Music Theory and Natural Order from the Renaissance to the Early Twentieth Century

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IAN BIDDLE

INTRODUCTION: TEXTS AND THEIR READERS

In the prologue to his *Celestina*, published in Saragossa in 1507, Fernando de Rojas asked himself why the work had been understood, appreciated, and used in so many different ways since its first appearance in 1499 at Burgos. The question is simple: how can a text that is the same for everyone who reads it become an 'instrument of discord and battle between its readers, creating divergences between them, with each reader having an opinion depending on his own taste'?[1]

Roger Chartier's analytical trajectory draws us into a close analysis of some of the ways in which a history of reading might be constituted in the historically contingent activities that regulate and pattern reading practices: in the ways in which 'texts and the printed works that convey them organise the prescribed reading' and through the 'collection of actual readings tracked down in individual confessions or reconstructed on the level of communities of readers'.[2] This radically historical formulation insists on the conditionality of reading practices and on the fragmented and locally formed nature of such practices, and positions the reader between a theoretical 'freedom' to read, a 'secret' activity, if you will, and the constraints which the 'machinery' of the text is designed to affect.

This tantalising cultural-historical problem poses some interesting questions for historians of music theory: to what extent might the music-theoretical idiom itself represent a record of types of 'reading' and what is the nature of the 'text' in such readings? Such questions do not have simple answers since, as the New Historicism has taught us, 'texts' are not immutable receptacles of some ontological matter, but construed from the operations of often quite radically fluid reading practices.[3] The

[1] Roger Chartier, 'Texts, Printings, Readings', in *The New Cultural History*, ed. Lynn Hunt (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1989), p. 154. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 158.

[3] Roger Chartier's work is seminal in this area. See in particular Roger Chartier (ed.), *The Culture of Print: Power and the Uses of Print in Early Modern Europe*, trans. Lydia G. Cochrane (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989); Chartier, *La correspondance: Les usages de la lettre au XIXe siècle* (Paris: Fayard, 1991); 'Text, Symbols and Frenchness', *Journal of Modern History* 57 (1985), 682–95; *Forms and Meanings:*

structural problem that attends a history of reading is thus centred on the relation of the reading subject to its object, on how that relation is legislated for and policed, and how the constitution of the text as an object of scrutiny competes with the contingency of that text – in short, on how cultural practices seek to maintain the ontological field of the text-object.

I propose here to scrutinise a crucial moment in the emergence of a new kind of reader and text-object, namely the period in German history that has been characterised as gripped by a *Lesewut*[*b*], a rage for reading that consumed the middle classes from the second half of the eighteenth to the middle of the nineteenth century. Chartier has suggested that a new kind of reader, the so-called 'extensive' reader, emerged at this time,[4] but he nonetheless cautions against the all-too-easy juxtaposition of this new reader with the older 'intensive' reader – the reader faced only with a 'narrow and finite body of texts, which were read and reread, memorized and recited, heard and known by heart, transmitted from generation to generation':[5]

> This view is open to discussion. There were, in fact, many 'extensive' readers during the period of the supposed 'intensive' reading . . . The inverse case is truer still: it was at the very moment of the 'reading revolution' that the most 'intensive' readings developed (with Rousseau, Goethe, and Richardson), readings in which the novel seized its readers to become a part of them and to govern them as the religious text had once done.[6]

I should like to suggest that, contrary to Chartier's caution, the extensive reader was an important cultural trope – an imagined reader that served as a useful cultural resource in the construction and maintenance of the identity of a group – what Hegel would term a *Stand* – that sought to exercise implacable cultural authority over reading practices at this time. The authority of these learned classes, or *Gelehrtenstand*, was sustained in part by the long-established, academy-mediated[7] practices of reading scholarly texts closely. Written by university professors for close scrutiny by students, these texts were based around a set of methodological problems and grounded on what was still largely an Aristotelian model of education.[8] The 'extensive' reader, whether

footnote 3 (*cont.*)
Texts, Performances and Audiences from Codex to Computer (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995); and *The Order of Books: Reader, Authors, and Libraries in Europe between the Fourteenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, trans. Lydia G. Cochrane (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994).

4 Chartier, *Forms*, p. 17.

5 Chartier's characterisation of the 'extensive' reader: 'The "extensive" reader, that of the *Lesewut* . . . is an altogether different reader – one who consumes numerous and diverse printed texts, reading them with rapidity and avidity and exercising a critical activity over them that spares no domain from methodological doubt.' *Ibid.*

6 *Ibid.*

7 I use 'academy' here to denote not necessarily an institution as such, but in its more critical sense as applied to a practice that is sanctioned and sustained by some kind of recognised line of transmission such as master-to-pupil training. Clearly similar practices could also exist within institutions such as universities, but since musicology and analysis were not yet codified as university subjects, one has to re-think what might be meant by 'institution' and 'academy' in this context. See also Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983), p. 57.

