an ensemble of interpretative discourses – among them Bloomian influence (Straus 1990, Korsyn 1991), Adornian negative dialectics (Paddison 1993) and Habermasian communicative action (Williams 1997) – likely to enhance an understanding of the postmodern condition and music's place within it. For my own part, the extension of deconstructive work as a means of demystifying Schoenberg's aesthetic theology, both singularly (Street 2000) and as part of a polyphonic tracing of the newest criticism (Street 1996), appeared the most appropriate course to follow. However, while the writings of, for example, Lawrence Kramer began to exploit an apparently inexhaustible flow of hermeneutic productivity, the impression that only a limited form of institutionally-sanctioned change would ever eventuate became almost impossible to ignore.

Kramer himself identified the 1988 meeting of the American Musicological Society in Baltimore as the site of the creation myth for what later became known as the 'New Musicology'. There, he asserted, "the conceptual innovations that had long since shaken up literary and social theory and philosophy finally crossed – or collided – with the familiar positivism and formalism of musical scholarship" (Kramer 1992: 5). It is perhaps a form of shorthand that led Kramer to disregard this meeting as a joint event also involving the Society for Music Theory. However, the point of elision remains indicative for the manner by which the potential for a fully reflexive encounter with the practice of close reading was supplanted by a precipitate reattachment to the contemporary critical canons of race and gender. That the prospects for emancipation and empowerment already conformed to a predominantly North American agenda could be gauged by the extent to which class – with the possible exception of popular music studies – was largely subordinated. Thus an essay collection such as Ruth Solie's *Musicology and Difference* (Solie 1993) chose to frame its engagement with alterity through the subtitle *Gender and Sexuality in Music Scholarship.* And rather than get out from under the legacy of music theory through negotiation, her introduction reiterated an increasingly pervasive disregard for "traditional musical analysis [as ...] one of the most aggressively universalizing discourses still in common use" (Solie 1993: 8, n. 24).

To all intents and purposes, I would suggest, English-speaking musicology's encounter with deconstruction never really took place. Critiques from within such as that by Nattiez against "the hermeneutics of Undecidability" (Nattiez 1993: 272) were generally ignored. Affirmative statements such as Kevin Korsyn's seeking to align de Man's demystification of aesthetic ideology with Terry Eagleton's materialist criticism (Korsyn 1993) likewise experienced a restricted circulation, no doubt perceived to be part of the problem rather than solution in as much their problematising effect could be dismissed as a formalist programme, itself further discredited by association with de Man's wartime journalism. Music theory was not the only non-literary sphere to develop a critical dimension linked to de Man's work during the 1980s and 1990s; as Hal Foster relates in his 1996 study *The Return of the Real*, both Craig Owens and Benjamin Buchloh identified the metonymic effects of allegory during this time as a means of tracing a textualising drive at work within contemporary visual art. For musicology, however, detailed exploration seemed unwarranted. Hence the plenary discussion of the de Man case led by Carolyn Abbate at the Oxford Music Analysis Conference in 1988 finds only a brief post-echo in her book *Unsung Voices* of 1991, such that de Man's belief in music as the paradigmatic allegorical medium is taken as an aestheticised platitude reliant on the nineteenth-century conception of its nature as pure form.

The response within literary studies to de Man's legacy has understandably been far more involved. Writing in homage in 1984 (Derrida 2001), Derrida, with graceful irony, also refers to de Man's preoccupation with music, noting that the component which supports the bridge of stringed instruments and therefore effects the essential spacing that allows the two sounding boards to communicate is known in French by the work *âme*, or soul. Commenting in 1989 following publication of texts produced in the wake of de Man's wartime articles coming to light, Eagleton is even-handed in balancing the former's resolute blindness to the importance of emancipatory politics against a "philosophical acumen and strenuous originality of thought" (Eagleton 2005: 156) committed to the exposure of totalising, teleological and organicist habits of mind. Other commentators have been concerned to separate de Man as primary representative of deconstruction in America from Derrida's own legacy. Thus for Richard Rorty, deconstruction is uninteresting while it aspires to be one more species of antifoundationalism, yet far more compelling in the guise of Derrida's readings of the idealist and phenomenological traditions that he tropes as a distinctively comic writer. By comparison, de Man remains wedded to a belief in deconstruction as negative theology, a form of mourning for divine absence whose characteristic tone "mixes elegy with polemic" (Rorty 1989: 209). More self-defeatingly, Rorty contends, de Man also

> *needs* the discourse of Cartesian philosophy – with its talk of immediate knowledge, self-validating intuitions, and all the rest of it – to remain intelligible and *non*enigmatic. He needs it to remain intelligible in order to contrast the way language works from the way 'the phenomenal world' works (and, indeed, to make sense of the notion of the 'phenomenal' – what appears to the senses, what is present to consciousness, etc.). (Rorty 1989: 211)

Since such pragmatist arguments strike at the heart of de Man's deconstructive readings, it is no surprise to find the master trope of aesthetic ideology, organic unity, singled out for special attention. Hence Richard Shusterman finds de Man correct in denouncing the New Critical doctrine that "literary works are organic unities by virtue of some special ontological status" (Shusterman 1989: 104), yet otherwise reliant on a monolithic, univocal concept of unity that dogmatically ignores the tension of oppositions at work within organic wholes. Norris and Jonathan Culler are similarly upbraided for a puritanical prejudice against aesthetic richness, a condition whose potential solace is otherwise gratefully preserved by the pragmatist conviction that all facts ultimately "dissolve into interpretations" (Shusterman 1989: 109).

Although avowedly non-theoretical, arguments of this kind may be seen to have transferred more or less explicitly into several more recent commentaries on the topic of musical unity. Appearing as it did in the symposium *Rethinking Music,* published in 1999, an essay collection seemingly intended to address the pre-millennial status of Anglo-American musicology through its two principal discourses reflexive at the levels of work (analysis) and world (ethnomusicology), Fred Everett Maus's "Concepts of Musical Unity" marks a clear disciplinary shift away from poststructuralist literary thought. Maus's account is openly indebted to the work of the pragmatist philosopher John Dewey. Furthermore, by equating unity with the nature of listening, Maus is also given to locate its effects "in a particularized, contingent event, rather than an ontologically and experientially mysterious 'work' or 'composition'" (Maus 1999: 180). While some sense of postmodern relativity might be thought to rest on this assertion, Maus is careful to relegate any such supposition to a footnote (as indeed he is the work of both Korsyn and myself). The attention he pays to the vocabulary associated with the idea of unity – coherence, completeness, comprehensiveness, fusion, integrity, integration, logic, synthesis, totality and so on – proves

illuminating. Yet, for a commentary so strongly motivated by the immediacy of experience, the narrative makes no attempt to explore this in detail, nor to relate it to any specific auditory event.