8 One such text is Friedrich W. J. Schelling's *Philosophie der Kunst* (1802–3) (Eßlingen: J. G. Cotta, 1859; rpt Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1980).

truly distinguishable from the 'intensive' reader or not, served as a kind of identity-forming Other for the *Gelehrtenstand*.

The overt opposition that such figures as Goethe, Fichte and Schiller[9] provided in relation to the new 'narcotic' of extensive reading is part of a broader tendency to construct 'the popular' as the Other to the 'learned' discourses: the very identity of the *Gelehrtenstand* depended on this opposition. Of course, such oppositions are not unique to the nineteenth century, and historians recognise such forms of antagonism between 'high' and 'low' at many moments: Peter Burke recognises a process of bifurcation under way in 1500 (and certainly well established by 1800), while Jacques le Goff and Jean-Claude Schmitt discuss the seminal moment of the emergence of a 'lay culture' as early as the twelfth and thirteenth centuries respectively.[10] It seems, at any rate, that the recognition, maintenance and critique of a putative divide between 'popular' and 'learned' discourses has exercised many cultures in the past. It is thus my intention not to privilege the early nineteenth century over other such schisms, but to scrutinise the specificity of this divide in particular.

THE HISTORICITY OF THE GAZE

The logic of the divide between the *Gelehrtenstand* and its Other is founded, like many before, on an alteritous formulation – by which I mean an asymmetrical binary opposition in which the dominant element depends for its identity on a 'lesser', more fluid Other. In short, what we have already recognised as the structural problem of a history of reading, the relation of Subject and Object, comes into clear focus here: the construction of the learned 'I', the exemplary Subject of the *Gelehrtenstand*, contrasts itself, with all the cultural authority at its disposal, with its impoverished Other. What is particularly striking in the texts written by and for intensive readers at this time is the speculative attention they lavish on anything that seems to duplicate such alteritous formulations.

[9] Erich Schön, *Der Verlust der Sinnlichkeit oder die Verwandlung des Lesers: Mentalitätswandel um 1800* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1987). For a useful overview of this process, see Daniel Leonhard Purdy, 'Reading to Consume: Fashionable Receptions of Literature in Germany, 1774–1816' (Ph.D. thesis, Cornell University, 1992), which challenges the traditional sociological view that fashionable reading was motivated by a desire to emulate higher class status. Instead, Purdy suggests that the *Lesewut* was fuelled initially by the eighteenth-century court semiotic in which 'luxury goods signified social status', to be very quickly superseded by a bourgeois semiotic system that 'read clothes and domestic decorations as signs of individual character and moral worth' (p. 205). Another useful account of this process can be found in Daren Ivan Hodson, 'The Institutionalisation of Literature in Eighteenth-Century France and Germany: The Functions of Reading in Rousseau, Novalis, Fichte and the *Ecole Normale*' (Ph.D. thesis, University of Utah, 1995). See also Robert Darnton, 'Readers Respond to Rousseau: The Fabrication of Romantic Sensitivity', in *The Great Cat Massacre and Other Episodes in French Cultural History* (New York: Basic Books, 1984), pp. 215–56.

[10] Peter Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe* (New York: Harper and Row, 1978); Jacques le Goff, 'Ecclesiastical Culture and Folklore in the Middle Ages: Saint Marcellus of Paris and the Dragon', in *Time, Work, and Culture in the Middle Ages*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1980), pp. 159–88; and Jean-Claude Schmitt, '"Religion populaire" et culture folklorique', *Annales: Economies, Sociétés, Civilisations* 28 (1976), 941–53.

I recognise here a certain intensification of the debates that rage around the nature of subjectivity, its agency in the natural world and the extent to which it can know itself without recourse to anything outside itself. Such debates resonate across many discourses. First, in the philosophical concerns of the *Naturphilosophen*, the growth and sustenance of the self is located in a speculative field of *Negativität*, which Hegel links to temporality and to music in particular.[11] Second, in the sciences, both speculative and empirical, one can discern what might be termed an 'intensification of scrutiny', where transitive activities (activities that require an object) become ever more intrusive, where scrutiny becomes ever more invasive and the object of scrutiny ever more distant, pacified, emptied out. Third, in other learned discourses, anxieties about the constitution of the object of scrutiny are transformed into quasi-scientific incursions into the objective realm. Indeed, Michel Foucault has characterised what might be termed the transitive descent into the object of scrutiny as a seminal reorientation of the relation of the self to its environment.[12]

There is one image that captures this intensification of the 'learned' scrutiny – the image of the implacable gaze, exemplified in the very optic organ itself: the eye. Recent attention to the gaze has tended, with good reason, to concentrate on the act of looking itself, or on the obvious art forms in which the gaze is overtly engaged – film and the visual arts.[13] I want to suggest here that the gaze, as an act of power, can be engaged in ways that that are more covert, more figuratively grounded, and yet no less potent in their operation on the object of desire. In this sense, a history of reading might also, at certain moments, embrace a history of the gaze, a history of the surreptitious and secretive activities that surround the text-object and its users when mediated through sight or through figurative invocations of looking.