By comparison, Robert P. Morgan's 'The Concept of Unity and Music Analysis' (Morgan 2003) is committed to demonstrating how counter-readings of five examples chosen to exemplify structural discontinuity – by Joseph Dubiel, Jonathan Kramer, Kevin Korsyn, Daniel Chua and Kofi Agawu – effectively disable themselves. In Morgan's view, all five examples can be shown to maintain a convincing formal-syntactic coherence. Conversely, and despite the problematising strategies variously put forward by Derrida, de Man, Barthes, Pierre Macherey and Mieke Bal,

> simply to claim that a composition lacks unity [...] is only to say that it fails, leaving it indistinguishable from any others that fail. Though this is apparently not the intention of the analyses considered here, it seems to be their necessary consequence. Put differently, the mere claim that a composition lacks unity necessarily silences the analyst. (Morgan 2003: 27)

In conclusion, Morgan observes that both Michel Foucault (interpreting Flaubert) and Barthes (interpreting Balzac) are given to celebrate the formal connections that hold their chosen texts together. Moreover, the preference for discontinuity not only marks a simple inversion of the existing order, he argues, but also extols "a universalist commitment to anti-unitarianism as applicable to any music" (Morgan 2003: 43).

Placed on the defensive to this degree, it would seem that poststructuralism presently carries little if any live critical charge for music studies. Yet two further deconstructive readings – by Craig Ayrey of Webern's Second Cantata Op. 31 (Ayrey 2002), and Raymond Monelle of music by Bach and Charles Ives (Monelle 2000) – indicate that its recursive effects can still be traced to impressive effect. In Ayrey's virtuoso interpretation, the antinomy of law and freedom named by the Platonic signifier *Nomos* (a term Webern himself approved) is shown to radiate throughout the serial structure of the Cantata's fourth movement, *Leichteste Bürden der Bäume*. In sum, Webern's *Nomos* "defines a decisive moment in the deconstruction of totally administered musical structure, the moment when the challenge to the domination of law from expressivity contains a quasi-ethical sense of responsibility to the law" (Ayrey 2002: 296). Likewise, Monelle advocates the practice of close reading, but here through the intertextual correspondences linking two Bach fugues, BWV901 in F major, and BWV886 in A flat major. In both, the emblematic status of the chromatic descending fourth, or *passus duriusculus* figure, is taken to signify a deconstructive relationship between introversive and extroversive semiosis, between the treatment of dissonance as an aspect of compositional craft, and the function of chromaticism as the expression of a "fervid penitence" (Monelle 2000: 201). This essential tension is further heightened by virtue of the metonymic association of the same component with an urbane trio sonata subject. Yet in charting the allegory of listening within which "the abstract gesture which is rooted in dance and the referential syntagm with its history in song" are articulated (Monelle 2000: 206), Monelle is also preoccupied with revealing "the world beyond the frame" (Monelle 2000: 205). In this regard, the music of Ives is posited as a decisive counter to the utopian vision of musical modernity sustained by Schoenberg and Adorno. For Monelle, the sheer randomness of Ives's scores exposes any residual conception of the work as a reflexive totality to be nothing more than an evident fetish. Hence the purpose of his argument is less to surrender Adorno to his more complacent conservative critics such as Roger Scruton, but rather to celebrate the programmatic subversion of the "capitalist art-economy" (Monelle 2000: 219) that arises from Ives's music despite his own professional blindness to the contrary.

Monelle's thesis is trenchant in substance, if not altogether in tone. Yet if he might appear to misrepresent the passion of the sign as a purely propagandist impulse, it is salutary to note, with Foster, that art-critical appropriations of poststructuralism could be thought to have failed to the extent that aporetic doubt was permitted to displace any sustained analysis of art's position within the political economy. In short, appreciation of the effect of a destabilising textuality does not absolve us from the need to distinguish between "*critics* of the reification and fragmentation of the sign", and "*connoisseurs* of this same process" (Foster 1996: 96). Appraising the correspondence between music and deconstruction, therefore, it would appear imperative to consider the implications of such processes for the very continuation of meaningful dialogue at a time when the academic status of music seems under threat throughout Europe and beyond.

"For knowing how to learn, and learning how to know", writes Derrida, "sight, intelligence and memory are *not* enough. We must also know how to hear, and to listen" (Derrida 1983: 4). Answering this call indirectly, yet in the affirmative, Alastair Williams contends that

> musicology is a fully socialized medium that participates in the construction and negotiation of identity. Like music, musicology does not just reflect what happens elsewhere; it offers ways of inhabiting and shaping the world (Williams 2001: 140).

Nothing in this statement could I disagree with. All the same, the micropolitical effects of tenure pursuit in the United States, and the state-sponsored Research Assessment Exercise operative across all disciplines within the United Kingdom, both still conspire to exert pressures that either distort or drown out such empowering potential. "Desiring to remove the university from 'useful' programs and from professional ends", writes Derrida, "one may always, willingly or not, find oneself serving unrecognized ends, reconstituting powers of caste, class, or corporation" (Derrida 1983: 18). Here, Kevin Korsyn accepts the challenge of mediation, advising that "since music has always had an ambiguous location in the university, never fully legitimate, never quite at home, we might now exploit our marginality and embrace it" (Korsyn 2003: 183). Picking up on the Fordist principles that underpin the corporatist model of the university, Korsyn questions the institutionalised logic of both peer review and professionalised tenure, supposing that institutional patterns might indeed be rebuilt in a way that would resist the progressive commodification of knowledge. Philip Bohlman, Ellen Koskoff and David Lewin are variously taken to provide "suggestive models for how we might negotiate among different sociocultural languages" (Korsyn 2003: 187). However, it is to be hoped that the related image of a contested "agonistic space" (Korsyn 2003: 187) does not come to equate with a bland apologia for the North American Way. For Derrida, conversely, "'thought' requires *both* the principle of reason *and* what is beyond the principle of reason, the *arkhe* and an-archy" (Derrida 1983: 18). So far, we have no answer to the question of what makes music indispensable to the academy. And yet by listening to the message of self-resistance encoded within deconstruction, we may at least begin to find a solution.

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The Truth – In Music The Sound Of *Différance*

Resnica – v glasbi Zvok *différance*

Ključne Besede: resnica, glasba, zvok, *differance*, *destinnerance*, *résonance*, paracitat, igra, cepič, pesem, medprostor, poslušanje, slišanje

Keywords: Truth, Music, Sound, *Différance*, *Destinnerance*, *Résonance*, Para-cite, Play, Graft, Song, Space-Between, Listen, Hear

POVZETEK

Članek (poskus, prizadevanje, preizkus, prizadevanje) skozi (na: poti, za katero pravimo, da na njej poteka določen vir energije) resnico v glasbi je napisan, da bi se bral in poslušal. Da bi se pri-klicala izkušnja ireduktibilne zvočnosti resnice (iz) glasbe (prek) besed, ki govorijo o njej, in igra *différance* – niti tišine, ki se pletejo med zvoki, s katerimi je jezik/glasba/resnica prepletena –, ki prinaša smisel (čutnega). Komponiran kot niz »cepičev« (paracitatov) pisanj Jacquesa Derridaja, članek uporablja to, kar predlaga, ponazarja to, o čemer govori: dekonstrukijo, ki je vselej prisotna v delu (v njegovem delu, v tem delu, v katerem koli delu): dvoumen *destinerrance* resnice (iz) glasbe (prek) besed.