Before proceeding to an analysis of the mechanisms of learned scrutiny in the music-theoretical text, I want to propose, along Lacanian lines, a controversial formulation: that the gaze 'itself' is not a product of optics or of perception in a more general sense but that it resides *outside* the seeing subject. Lacan recognises this in Sartre's *Being and Nothingness*:

> If you turn to Sartre's own text, you will see that, far from speaking of the emergence of this gaze as of something that concerns the organ of sight, he refers to the sound of rustling leaves, suddenly heard while out hunting, to a footstep heard in a corridor. And when are those sounds heard? At the moment when he has presented himself in the action of looking

[11] Georg W. F. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Ästhetik*, in *Theorie Werkausgabe*, vol. XV (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1970), p. 133: 'Dies Tilgen nicht nur der einen Raumdimension, sondern der totalen Räumlichkeit überhaupt, dies völlige Zurückziehen in die Subjektivität nach seiten des Inneren wie der Äußerung, vollbringt die zweite romantische Kunst – die Musik.'

[12] Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Science* (New York: Tavistock Publications, 1974), p. 239.

[13] Perhaps the seminal work in the role of the gaze in film is Laura Mulvey's 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema' first published in *Screen* in 1975, available in *The Sexual Subject: A Screen Reader in Sexuality* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), pp. 22–34, and her follow-up: 'Afterthoughts on "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" inspired by *Duel in the Sun*', in *Visual and Other Pleasures* (London: Macmillan, 1989), pp. 29–39.

through a keyhole. A gaze surprises him in the function of a voyeur, disturbs him, overwhelms him and reduces him to a feeling of shame.[14]

Looking and being looked at can be constructed, as Lacan would have it, as a psychoanalytical function of identification or differentiation or, as Laura Mulvey would have it,[15] as the site of a particular kind of power relation between the bearer of the gaze and the Other made image. We can thus locate an analysis of the mechanisms that police and manipulate the gaze in early nineteenth-century German culture at the heart of a wider analysis showing how the authority of the learned scrutiny is constituted. By recognising, for example, the relocation of the power relation of the gaze in, say, the field of poetic figuration, we open up the possibility of a structural analysis of the giving and receiving of transitive actions, of the constitution of the individual at various points between the exemplary subject and the wretched object and of the formation of a broader ideological field in which certain powerful social and cultural archetypes control the gaze to the detriment of others.

In early nineteenth-century thought, the 'eye' itself, that metonym of the gaze, is often a figuration of a kind of raw, destructive or unmediated subjectivity, surreptitiously linked to a fetishised (voyeuristic) scrutinising of an object of desire, or to the processes of objectification that invariably accompany a putatively rational and purposive observation; the eye is thus often linked to an *excessively empirical* self, an unfettered rational ego. Anyone familiar with Meyer H. Abrams's *The Mirror and the Lamp*[16] will also be familiar with the notion that pre-Romantic thought is best figured as *mimetic*, or as *binaristic*, and that the metaphors of 'looking' and 'mirroring' are often linked to the actions of a naïve unfettered ego, a Cartesian, mechanistic self or a less coherent antecedent of the exalted subject of the German Romantic ideology. This notion, best understood perhaps as modernist in orientation, figures North European Romanticism as a liberation from cultural atrophy, a loosening of paternal authority and a relocation of the self in a more fluid relation to its environment, an environment which is often itself located within (or as) 'nature'. Yet Lacan would seem to condone such a view:

It is not for nothing that it was at the very period when the Cartesian meditation inaugurated in all its purity the function of the subject that the dimension of optics that I shall distinguish here by calling 'geometral' or 'flat' (as opposed to perspective) optics was developed.[17]

Lacan's remarks would seem to suggest, then, that the gaze is not an immutable process, but generated from and transformed by relatively finite historical contingencies of the order of what the *Annales* historians have called the *longue durée*.

What, then, characterises the historical specificity of the gaze in early nineteenth-century German culture? It is not so remarkable in itself that metaphorical recourse to 'looking' and other figurations of scrutiny are linked, as we have seen, to an

[14] Jacques Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. Alan Sheridan (London and New York: Penguin, 1994), p. 84. [15] Mulvey, 'Visual Pleasure', 25.

[16] Meyer H. Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971). [17] Lacan, *Concepts*, p. 85.

excessively empirical self. What is striking in this culture is the antagonism that this empirical self demonstrates towards what might be termed the 'ideal self': an antagonism that Schumann demonstrated quite clearly for Florestan's 'psychological' mode of criticism.[18] If, as Paul de Man has suggested, we figure the 'critical problem' of Romanticism as driven by the tension between the 'empirical self of the author and the self that appears as the speaking voice in the work',[19] then clearly an examination of the mechanisms of the text-object, of authorship as figured within and without the text-object, of readers and of the learned authority masquerading as a unified and universal subjectivity is crucial to an understanding of the 'web' of cultural processes at work in the birth of the modern music-theoretical idiom.

SEEING MUSIC

In attempting a location of the putative or speaking self in the music-theoretical text, we are confronted, first of all, by the distinctiveness of the music-theoretical idiom. This idiom allows its 'voice' (to use de Man's term again) to speak without denying or transcending the empirical self. Subjectivity is not merely a functional constituent of the text, not auctorial in its operation, but is crucial to the exposition of that text, as if it were turning the pages of the text itself. In other words, the music-theoretical text speaks with an authority that is dependent in particular upon a relatively clear and unproblematic location of the empirical-subjective voice within that text, as unmediated, unproblematic, pragmatic. Authors seem to take us through the process of their coming-to-be, the text acting as a kind of performative re-enactment of the author's journey of discovery.

Yet the very empirical self that is located within this textual process is the same self that was invariably constructed as the Other of the ideal Romantic self, as a mediocre, glib and reductive authority, imprisoned within the constraints of artificial *culture*. In general terms, we might be able to posit a general distinction between the empirical self of the music-theoretical text (ever more analytical, it seems) and the poetic self of certain forms of music criticism, exemplified perhaps most eloquently in the split that often occurs in Schumann's *noms de plume* (for example Florestan) or in the structural dualisms of hermeneutic criticism. A common trope in much German music criticism from this time is a sense of loss, of a fragmentation of a former organic wholeness into petty professional specialisation. What the poetic self felt so painfully as a loss was dealt with more covertly by the more empirical self of the music-theoretical

[18] See Robert Schumann's review of Berlioz's *Symphonie fantastique* in *Neue Zeitschrift der Musik* (1835): 1 (3 July), 1–2; 9 (31 July), 33–5; 10 (4 August), 37–8; 11 (7 August), 41–4; 12 (11 August), 45–8; 13 (14 August), 49–51. The first part (3 July) of the review is written by Schumann's 'poetic' incarnation Florestan. Schumann excised this section from the review for his *Gesammelte Schriften*. For more on this see my 'Policing Masculinity: Schumann, Berlioz and the Gendering of the Music-critical Idiom', *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 124 (1999), 40–64.

[19] Paul de Man, *Romanticism and Contemporary Criticism: The Gauss Seminar and Other Papers*, ed. E. S. Burt, Kevin Newmark and Andrzej Warminski (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), p. 25.

idiom and was often the cause of much vitriol. This is particularly evident in Wackenroder:

> An eternally hostile chasm is entrenched between the feeling heart and the investigations of research, and the former is an independent, tightly sealed, divine entity, which cannot be unlocked and opened up by reason.[20]

Elsewhere, Wackenroder speaks of a 'mysterious merging' of properties,[21] a kind of idealised transcendence of the empirical ego that de Man recognises in the writings of Rousseau.[22] The unifying action implicit in this *rätselhaftes Verschmelzen* is thus deliberately anti-intellectual. There is no systematic or symmetrical unification of the two sides, but a violent incursion of the fictive 'I' of, for example, Hölderlin's *Friedensfeier* into the realm of the empirical 'I'. Wackenroder thereby attempts to transform the performative rigour of an academy-mediated idiom into a kind of idle chatter, an arbitrary making of signs:

> O, then I close my eyes to all the strife in the world – and withdraw quietly into the land of music, as into the *land of belief*, where all our doubts and our sufferings are lost in a resounding sea, – where we forget all the croaking of human beings, where no chattering of words and languages, no confusion of letters and monstrous hieroglyphics makes us dizzy but, instead, all the anxiety of our hearts is suddenly healed by the gentle touch.[23]

In doing so, he casts the empirical self out in a Rousseauesque quest for an original pre-cultural self, the self before Babel.

Cutting across the binary opposition of the empirical/ideal selves is the pairing of 'natural' or 'original' (i.e. pre-cultural) and cultural. The two pairings are not equivalents, nor do they map onto each other with any consistency. Their interaction is complex and fluid, figured differently in different localities or idioms. Wackenroder's figuration of the pairings is distinctly anti-analytical, in that the ideal self is under constant threat from the empirical self, reflected in the ideal self's quest for the pre-cultural, a yearning for a state of wholeness before having been cracked open by the contrivances of culture.

[20] 'Eine ewige feindselige Kluft ist zwischen dem fühlenden Herzen und den Untersuchungen des Forschens befestigt, und jenes ist ein selbständiges verschlossenes göttliches Wesen, das von der Vernunft nicht aufgeschlossen und gelöst werden kann.' Wackenroder, *Phantasien über die Kunst für Freunde der Kunst* (1799), rpt (Potsdam: Gustav Kiepenheuer, 1925), p. 186. Translation based on that by M. H. Schubert in Edward A. Lippman (ed.), *Musical Aesthetics: A Historical Reader*, vol. II: *The Nineteenth Century* (Stuyvesant, NY: Pendragon, 1988), p. 23.