Ce qui reste à force de musique. Niti poezija niti proza. Niti filozofija niti pesem. Nekaj iz prostora vmes.

ABSTRACT

This essay (trial, effort, test, attempt) through (on: the way we say that something runs on such and such an energy source) the truth in music has been written to be read as heard. To re-call the experience of the irreducible sonority of truth (in) music (in) words of which it speaks, and the play of *différance* – the threads of silence that run between (the) sounds that language/music/truth is mixed together with – that makes *sens*(e). Composed as a series of grafts (para-cites) on to the writing of Jacques Derrida, the paper engages what it proposes, enacts what it tells: the deconstruction always already at work in a work (his work, this work, any work): the equivocal *destinerrance* of truth (in) music (in) words.

Ce qui reste à force de musique. Neither poetry nor prose. Neither philosophy nor song. But something in between.

I

I owe you the truth
In painting
And I will tell it to you

Cézanne wrote
In a letter
To Émile Bernard

Strange utterance

Derrida writes
I recite
(Para-cite)

The speaker is a painter

He is speaking
Or rather
Writing

For this is a letter

He is writing

In a language
Which *shows* nothing

Causes
Nothing
To be seen

Describes
Nothing

Represents
Even less [1]

What must truth be
To be owed
(*Due*)

Even rendered
(*Rendue*)

In
Painting
That is
What interests me

This interest
When I am interested

In the idiom
Of truth

In
Painting

Which promises
A truth

Which is (not)
Always already there

In
Painting

This revenue
Of
Surplus value

Irreducible

To the semantic
Content
Of its representation

Indeed
To the representable

Untranslatable
In its economic performance

Undecidable
In Its equivocal *destinerrance*

(Derrida writes)
I recite

This idiom
Of truth

In
Painting [2]

But
That's what
An idiom is

It does not
Merely
Fix
The economic
Propriety of a focus

But
Regulates
The possibility

Of
Play

Of
Divergencies

Of
The equivocal

A whole economy
Precisely

Of
The trait

This economy
Parasitizes
Itself

Hear
Here on
Off the page

What must truth be
To be owed
Due

Even
Rendered

Rendue
In
Music

In
Painting [3]

In
Words

On
Off the page

That is
What interests
Me

This revenue
Of surplus value

This
Interest

When
I am interested

In
The idiom of truth

In
Music

Which promises
A truth

In
Writing

In
Words

Which is (not)
Always already
There

In
Music

Ce qui reste
À force
De musique[4]

What Must
Truth
Be

In order
To be owed
Due

Even
Rendered
Rendue

In
Music

I cannot
Precisely
Have it

At my
Disposal

Or
In my
Control

I listen to it

It is
The experience
Itself

Of
Impossible appropriation

The most joyous
And
The most tragic[5]

(Derrida writes)
I recite

It may give rise
To
Calculation

Representation
Tabulation
Imitation
Regulation

Notation

Con-scription
Pre-scription
In-scription

De-scription

But
In the final analysis
It ceases to be
Calculable [6]

Ce qui reste
À force
De musique

Beyond
The order of the calculus
Itself

Beyond
The incalculable
As a still possible calculus [7]

Forever
Unable to saturate
A context

What reading writing
Speaking citing
Re-citing

Will ever make it heard [8]

This idiom
Of truth

In music

In a word

The reader too
Must
Improvise [9]

Take breath
And read with the ears [10]

hör dich ein
mit dem Mund

Hear deep in
With the mouth [11]

Listen
With limbs and lips
And throat and tongue

Absorb
Its movement
With larynx and lungs [12]

What underlying scansion
Of the world
Does it embody [13]

This idiom
Of
Truth

Which is (not)
Always already there

In music

In words

Irreducible
To the semantic content
Of its representation

Indeed
To the representable

Untranslatable
In its economic performance [14]

Undecidable
In its equivocal
Destinerrance

The stereographic activity
Of an entirely other ear [15]

An entirely other echo
Echo echo echo
Sphere

Ce qui reste à force de musique

Hear
Here on
Off the page

Only the song remains
It is reborn
Each time

Nothing
Can be done against it

Never
Will any letter
Ever

Make it heard
In a word [16]

Here
Hear on
Off the page

Nevertheless

At this very moment
In this work
Here I am [17]

Me
Voici

I follow
Je suis

Under assignation

To make
It heard

To tell the truth

In music

In words

I owe you the truth in music

And I will tell it to you

As it is tol(le)d
In music

Le son
Résonant

Quelle
Chanson

Like the sound of the sea
Deep within a shell [18]

The essential thing
Is to set the song in motion
As a graft

[Shoot or scion
Inserted in a slit of another stock
From which it receives sap
[Piece of transplanted living tissue]
Process of grafting
Place where the graft is inserted
Hard work] [19]

And not
As a meaning
A work
Or a spectacle [20]

This economy parasitizes itself

Each grafted text
[Piece of transplanted living tissue]
Continues to radiate back
Toward the site of its removal

Transforming that too
As it affects the new territory [21]

We must begin
Wherever
We are

Wherever
We are in a text

Wherever
We already believe ourselves
To be [22]

Fidelity
Requires that one quote

In the desire
To let the other speak

And

Fidelity
Requires that
One not just quote [23]

To grasp a meaning
That does not come through understanding [24]

But through
Rhythm resonance
Repetition rhyme
Timing timbre
Tone

Ce qui reste
À force
De musique

Undecidable

In its equivocal destinerrance

What reading
Writing speaking
Reciting citing
In-citing
Will ever
Make it
Heard

In a word

The silent play of
Différance

The s-p-l-a-c-e of
Résonance

Undecidable

Between

The sedimented *sens*
Of
Sound

The sedimented sound
Of
Sens

Singing
Ringing
Off on the page

The most difficult thing
Is the invention
Of the tone

And with the tone
Of the scene
That can be staged [25]

The pose that adopts you
As much as you adopt it [26]

Hear
Here on
Off the page

The tone being precisely
That which establishes
The relation

It isn't the content
It's the tone [27]

Everything is summoned
From an intonation

And even earlier still
In what gives its tone
To the tone

A rhythm

I think
That all in all

(Derrida writes)
I paracite

It is upon
Rhythm

That I stake
Everything

It therefore begins
Before beginning

That is
The incalculable origin

Of
A rhythm [28]

II

I owe you the truth
In music

And I will tell it to you

As it is tol(le)d
In music

En passant
Résonant

In the space between

One thing and another

Speech
(And)
Writing

Poetry
(And)
Song

Sens
(et)
Sons

Undecidable

Between

Le nom/non du père
The discourse of the father

And the lalalangue
Of the mother tongue

The truth
in music

Comes
To
Pass

As music
Comes

To
Pass

Always already
Past

Passed
Through

The desire of the (m)Other

Trace effect(s)
Of
The in(ter)vention

Of
The Other

Which must be re-enacted

Repetitioned
Repeated
And
Rehearsed

To be
Enjoyed enjoined

Or
Real-ized

At all

As
Music

As
Truth

In
Music

Event
Of the space
Between [29]

One and Other

Of the space
Between
Things

That
Sound
Re-sound

Only when they move
A-part
Together

When they are moved
Together
A-part

Event
Of the space
Between

Sounds

The threads
Of silence

That run
Between
The sounds

That music is
Mixed
Together with [30]

The silent
Play
Of *différance*

That sustains

Maintains
Retains
Sound

As
Music

The truth
Of
Différance

In
Music

All round
From outside

All round
From a centre

Somewhere
Near
Here
And there

Music tells
The truth
About
Truth

Which comes
And goes

Which comes
To pass

Which comes
Always
Already pas(t)sed

Through

The play
Of
Différance

Undecidable
In its equivocal *destinerrance*

Between

A passion
That moves

And

The mobilizing action
Of one body on another

Between

Choice chance
And
Necessity

What reading
Writing speaking
Singing citing
Reciting
Inciting

Will ever
Make it
Heard

The truth
That music tells
The truth

About

In a word

Repeated
And
Rehearsed

Repetitioned
And
Recalled

To be
Enjoined

Enjoyed
Or
Real-ized

At all

Only the song
Remains

It is reborn
Each time

Nothing
Can be done
Against it

Ce qui reste

À force

De musique

Between

Speech
And
Writing

And
Beyond
The tranquil familiarity

Which links us
To one and the other

Occasionally reassuring us
In our illusion
That they are two [31]

Music
Takes its toll

Engages
The play of *différance*

The truth of truth
In
The space between

And
Turns it

Into
Sound

Phenomena
Experience
Event

Something
We hear

Something
We apprehend

Something
To which
We can attend [32]

Le son
Du sens

Les sens
Du son
Résonant

With in as our bodies
Our selves

Ce
Qui reste
À force de musique

Making space

Giving place
To (a) truth

To which
We cannot *not*
Respond

One way or another

Like the sound of the sea deep within a shell

That is not
Any sort of present being

That has neither
Essence nor existence

That does not exist [33]

The truth
Of
Music

The truth
Of
Truth

The truth
Of
Différance

What

Reading writing
Singing speaking citing
Inciting
Reciting

Will ever
Make it
Heard

Ce qui reste
À force
De musique

In a word

This is not a game

In which
Mastery is acquired [34]

Though some do strive
To make it so

And this we can hear

In (the) music

Even where it strives to deny it

The truth
Of d*ifférance*

The *différance*
Of truth

And where true the effort to deny it

In (the) music

As
A work

Which comes
And goes

Which comes
To pass

Which comes
To be

Always already
Pas(t)sed

Which has to be
Repeated
And
Rehearsed

Repetitioned
And
Recalled

In order to be
(Music)
At all [35]

The truth
In
Music

The truth
Of *différance*

Cannot be
Fixed

In a permanent present
Or

Confined
To a single moment

Meaning
Origin
Articulation
Event
Agent
End

Though some contrive
To make it so

And this too can be heard
In (the) music

The *différance*
Of
Truth

The truth
Of
Différance

And
Where true
The effort to conceal it

To reveal it

As
The essence
Or
Existence

Of
Some fixed and present being

Soul
Spirit
Satan
Nature
God

Truth
Of
The Human Condition

Toujours déjà
Il y a là

Déconstruction
À l'oeuvre

And this can be heard in (the) music

In the space
Between
One and Other

That sounds
Re-sounds

With in as our bodies our selves

Bending our bodies
Lending our bodies

To the truth
Of its becoming

As
Music

Rhythm resonance
Repetition rhyme
Timing timbre
Tone

The tone being precisely that
Which establishes
The relation

I am complicit

Implicated

Imbricated

In the ethics
Of this musical engagement

Strategic and adventurous [36]

Of the play
Of *différance*

In one direction
(*Sens*)
Or another

An ethical appeal
To which
I cannot *not* respond

One way or another

By resistance
Denial
Or consent

I am *solicited* by (the) music [37]

Whether I acknowledge it
Or not

I am
Embrangled
In response-ability
In (as) my body
(Myself)

In the politics
Of its very possibility
As music

To which I cannot *not* respond

The institutions
Which name frame
Contain restrain maintain
And tame

What is
To be

The sound(s)

(Of truth)

In music

When I consent
To the music

I consent
To the politics
Of the institutions
That let it be
Music

One way or another

Whether I acknowledge it or not

All this
Can be heard

In (the) music

Even where it strives to deny it

To celebrate a universal singular
Necessary objective
And final
Truth
(For example)

One
That does not
Come
To pass

But is
(Posited as)

Here
To stay

Named and contained
Within the silence
Of its musical frame

For
The work

Of producing truth
In music

Remains
Ce qui reste

As the work
Itself

Which cannot *not* be heard

The (hypostasized) One

Universal
Final
Truth
In
Music

Cannot be

Without
This work

Of producing
Truth

In
Music

This work
Of music

The work of truth

Cannot *not* be heard
In music

Which is always already
Experienced

Irreducibly

As
Work

By those
Who make it happen

Everything
Is at stake
In music

Epistemology
Ontology
Politics
Ethics
Aesthetics
Kinaesthetics

The truth of truth
The truth of *différance*
The *différance* of truth

We should not be surprised
Therefore

At the passion
With which

It is

Contested
Resisted
Defended
Denounced
Practiced
Pursued
Performed

For music
Is always more
Than what it signifies

Giving place to a truth which it does not because it cannot master
(Name tame frame or contain)

The truth
Of truth

The truth
Of *différance*

Ce qui reste
À force
De musique

Never will any letter ever make it heard

Only the song remains

It is reborn each time

Like the sound of the sea deep within a shell

I listen to it

I cannot precisely have it at my disposal

Or in my control

It is the experience itself of impossible appropriation

The most joyous

And the most tragic

So let's listen

Yes

Let's listen [38]