[21] 'Keine andre [Kunst] vermag die Eigenschaften . . . auf eine so rätselhafte Weise zu verschmelzen.' Wackenroder, *Phantasien*, p. 183.

[22] Paul de Man, *Romanticism*, pp. 25–49.

[23] 'Oh, so schließ' ich mein Auge zu vor all dem Kriege der Welt – und ziehe mich still in das Land der Musik, als in das Land des Glaubens, zurück, wo alle unsre Zweifel und unsre Leiden sich in ein tönendes Meer verlieren – wo wir alles Gekrächze der Menschen vergessen, wo kein Wort- und Sprachengeschnatter, kein Gewirr von Buchstaben und monströser Hieroglyphenschrift uns schwindlig macht, sondern alle Angst unsres Herzens durch leise Berührung auf einmal geheilt wird.' Wackenroder, *Phantasien*, p. 165; Lippman, *Aesthetics*, p. 11.

MUSIC THEORY AND THE NATURAL SCIENCES

One way in which to understand attitudes to (and in) the analytical text is by examining how subjectivity is figured in other academy-mediated texts. The discourses that look to the empirical realm as their body of evidence are, of course, the discourses of the natural sciences and medicine. This is not to privilege such discourses over others, but to recognise that debates about the order and constitution of the empirical realm can often provide insights into the manner in which texts make claims to the truths of that realm and how they invoke its wisdoms in support of their own suppositions.

To speak simply of 'science' in early nineteenth-century German culture is, of course, problematic since *Wissenschaft* also embraces notions of scholarship and knowledge, a complexity borne out by Hegel's *Wissenschaft der Logik*.[24] Yet there *is* a body of texts in German concerned with physiognomy, anatomy, biology, physics and chemistry which might be termed *scientific* in orientation. What surprises about such texts is the extent to which they problematise the distinction between empirical analysis and speculation. At the edge of this body of texts lies the work of the *Naturphilosophen* for whom empirical observation is a supplement to the more pressing concerns of generalisation and speculation. Such works include Friedrich W. J. Schelling's *Erster Entwurf eines Systems der Naturphilosophie* (1799), the introduction to *Ideen zu einer Philosophie der Natur* (1797), *Über den wahren Begriff der Naturphilosophie und die richtige Art, ihre Probleme aufzulösen* (1801) and contemporary works by Hans Christian Oersted, Heinrich Steffens, Carl August Eschenmayer, Lorenz Oken, Gotthilf Schubert, Johann Wagner and others.[25]

For speculative biology and other hybrid sciences, the emergence of organicism as both a philosophical and an analytical metaphor is implicated in the demise of a view of science as encyclopaedic.[26] This view of science, driven largely by the instrumentalisation of the scientific discourse, came under threat from the speculative sciences as a result of the former's apparent inability to systematise the external world. K. F. von Kielmeyer, J. D. Brandis, J. F. Blumenbach and Franz von Baader all called for the supression of the encyclopaedic view in favour of a theoretically generated model of the world that would bring the ever-expanding scientific world within the limits of human cognition.[27] This drive for a deep-lying principle of order, for a

[24] Hegel, *Wissenschaft der Logik* (1812–16), rpt (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1970), p. 272.

[25] First editions of all of the Schelling works are: Eßlingen: J. G. Cotta, 1859; rpt Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1980.

[26] See Joseph L. Esposito, *Schelling's Idealism and Philosophy of Nature* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1977), pp. 125–59. Some of this part of my argument is based on my review of Ian Bent's two-volume *Music Analysis in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994) for *Music and Letters* 79 (1998), 120–6.

[27] K. F. von Kielmeyer, 'Versuche über die sogenannte animalische Electrizität' [Experiments on so-called animal electricity], *Journal der Physik* 8 (1794); J. D. Brandis, *Versuch über die Lebenskraft* (Hanover: Hahn, 1795); J. F. Blumenbach, *Über den Bildungstrieb und Zeugungsgeschäfte* (Göttingen: Johann Christian Dieterich, 1781); and Franz von Baader, *Beiträge zur Elementar-Physiologie*, in *Sämmtliche Werke* (1797) (Leipzig: Hermann Bethmann, 1852).

circumscription of the world, can be usefully likened to the analytical drive to discover the structural essence, the *Bildungstrieb*, that internally orders the musical work. Hence, the move from the loosely Cartesian encyclopaedic order of the world to a compartmentalised, hierarchical order (from free-associative, visually apprehensible nature to the ontological order of discrete yet structurally resonant parts in the post-Cartesian universe) is implicated as much in the emergence of the *naturphilosophisch* universe and the interpretative dualism as it is in the rise of the organic metaphor in empirical biological science.