Notes

[1] Para-cited from (upon) Derrida 1987: 2 – 3.
[2] Para-cited from Derrida 1987: 4 – 5.
[3] Para-cited from Derrida 1987: 6.
[4] Derrida 1987a: 95 – 103.
[5] "I cannot ... tragic." Para-cited from Derrida 1995: 372-395, 394-395.
[6] Cf. Derrida 1994: 52.
[7] "Beyond ... calculus." Derrida 1989: 52.
[8] Cf. Derrida 1979: 76-77: "Forever unable to saturate a context, what reading will ever master this 'on' of 'living on'?"
[9] Lee 1998: 206.
[10] Hopkins 1966, cited from Pick 1966: 26.
[11] "Hear deep in with the mouth". Concluding lines of Paul Celan, 'The shofar place' (*Die Posaunenstelle*) in Celan 2000: 360-361.
[12] Para-cited from Lee 1998: 212.
[13] Lee 1998: 206.
[14] "Irreducible ... performance". Para-cited from Derrida 1987a: 5 – 9.
[15] Cf. Derrida 1982: xxiii. "Where has the body of the text gone when the margin is no longer a secondary virginity but an inexhaustible reserve, the stereographic activity of an entirely other ear?"
[16] "Only the song ... heard". Para-cited from Derrida 1987c: 43.
[17] Derrida 1990: 11 – 48.
[18] Derrida 1989a: 155 – 163.
[19] *Oxford English Dictionary* 1971: 1186.
[20] "The essential thing ... spectacle". From Philippe Sollers, cited by Derrida 1981: 355.
[21] "Each grafted ... territory". Para-cited from Derrida 1981: 355.
[22] "We must begin ... to be". Derrida 1976: 162.
[23] "Fidelity ... not just quote". Derrrida 1989a: 50.
[24] Derrida 1989a : 88.
[25] "The most ... the tone". Derrida 1995: 188.
[26] "The most ... the tone". Derrida 1995: 188.
[27] "The tone ... the tone". Derrida 1994: 21.
[28] "Everything ... rhythm". Para-cited from Derrida 1998: 48.
[29] For a more detailed elaboration of the spirituality, politics, and ethics of the space-between see my Finn 1996.
[30] Para-cited from Merleau-Ponty 1964: 46.
[31] "Between ... two". Derrida 1982a: 5.
[32] For a more detailed elaboration of music as the sound of *différance* see Finn 2002.
[33] "That is ... exist". Para-cited from 1982a: 6.
[34] Cf. Hobson 1998: 166: "Freud causes the child to create a track for himself – Freud's grandchild keeps the self going through the repetition of throwing the cotton reel out to an extreme and hauling it back. This is not a game in which mastery is acquired."
[35] For a more detailed elaboration of these ideas see Finn 2001.
[36] Cf. Derrida 1982: 7: "In the delineation of *différance* everything is strategic and adventurous. Strategic because no transcendent truth present outside the field of writing can govern theologically the totality of the field. Adventurous because this strategy is not a simple strategy in the sense that strategy orients tactics according to a final goal, a *telos*, or theme of domination, a mastery and ultimate reappropriation of the development of the field."
[37] "The French *solliciter*, as the English *solicit*, derives from an Old Latin expression meaning to shake the whole, to make something tremble in its entirety." Translator's note (# 18) in Derrida 1982a: 16.
[38] "Let's listen" are the final words of Jacques Derrida (Derrida 1995): 395.

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Pogovor • Postscript

Kevin Korsyn

Music, deconstruction, amnesia: Notes on the musicological reception of deconstruction

For Rose Rosengard Subotnik

Abstract: In seeking to analyze what he calls "misreading Derridean deconstruction in music," Martin Scherzinger fails to acknowledge his own implication in the history he narrates (see Scherzinger 2005), because Adam Krims had leveled similar charges against him in 1998 (see Krims 1998). In accusing Kevin Korsyn of confusing "general and particular levels" by failing to differentiate "the workings of 'repetition' between pieces and 'repetition' within a piece," Scherzinger misses the potential of Derrida's notion of iterability to transgress the borders between text and context, inside and outside, repetition within a text and repetition between texts. It remains to be seen whether or not Scherzinger's own attempt to define a deconstructive mode of musical analysis goes beyond the traditional musicological concern with ambiguity, and what it gains from the addition of Derridean terminology.

Keywords: deconstruction, Derrida, Kevin Korsyn, Adam Krims, David Lewin, music, musicology, Martin Scherzinger, Rose Rosengard Subotnik.

Acknowledgements: I am grateful to Professor Leon Stefanija not only for organizing this special issue on music and deconstruction, but also for inviting the contributors to respond to each other's essays. In reacting to Martin Scherzinger's work here, I relied on a version of the essay provided by Professor Stefanija in December 2005, so it is possible that Scherzinger's final version may depart somewhat from the text I received.

1

An important moment in the musicological reception of deconstruction occurred in 1998 with the appearance of a major essay by Adam Krims (Krims 1998). In "Disciplining Deconstruction (For Music Analysis)," Krims suggested that Derrida's name had become the locus of libidinal investment by certain music analysts (Krims 1998: 319) who seemed eager to "discipline deconstruction," often harnessing it to relatively traditional forms of music analysis, without recognizing the potential of deconstruction transform the field of analysis by calling attention to its "constitutive 'outside'" (324).[1] Among the analyses singled out for critique was an essay on Mahler's Seventh Symphony by Martin Scherzinger (Scherzinger 1996). After presenting a careful textual analysis of Scherzinger's essay, Krims concluded that "Scherzinger

[1] Jacques Derrida, 'Letter to a Japanese Friend,' in *Derrida and Différance*, edited by David Wood and Robert Bernasconi (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1988): 1 – 5, p. 3.

manages to produce an analysis not noticeably transformed by an encounter with poststructuralist thought" (Krims 1998, 311).

That was seven years ago. Now Scherzinger, writing in the present collection of essays, wants to repeat Krims's bold gesture by arguing "that much of the play of deconstruction in musicological parlance is based on a misreading of the term" (Scherzinger 2005: 82). On seeing this, and having read Krims's earlier and widely cited essay, I expected that Scherzinger's contribution would be autobiographical, at least in part, that he would include a few mea culpas in his litany of musicological misreadings. But I was mistaken; neither here nor in an earlier and very similar study (Scherzinger 20042) does he acknowledge that he is implicated in the history of misreadings that he narrates, nor does he mention Krims's essay. A strange amnesia afflicts Scherzinger's article, in which Krims's work, for those who have read it, may seem like an absent presence, a phantasm.

Something is lost in this process. It would have been helpful, for example, for Scherzinger to discuss his own struggles with deconstruction, his own misreadings. There is little doubt, for example, that Krims's essay had a salutary effect on Scherzinger, however much its appearance may have disappointed him. One obvious effect involves references to Derrida's later work. Among other faults in musicological treatments of deconstruction, Krims observed a tendency "to dwell on the older and more popularized versions" of it (Krims 1998: 308). In his more recent research, Scherzinger has been careful not only to cite texts from the classic phase of deconstruction, but also Derrida's work from the past two decades.

There is no doubt, then, that Scherzinger, like me, like all of us, has had to acquire his knowledge of deconstruction though an arduous process. So he is implicated in the process of misreadings he describes, and his own essays have probably perpetuated as many misconceptions as anyone's.[2]

2

The first scholar whose work he tackles is Rose Rosengard Subotnik, whose seminal essay 'Toward a Deconstruction of Structural Listening: A Critique of Schoenberg, Adorno, and Stravinsky', first appeared in 1988 (Subotnik 1996). Scherzinger essentially recapitulates a response to her work that he published in 2004, in which he concluded that "Subotnik's reading of deconstruction is limited and perhaps even undermining of some basic poststructuralist insights (Scherzinger 2004: 257. In responding to Scherzinger in the same collection of essays, Subotnik does not deny the relevance of his argument that she creates a binary opposition between "structural" and "nonstructural listening" (Scherzinger 2004: 257). But she points out that the historical context of her essay must be taken into account, since when she composed it circa 1986, deconstruction was scarcely an issue in American musicology. With a grace and candor that can only be refreshing today, she admits that she was still struggling to understand deconstruction at the time: "My own familiarity with poststructuralism was less than a year old at the time I set out to write my essay on structural listening; the idea of including the term 'deconstruction' in my title occurred to me only after the essay had gone through several drafts"

[2] One indication of how far Scherzinger has come can be seen if one looks at one of his first publications, which was a response to my work. In the second sentence, for example, he refers to "Harold Bloom, normally associated with the Yale School of Deconstruction" (Scherzinger 1994: 298). But Harold Bloom has consistently denied being a deconstructionist, and by 1994 it should have been clear that the so-called Yale School had been little more than a publisher's fiction. Although references to "Yale deconstruction" or the "Yale School" were common, it's hard to imagine anyone calling it the "Yale School of Deconstruction" (the capital "D" in "Deconstruction" would make any self-respecting exponent of deconstruction wince).

(Subotnik 2004: 282). Although Scherzinger's charge that she uses the Derridean term "supple ment" in a misleading way is not false, he forgets that Krims had said more or less the same thing about him, writing that in Scherzinger's analysis of Mahler's Seventh, "words like *supplément* and *deconstruction* might as well be replaced by the name of any traditional music-theoretical term and methodology, respectively" (Krims 1998: 311). Since Scherzinger's essay on Mahler was published about a decade after Subotnik's piece, at a time when musicologists had begun to explore deconstruction more fully, his misreadings seem more serious.

Subotnik also points out that for all his concern with identifying binary oppositions, he creates some of his own, as "when he opposes thinkers who are trapped by binaries to thinkers who undercut binaries" (Subotnik 2004: 287). The tendency that Subotnik observes here is not unique to Scherzinger, because a consistently deconstructive position is very difficult to sustain, in part since the sort of oppositions that Derrida dismantles pervade language itself: "'everyday language' is [...] the language of Western metaphysics, and it carries with it not only a considerable number of presuppositions of all types, but also presuppositions inseparable from metaphysics, which, although little attended to, are knotted into a system" (Derrida 1981: 19). As long as Scherzinger is explaining deconstruction in general terms through careful summaries of Derrida, his work seems reasonably reliable, but when he tries to apply it to musical concerns he sometimes lapses back into habits of thought that seem pre-Derridean.

3

The tendency to revert to a pre-Derridean, "commonsensical" sort of thinking comes to the fore when he tries to engage my book *Decentering Music: A Critique of Contemporary Musical Research* (Korsyn 2003). Despite acknowledging my "wealth of insight," he believes that my attempts to explain certain types of phrase expansions in music through such deconstructive concepts as "iterability" and "originary repetition" is "weak, incongruous even" (Scherzinger 2005: 89). He complains that I confuse "general and particular levels," by failing to distinguish between "the workings of 'repetition' between pieces and 'repetition' within a piece" (89). The rigid opposition of repetition within/repetition between is precisely what Derrida's notion of iterability calls into question.[3] Scherzinger also believes that norms such as eight-bear phrases are merely the result of empirical generalizations, "the result of empirically-oriented experience seeking to grasp the general characteristics of things," as in the use of statistics in science (89).

It is easy to see how Scherzinger arrived at this point of view, because it reflects an intuitive, "commonsensical" perspective. In everyday usage, we tend to think of an individual utterance as something that can be separated from its context on the model of container and thing contained: the context, on this view, is the outside, the individual text or utterance the inside. But in his lengthy reply to John Searle concerning Austin's theory of speech acts, Derrida challenges this intuitive picture: "context is always, and always has been, at work *within* the place, and not only *around* it" (Derrida 1987: 60; emphasis original). Thus we do not first understand a musical phrase, and only subsequently place it into the context of things like generalizations about typical phrase types; such norms have to operate for us to understand an individual phrase in the first place, and as our understanding of norms changes, our hearing of individual musical events changes as well.

[3] My discussion of phrase expansions belongs to a much larger examination of the text/context relation in music in chapters 4 and 5 of Korsyn 2003: 91-137. I will not attempt to summarize this section here, but an adequate reply to Scherzinger would have to take these chapters into account. My discussion of what constitutes the identity of a motive, for example, would be relevant to the issue of iterability. Unfortunately this reply was written in extreme haste, since Scherzinger was the last to submit his essay to this collection.

Scherzinger also muddies the issue by incorrectly summarizing my discussion of phrase expansions. When he states that in Mozart's Piano Sonata, K, 283, first movement, I claim that the "expansion of the first ten measures via near-repetition of mm. 5-10 in mm. 11-16" constitutes an instance of originary repetition, he does not accurately reflect what I said. My point was rather that while mm. 11-16 can be explained as a repetition of mm. 5-10, in which a hierarchical opposition of original/repetition can still be maintained, mm. 1-10 constitute a paradoxical sort of originary repetition, in which the phrase could be considered an expanded repetition of itself, a repetition without an original.

Scherzinger's belief that norms and statistics are merely empirical generalizations is also vulnerable to challenges from other contemporary thinkers in addition to Derrida. In *The Taming of Chance*, the philosopher Ian Hacking points out that statistics do not merely record preexisting facts; before things can be counted, they must be subsumed under a category (Hacking 1990: 147). In the case of people, for example, one must decide that a particular characteristic unites individuals into a group, such as the set of all dyslexic smokers (Hacking calls this "making up people").

4

Scherzinger's essay enters more productive territory when he explores the possibility that some musical thinkers, without having necessarily read Derrida, have reached insights compatible with his, arriving by an independent route. I pursued a similar line of thought in 'Schenker's Organicism Reexamined' (Korsyn 1994a), in which I argued that Schenker's early skepticism about organic unity in his 1895 article 'The Spirit of Musical Technique' seems to anticipate deconstruction in some uncanny ways. (Although it would take us to far afield to consider this issue in detail here, this affinity with Derrida and Schenker may hinge, in part, on their having drawn similar conclusions from reading Nietzsche.)

Among the music theorists whose potential resemblances to Derrida he considers, Scherzinger makes the strongest case for an essay by David Lewin (Lewin 1987). (I discussed Lewin 1987 at great length in Korsyn 2003: 166-75; it is surprising that in the context of an essay that critiques my book, Scherzinger omits any reference to my work on Lewin, which anticipates his in several respects.) In 'Music Theory, Phenomenology, and Modes of Perception', Lewin develops a model for analyzing musical perceptions, called the p-model, which is indebted to Husserl's schema of time-consciousness, with its protentions and retentions. Since Scherzinger explains Lewin's model quite effectively, I will not prolong my discussion of the model itself. Scherzinger believes that Lewin's analysis of a Schubert song, in which "the contents of m. 12 become non-identical transformations with no stable referent" suggests "a general affinity with deconstruction" (Scherzinger 2005: 101).

As thoughtful as Scherzinger's analysis of Lewin is, it remains an open question whether or not this aspect of Lewin's work constitutes its deconstructive moment; Lewin's reliance on Husserl's schema of time-consciousness, for example, might be vulnerable to the same sort of analysis that Derrida devoted to Husserl. In her recent book on Derrida's early work, for example, Paola Marrati suggests that although Husserl complicated the notion of the present, he still relies on a model of time as a series of nows (Marrati 2005: 125).

In any event, Scherzinger's reading of Lewin's essay ignores a key feature: after spending about half the essay devising the p-model, Lewin devotes the rest to exploring its limitations, to examining everything that resists the explanatory grasp of his system (see Korsyn 2003: 166-175). Lewin is attentive, in short, to the "constitutive 'outside'" of analysis to which Krims calls

attention; by ignoring that part of Lewin's article, Scherzinger may not only miss the real deconstructive work it does, but may also confirm Krims's charges about being interested primarily in the "analytical bottom line" (Krims 1998: 311).