What the German speculative sciences suggest about constructions of subjectivity is that they are distinctly fragile and contingent. If organicism thrives on the tension between two levels of experience, the general and the particular, then subjectivity can only be figured within that process as a kind of agent, a mediation of the levels, and reflecting, as all good organic beings do, that schism within itself. The apparent contradiction of the empirical and ideal selves can thus also be figured within the scientific discourses as the conceptual contradictions of the fragmentary and whole, the irrational and rational, the cyclical and linear, to name but a few. In the patterning of such pairings, the empirical natural sciences sought in particular to 'still' the object of scrutiny by controlling access to the mechanisms of scrutiny, by dictating who could 'know' and who was constituted as an object-to-be-known.

Recent spectator theory holds that the bearer of the gaze is masculine and that the image is feminine:

> In a world ordered by sexual imbalance, pleasure in looking has been split between active/male and passive/female. The determining male gaze projects its phantasy on to the female figure which is styled accordingly. In their traditional exhibitionist role, women are simultaneously looked at and displayed, with their appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact so that they can be said to connote *to-be-looked-at-ness*.[28]

To gender the gaze in this way is to recognise something profound about the way in which transitive activities were invariably figured in Hollywood cinema. A similarly hegemonic coding of the object of scrutiny of science is pervasive in the nineteenth century. Woman, in particular, figured as an exemplary spectacle in the medical sciences and occupied a 'privileged' location as the body *par excellence*, beset by the vicissitudes of womb vapours, hysteria, melancholia, narcissism and other 'infirmities' which marked out an acceptable middle-class femininity from other more deviant forms. Before we can proceed to an analysis of how gender is engaged in the music-theoretical text, we must make some general observations about the nature of such texts and how the gaze is constituted within them.

MUSIC ON DEAF EYES

The learned scrutiny is indebted to the empirical sciences for its construction of the Subject/Object binarism. The authorial locus of the academy-trained learned self,

[28] Mulvey, 'Visual Pleasure', p. 27.

the 'intensive' reader who both fuelled and dismissed the populist *Lesewut*, is sustained in the music-theoretical idiom by a particularly close and constant attention to the nature of the object of scrutiny, by a turn, in short, to a kind of prototypically analytical activity. This object, the empirical corollary of the work, is formed through the creeping professionalisation of the music-theoretical idiom and an ever broader schism between the once unified pedagogical (compositional) and analytical projects. We must not, however, fall into the trap of characterising all that seems *analytical* as somehow positivist or 'scientific' in orientation. Few music theorists would ever have made such claims and even fewer would have understood the need to do so. Rather, the relationship between music-theoretical practices and the empirical sciences of the first half of the nineteenth century is much more fluid. Two points in particular demand our attention here: first, that the empirical sciences themselves were in a state of considerable methodological and epistemological flux, slowly unshackling themselves from the constraints of Leibnizian and Cartesian forms of speculation, only to encounter the unwieldy formulations of German *Naturphilosophie* – hence, to speak of the German empirical sciences as if they were a clearly characterised and finite set of practices is untenable; second, that although German music theory was undergoing a remarkable transformation, the final 'victory' of the analytical method over other more descriptive or critical activities was much later than is often made out. With these two points in mind, it becomes clear that the music-theoretical text is a wayward and rather hybrid beast.

The hybrid nature of such texts is easily demonstrable: one need only browse Ian Bent's two-volume *Music Analysis in the Nineteenth Century* to see how elucidation, speculation and description rub up against analytical procedures in an often bewildering profusion of approaches. There is also no point in denying that much of what passed for music theory was characterised by derivative and banal invocations of the latest intellectual vogues: sub-Hegel, pseudo-science and professional posturing – at its most banal, music theory could (and can) be tiresome. And yet, it is the very banality of some of these texts that opens up some interesting trajectories. Rather than dismiss what Wackenroder termed the 'chattering of words' and 'monstrous hieroglyphics' of the music-theoretical text as somehow sub-standard, I suggest that there is something fundamentally *readerly* to this hybridity, as if the wilful fluidity of approaches pointed beyond itself to some other text or texts.

This returns us to the tantalising prospect made at the outset of this chapter for music theory as a record of a kind of 'reading'. Whilst one cannot deny the acumen with which many theorists approached the musical work, one particularly deadly myth must be laid to rest: as an academy-mediated idiom, music theory does *not* spring first and foremost from an aural apprehension of the music. The act of making a music-theoretical text is a double process of both 'reading' the printed score and attempting to convince the reader that he or she is being made party to that reading. Two further notes of caution should be sounded before we can proceed along this trajectory. First, there is a considerable difference in the way 'listening' is constituted in nineteenth-century German culture and in our own – the music theorist's ability to construct (to

'hear') the work from the score was common practice, and the act of listening was always, figuratively speaking, 'in' the text. Second, domestic performances of well-known works were not uncommon, and piano reductions became readily available with the expansion of publishing and the drop in prices due to widespread pirating. This would seem to support the view that early nineteenth-century Germany sustained a broad range of cultures of listening and that attempts to characterise such cultures in terms of a singular experience are problematic. (Indeed, Schumann wrote his review of Berlioz's *Symphonie fantastique* having heard only Liszt's piano reduction, a fact that suggests that late twentieth-century scholarly notions of 'authenticity' or 'authentic listening' in scholarly apprehensions of the musical work are out of place in early nineteenth-century culture.) Despite this plurality of listening modes available to the music theorist, the production of a text is a laborious process that alienates, delays, distends and defers the subjective apprehension of the musical work. The theorist is thus constantly striving to capture the 'original' apprehension and doomed to fail in the quest for that 'immediate presence': in this very profound sense, the music-theoretical idiom engages the ear only figuratively.