5

When Scherzinger finally lays his cards on the table and tells us what he thinks deconstruction might involve for music, he figures it as "a mode of alertness" and a "mode of *listening*" (Scherzinger 2005: 97; emphasis original). In practice this turns out to involve a sensitivity to musical ambiguity, certainly a commendable virtue in analysis, but not necessarily one that goes beyond what music analysts have traditionally done at least as far back as Gottfried Weber in the early nineteenth century. Scherzinger analyzes the beginning of Beethoven's Piano Sonata in D Major, Op. 10 No. 3, and finds a "strange oscillating experience" at the fermata in m. 4, with its unison A sustained throughout four octaves. This causes him to wonder whether to hear this event as a tonic or a dominant, or perhaps "a tonic-sounding dominant"; for him, this constitutes a moment of "undecidability," and unleashes a "functional phantasm."

Some musicians will wonder what is gained by calling this a deconstruction, since there is nothing here that goes beyond the sort of observations about musical ambiguities that analysts make all the time.

It should remain an open question, in fact, whether any equation of musical deconstruction with listening, no matter how alert or refined it may be, can fully capture the implications of Derrida's work for music. In his late book *On Touching—Jean-Luc Nancy*, for example, Derrida undertakes a critique of intuitionism that invites us to rethink not only the place of touch in a hierarchy of the senses, but also the relationship of the other senses, including hearing, to each other (Derrida 2005). What might this mean for music?

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Marcel Cobussen

Letter to a Slovenian Friend

Dear Leon Stefanija,

In one of your previous emails you asked me (us) to put down, by way of an introduction, a definition of deconstruction in music. Although an answer to this request is, of course, impossible, 'everything' could 'start' with a rereading of this word 'definition'. Instead of taking 'definition' in its most usual sense as a naming and (thereby) framing of a being, a clear and univocal description of its characteristics and workings, I would suggest to add a hyphen between the 'e' and 'f', to make another 'interpretation' at least more visible – de-finition regarded as 'un-ending', not limited or restricted. "All sentences of the type 'deconstruction is X' or 'deconstruction is not X' a priori miss the point ... One of the principal things at stake [...] is precisely the *delimiting* of ontology and above all of the third person present indicative: S *is* P," Derrida already explained in 1983.

Deconstruction 'is' 'in itself' de-finite: deconstruction takes place everywhere where there is something, ergo also in music. And deconstruction de-fines: it poses questions at every attempt to define, for example when introducing terms such as 'music', 'Renaissance', 'sonata form', 'theme', 'chord', or 'tone'. Deconstruction takes place everywhere. Always and already, that is, not (necessarily) as a conscious act of a subject.

But how does it take place *in* music? In other words, how does it take place in the system of differences that we adorn with the term 'music'? Or, once more, how adequate and how reliable is it to say that we can tell and write down, in short, convey in discursive language, that deconstruction takes place *in* music, that we can say *where, when,* and *how* it takes place within music, that is, within a language that can never be reduced to linguistic concepts? Is deconstruction in music an impossibility or at least unknowable and indescribable because deconstruction, in the end, needs to be articulated in a discursive language? Or can this thought also be deconstructed? Is it already in the process of deconstruction? Here and now?

How to translate 'music'? 'Deconstruction *in* music'?

Martin Scherzinger

In Quest of the Waning Name: A Short Response to Kevin Korsyn

First, a note of gratitude: I would like to thank Leon Stefanija for asking me to participate in this wonderful special issue, and also Kevin Korsyn for his engaging response to my essay. Furthermore, my writings on deconstruction in music and musicology would not have been possible without the support and the pioneering musical imaginations of, amongst many others, Kofi Agawu, Benjamin Boretz, Scott Burnham, Suzanne Cusick, Joseph Dubiel, Charles Fisk, Scott Gleason, Lydia Goehr, Marion Guck, Christopher Hasty, Berthold Hoeckner, Brian Hyer, Ellen Koskoff, Jonathan Kramer, Lawrence Kramer, Kevin Korsyn, Adam Krims, Richard Leppert, Fred Maus, Robert Morris, Alexander Rehding, Robert Snarrenberg, Ruth Solie, Gary Tomlinson, Leo Treitler, Gretchen Wheelock, and especially Rose Rosengard Subotnik. My critique is motivated by a fundamental embrace, appreciation, and profound gratitude.

Second, by way of self-citation, a *mea culpa*: "Of course, the charge of misreading [deconstruction in the context of musicology] is foolishly in danger of presupposing the 'proper' coordinates of the deconstructive maneuver, as if these can be *aprioristically* established" (82). As is clear from my *Prelude to an Idealization*, then, I offer but a "narrowly idealized construal of deconstruction" to launch the critical, historical and analytic speculations in my present essay (83). Thus, it is not only with regard to my deconstructive analysis of Mahler's Seventh Symphony in 1995 (which apparently "perpetuated as many misconceptions [about deconstruction] as anyone's") that I need to acknowledge compressed appropriations, conceptual limits and layers of misreading, but also here and now, and again and again (158).[1]

Third, on the topic of affinities between music theory and deconstruction: Summarizing a point I made in "The Return of the Aesthetic: Musical Formalism and its Place in Political Critique" (written three years before the appearance of Korsyn's *Decentering Music*), I note a *general* affinity between David Lewin's transformational stance and Derridean deconstruction. In the latter article I also note a more precise affinity between deconstruction and some work by Benjamin Boretz; and in the present article between deconstruction and some work by Joseph Dubiel. The point of these resemblances is to amplify the ways in which music *qua* music can be construed "as a performative dramatization of Derrida's theory of language formation; an idea that resonates with music's privileged position in Continental philosophy of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries" (89). Derrida's association of philosophy with the death of music underscores this point. "Traditional" as they might seem, then, perhaps it is not surprising that certain kinds of *musical* ambiguity, polyvalence, dispersal, contradiction, and illusion resonate uncannily with the philosophical figure of deconstruction (158).

Finally, on the topic of reverting to commonsense in the context of a musical phrase: Kevin Korsyn claims (more or less correctly in my view), "we do not first understand a musical phrase, and only subsequently place it into the context of things like generalizations about typ-

[1] I did not consider the Mahler analysis, which I wrote as a first-year graduate student in 1994, as a significant contribution to the debate about deconstruction in music and musicology, and hence did not mention its particular limits in my present essay.

ical phrase structure; such norms have to operate for us to understand an individual phrase in the first place, and as our understanding of norms changes, our hearing of individual musical events changes as well" (160). While Korsyn is basically correct here, I prefer – in a deconstructive setting (that does not identify with 'container' theories!) – to mark the "unguessed-at dimension" (or in Derrida's terms, the "inexhaustible reserve, the stereographic activity of an entirely other ear"), which, on close listening, imposes itself on our musical experience, rather than to mark the already-secured contexts (or generalized norms), however much these may be inscribed in our musical understanding in the first place (82).[2] Whether or not these respective analytic moves are labeled *deconstructive* is not, in my view, urgent. The question is: Are we interested in listening out for "norms" that "operate for us ... in the first place" (160)? Or do we prefer to listen out for that of which we do not know what it is; to that (un)nameable thing which it is wearing itself out trying to name?

[2] On the subject of phrase structure expansions in Mozart's K. 283, Korsyn states that I "mudd[y] the issue by incorrectly summarizing [his] discussion". He writes: "My point was rather that while mm. 11-16 can be explained as a repetition of mm. 5-10, in which a hierarchical opposition of original/repetition can still be maintained, mm. 1-10 constitute a paradoxical sort of originary repetition, in which the phrase could be considered an expanded repetition of itself, a repetition without original" (2005, 161). I wrote: "Moreover, argues Korsyn (following William E. Caplin), the ten-bar prototype of this expansion is itself an expansion of an "eight-bar norm," figured as an "absent prototype" (2005). How exactly could the latter summary be corrected to conform to the former? And how can this alter the argumentative thrust regarding norms and prototypes?

Alan Street

Postscript

Over the course of Western civilisation music has been regarded as inherently subversive. So argues Mladen Dolar in his capsule summary of the vocal trope — *contra* Derrida — as represented within the metaphysical tradition. For Derrida, voice is understood as the figure of unmediated consciousness; the medium through which the sensible and rational are conjoined within the autonomous self. Yet if this ontological status could be affirmed as key to a harmonious correspondence between nature and culture by Plato and his successors, the treacherous prospect of sound becoming decoupled from sense equally determined the extent of its susceptibility to a prosthetic denaturing. In fact, as Dolar remarks, the parasitic effect of voice may be thought altogether more virulent than that of writing on account of its very interiority. Hence deflected from its sublimated purpose, the sonorous human voice threatens to wreak havoc on the ideality of logos, imposing a hedonistic tyranny capable of undermining all social convention.

This abysmal disjunction is explicitly embodied, or so Marcel Cobussen suggests, in Debussy's ambiguously titled modernist composition for solo flute, *Syrinx*. Nonetheless, as Christopher Norris goes on to claim, it is precisely a critical fusion of the hermeneutics of suspicion with a misappropriation of the pleasure principle that has led to the programmatic denunciation of structural hearing within musicology. One can agree with Norris that any reactionary attitude towards developed perceptual strategies risks selling all listeners short. One may also accept that the exclusive alignment of gratification with localised sensual immediacy is a reductive reflex that takes no account of the satisfaction to be derived from engaged close reading. Where I would wish to question his diagnosis, however, is in supposing that all post-structuralist readings of the discourse of music analysis inevitably take this turn. One could begin, for instance, by countering that despite his own stated convictions to the contrary, Norris's preoccupation with a presumed thematic bias in the work of Heinrich Schenker, not to mention minimalism and the music of the baroque, itself betrays an unwarranted attachment to localised auditory phenomena. More significant, however, is his identification of a 'minor industry' of deconstructive musicology, a statement which confers a misleading homogeneity on the Anglo-American field. For example, that the relationship between theory and practice is at best tenuous in this sphere can be gauged from the fact that Subotnik's paradigmatic essay on the question of structural listening (Subotnik 1996, pp. 148-76) takes little if any account of parallel work linking music and poststructuralism. All the same, if Subotnik's approach falls short of a critique of music-analytical enquiry from within, it nonetheless stands in a position altogether preferable to those blanket condemnations of score-based close reading practice that betray their own essentialism even as they strive to embrace the real-world ideal of social inclusion.

For me, exploring the consequences of the aesthetic ideology for the development of music analysis entails that resistance to theory which, as Misko Suvakovic recalls through a quotation from Derrida, 'demonstrates the impossibility of closure, of the closure of an ensemble or totality on an organised network of theories, laws, rules and methods'. And if this further necessitates a negative appraisal of the criticism of sensibility represented by the work of Joseph

Kerman and Charles Rosen alike – *pace* Norris – then it also admits the kinds of interpretative disposition so resourcefully finessed here by Martin Scherzinger. This much said, the sense of a collegial transatlantic spirit that still shines through Kerman's *Musicology* is likewise something to be defended, a concrete counter to the uniformly bureaucratised conception of professional mission that might otherwise stand to overwhelm Kevin Korsyn's paradigm of autocritical institutional discourses. Because as Geraldine Finn's textual performance makes plain, responding to music means not only consenting to its political institutions, but also engaging ethically on the ground of alterity through the willing disposition of an entirely other ear. Hence at a time of disciplinary uncertainty and consequent cultural impoverishment, listening, that experience of impossible appropriation, serves to remind us all that a shared sign of humanity which defies exclusive ownership is one of the truths of music which cannot *not* be heard.

Geraldine Finn

Some comments

If there is (not) 'one' thing to be learned from these essays it is that there is no 'one' deconstruction – and likewise – no 'one' music/ology: "Each 'deconstructive'

event remains singular or, in any case, as close as possible to something like an idiom or a signature."[1] Undecidable in its heterogeneity. Its polyphony. Its irreducible alterity. Its non-identity with itself. Its authority. (Its music/ology.) Awaiting the counter-signature of the other to come. Calling (to) the other to come. Come listen. Come hear. Come. Say. Yes.

L'ouï dire. L'oui dire. Lui dire.[2]

This is the *Gift* – the promise or poison – of deconstruction in music/ology, of music/ology in deconstruction. Poison or Gift. Depending on how comfortable you are with a music/ology that is always already open to the in(ter)vention of the other and to the play of *différance* inside/outside the disciplinary frame (displacing the law of genre which would otherwise separate and contain music, writing, poetry, song, speech); and to a response-ability without return that cannot *not* be assumed for the event of the space-between and its in(de)terminable *destinerrance.*

"There will be no unique name ... we must think this without *nostalgia*, that is, outside of the myth of a purely maternal or paternal language, a lost native country of thought. On the contrary, we must *affirm* this, in the sense in which Nietzsche puts affirmation into play, in a certain laughter and a certain step of the dance."[3]

L'oui rire. L'ouï dire. L'oui dire. Lui dire. Lui rire.

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1 Cf. Jacques Derrida, 'Ulysses Gramophone,' in *Acts of Literature* edited by Derek Attridge (London: Routledge, 1992): 253 – 309, p.267.

2 Jacques Derrida, 'Différance,' in *Margins of Philosophy,* translated by Alan Bass (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1982): 1 – 27, p. 27.

3 Krims did not engage any of my work on music and deconstruction in this essay, possibly because much of it has involved analyzing discourse about music, as in Korsyn 1988, 1993a, 1993b, 1994a, and 1994c, rather than "applying" deconstruction directly to the analysis of musical compositions. Korsyn 1993b does include some musical analysis, but only in the context of discussing an analysis by David Lewin. Krims did cite Korsyn 1991 in another essay (Krims 1994), in which his focus was not on deconstruction but on the musicological reception of Harold Bloom's literary criticism. His major focus in that essay, however, was on the work of Joseph Straus, and while my work was mentioned, it was not discussed. I tend to think that my engagement with Bloom, although not without its flaws, would have provided a rather more elusive target for Krims's critique.

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