Constituted in the very practices that the music-theoretical text purports to show is a highly transitive act linked more than just figuratively to the gaze. Clearly these texts posit a very specific kind of reading dependent not first and foremost on *listening*, but on *looking*. The eye, as our initial Lacanian formulation suggested, is little more than a pale metonym of the gaze itself. Since the subjective apprehension of the music is always deferred in such texts, the gaze has detached itself from the optics of perception and set itself free in search of an eternally deferred Other, the music itself, and attaches itself to neither the looking subject nor the 'image' of the music.

GENDERED LISTENING, GENDERED LOOKING

As Mulvey and Lacan have both shown, the gaze is linked intimately (and ultimately) to desire:

> We can apprehend this privilege of the gaze in the function of desire, by pouring ourselves, as it were, along the veins through which the domain of vision has been integrated into the field of desire.[29]

The object of the gaze is thus the object of desire and the look passes from a simple relation of power to one of erotic potential. As we have seen, Mulvey has shown how this erotic potential is structured in the Hollywood epic to mark woman as the *to-be-seen* of the binarism and man as bearer of the gaze. We have also noted how this formulation finds a parallel in the late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century medical construction of woman as the exemplary body and man as the exemplary mind. Endemic to a gaze grounded in this culture is the pleasure that looking at a woman gives a (heterosexual) male, a pleasure characterised usefully as a kind of

[29] Lacan, *Concepts*, p. 85.

scopophilia, an erotic pleasure in looking such that the look becomes almost as charged as the touch, the difference almost annihilated.

It would, of course, have been easier to engage questions of gender in music-theoretical texts by paying close attention to more overtly gendered quasi-narrative texts such as Schumann's review of the *Symphonie fantastique* or texts on opera such as Berlioz's review of Meyerbeer's *Les Huguenots*.[30] By concentrating on such texts, however, one privileges the overt over the covert, the externalised over the codified, the foreground over the background. Even in texts that are 'overt', furthermore, one cannot simply wade into the text looking for gender. It has to be located and grounded in the discourses that operate around the text and through which the text itself mediates constructions of gender. By concentrating on the structure of the gaze, however, one embraces the possibility of analysing the textual operations that hide, marginalise and objectify the feminine 'body' and of uncovering some of the ways in which misogynous assumptions on gender are incorporated in discourses apparently free of such concerns.

To return to the operations of the gaze, music analysis in its most 'elucidatory' mode, to use Bent's term, is usefully figured in terms of a kind of scrutiny premised on the notions that its object is somehow coquettish, wilfully complex and mischievously illusive. Moritz Hauptmann's analysis of Bach's *Art of Fugue*,[31] Simon Sechter's analysis of Mozart's 'Jupiter' Symphony,[32] Siegfried Wilhelm Dehn's analysis of Bach's *Well-tempered Clavier*[33] all construct a dramatic process of drawing back the veils of complexity to reveal the inner locus of the ontic core, through a range of interpretative trajectories. This process is perhaps more explicitly embraced in hermeneutic accounts such as Hoffmann's famous review of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony:

> Beethoven's instrumental music unveils for us the realm of the almighty and the immeasurable. Here shining rays of light shoot through the darkness of night, and we become aware of giant shadows swaying back and forth, moving ever closer around us and destroying within us all feeling but the pain of infinite yearning, in which every desire, leaping up in sounds of exaltation, sinks back and disappears.[34]

The focused clarity of Gottfried Weber's analysis of a Mozart quartet stands in stark contrast, and yet tacitly engages the same model, that of a peeling away of veils to reveal an inner core:

[30] *Journal des débats* (10 November 1836), 1–2.

[31] Moritz Hauptmann, *Erläuterungen zu Joh. Sebastian Bachs KUNST DER FUGE . . . Beilage zum III. Bande der in obiger Verlags-Handlung erschienenen neuen Ausgabe von J. S. Bachs Werken* (Leipzig: C. F. Peters, 1841), pp. 3–14.

[32] Simon Sechter, 'Zergliederung des Finale aus Mozarts 4. Sinfonie in C', in Friedrich Wilhelm Marpurg, *Abhandlung von der Fuge, nach den Grundsätzen und Beispielen der besten in- und ausländischen Meister entworfen, von Friedrich Wilhelm Marpurg, neu bearbeitet, mit erläuternden Anmerkungen und Beispielen vermehrt von S. Sechter* . . ., ed. Simon Sechter, 2 vols. (Vienna: Anton Diabelli [1843]), vol. II, pp. 161–93.

[33] Siegfried Wilhelm Dehn, 'Dreistimmige Fuge aus dem "Wohltemperirten Clavier" von J. S. Bach', in *Analysen dreier Fugen aus Joh. Seb. Bach's 'wohltemperirtem Clavier' und einer Vocal-Doppelfuge A. M. Bononcini's* (Leipzig: C. F. Peters, 1858), pp. 1–7.

[34] Translation from Bent (ed.), *Analysis*, vol. II, p. 145.

The sole task that I have set myself here is to carry out just such an enquiry, to produce just such an analysis . . .
I believe that I can best carry out the promised analysis of the passage in question if first, in preparation, I:

1 examine it from the point of view of its underlying chord progression or tonal scheme; then
2 consider the notes foreign to chords, otherwise known as passing notes, that occur in the passage, and then
3 a few so-called cross-relations that are lurking there; as well as
4 some parallel progressions between voices that are worthy of note; but finally examine the entire passage once again, bringing all the above points into conjunction with one another.[35]

Even later, Hauptmann is able to invoke an interiority, despite his positivist pretensions:

What it is, on the one hand, that enables a work of art to communicate with us as a living source deep within; or what it is that empowers the often recalcitrant raw materials, under such irksome constraints as these, to take shape in the master's hand as free and profoundly inspired forms, and that reveals its creator to us, the object equally of our admiration and our astonishment, – all of this can be understood and appreciated through kindred feeling.[36]

In Hoffmann and Hauptmann, the 'poetic' tone, often figured as an 'aside' or throw-away encomium, is the locus of a shift in conceptions of what the analytical project can be. Such encomia are clearly integrated into the text in Hoffmann, whereas they reside at the fringes of Hauptmann's analytical argument (and are already largely absent from Weber's terse analysis). It is, indeed, this purification or filtering out of the idealising subjectivity that marks the ascendancy of the much later positivist outlook.

By recourse to a more overtly rigorous and 'scientific' idiom, music theory attempted over and over in the latter half of the nineteenth century to validate itself according to more clearly 'scientific' models that cast out the speculative biology of the early nineteenth century in favour of more rigorously empirical methodologies. Hence, the gaze intensifies with all the fecundity of the camera, constructing a view of the human anatomy based on fidelity to the original, premised on the belief that external reality has independent existence that can be captured in the act of looking and recounting through the visual image. As nature unveils itself to the gaze of positivist scrutiny in the statue by Louis Ernest Barras, *La Nature se dévoilant devant la Science*, so feminine music lays bare its internal organs to the scrutiny of the analyst. What resounds most clearly in the transition from speculative to positivist music theory is the transformation of figurations of musical material as natural, to a kind of frozen existential time, hung in the concert hall like a great delicate net.

Authority and subjectivity in the positivist analytical text centre around an empirical self that is exemplary. The gaze of the positivist music analysis is gendered –

[35] Gottfried Weber, 'Ueber eine besonders merkwürdige Stelle in einem Mozart'schen Violinquartett aus C', in *Versuch einer geordneten Theorie der Tonsetzkunst zum Selbstunterricht*, 4 vols. (Mainz: Schott, 1830–2), vol. III, pp. 196–226. Translation from Bent (ed.), *Analysis*, vol. I, p. 163.

[36] Moritz Hauptmann, *Erläuterungen*, p. 15; translation from Bent (ed.), *Analysis*, vol. I, p. 76.

invariably – in terms of the more readily masculine side of the binary pairs: rational, clear, incisive, penetrative, unveiling. Within this cultural-historical configuration, the gaze is always owned by men. Gender occupies an exemplary position within the logic of alterity since its dualism always seemed to be grounded in a pre-ordained biology, in 'nature' itself. The putatively 'natural' dualism, the differences 'given' in nature thus constituted a useful, apparently empirical, model for the other asymmetrical binarisms of alterity. In the music-theoretical idiom, the gendered gaze designated the academy-mediated authority of the analyst/theorist as invariably masculine since gender itself is often held up in the scientific/medical discourses as *the* binarism *par excellence*. It is, so to speak, the ultimate duality on which the construction of the analytical/empirical 'I' rests.

The nineteenth century frames a remarkable transformation of music theory from a kind of desirous 'reading' to an activity closer to an exploratory invasion of the musical 'body'. If the desire located in the deferral of the musical 'object' is linked to the gaze, then the shift from 'reading' to 'analysis' is thus a shift from the gaze as yearning or questing to a fetishistic, stifling, scopophilic gaze that reduces the object of scrutiny to a mere captive image. It is of little surprise that the polemicists of analysis and a thoroughly professionalised *Musikwissenschaft* should emerge at the very moment that the first audiences could gaze from the darkened auditorium on the first moving images taken by camera.