

General introduction

§1 The two opposing principles of music analysis

The General Introduction to volume I of the present work opened with Jérôme-Joseph de Momigny's self-important proclamation in 1803 of a new kind of music theory. Momigny's implementation of that theory foreshadowed to a remarkable degree the tendency of nineteenth-century theory to resort more and more to analysis. However, while that implementation typified the newly dawning one, the theory itself typified the outgoing era: the frame of mind in which Momigny wrote was explicitly that of 'the man of enlightenment', and his theory was rooted in the Enlightenment's reliance upon exact observation of natural phenomena, upon empirical sensationism – upon, in short, the *scientific* mode of viewing the world. Fairly or unfairly, we used Momigny as the paradigm for that scientific impulse toward musical phenomena which, already strong in the eighteenth century, continued through the nineteenth and on into the twentieth. To a greater or lesser extent, all the analyses presented in volume I, and especially those in Parts I and II of that volume, were imbued with the impulse to describe exactly, to measure, to quantify, the material attributes of music – its sounding phenomena (the Greek plural 'phenomena' means 'things that appear', 'appearances').

Volume II is driven by the opposite impulse. All of its analyses – again to greater or lesser extent (and ironically they include an analysis by Momigny, one of only two writers to be represented in both volumes) – are imbued with the impulse to *interpret* rather than to describe. Their concern is with the *inner life* of the music rather than with its outward, audible form. They strive to transcend that outer form and penetrate the non-material interior. Here the inscription on Sir William Herschel's telescope, *coeli munimente perrupit* ('it has pierced the walls of the heavens'), quoted by von Lenz in Analysis 16c of volume I, takes on a new aspect. Rather than bursting the barriers of the visible world to attain new scientific discoveries beyond, as Herschel intended, they penetrate the audible exterior so as to attain human discoveries within.¹ This new and opposite impulse is called the *hermeneutic principle*. While only one of the authors presented in volume II used the term 'hermeneutics' and showed an explicit awareness of the broader field of hermeneutic thought, all of them were, though to greatly varying extents, and though they themselves belonged to different traditions of music-theoretical thought, motivated by this hermeneutic impulse.

1 To be fair, von Lenz was using the inscription not for new scientific discoveries but for Beethoven's reaching of his third style.

§2 General hermeneutics: the beginnings

There are two classes of interpreters [within hermeneutics] who can be distinguished by their procedures. The one class directs its attention almost exclusively to the linguistic relations of a given text. The other pays more attention to the original psychic process of producing and combining ideas and images.

Thus declared Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768–1834), the Protestant theologian and philologist, in an address to the Berlin Academy of Sciences in 1829. The extremes of both approaches are, in Schleiermacher's view, dangerous. The interpreter who bases his interpretation of a literary work exclusively on a precise examination of language, while having no sense of the life of the author's mind, exhibits what 'we call "pedantry"'. On the other hand, he who concentrates on the author's psychological processes to the neglect of linguistic matters 'we have to call by a name that has been used . . . in the sphere of artistic productivity . . . : he is a "nebulist"'. To ensure a balanced approach, Schleiermacher advises would-be interpreters to work at both 'sides of the mountain'.²

Hermeneutics has its origin in *hermeneia*, Greek for interpretation, on which subject Aristotle wrote a major treatise, *Peri hermeneias*. The word derives from *hermeios*, the priest at the Delphic oracle, and is said (perhaps fancifully) to relate back to the winged messenger-god Hermes. Its earliest use in modern times may be the title of Johann Conrad Dannhauer's *Sacred Hermeneutics, or Method of Expounding Sacred Writings*, dating from 1654.³ During the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries hermeneutics existed as a number of separate but related fields, most significantly biblical hermeneutics, classical literary hermeneutics and juridical hermeneutics. Among the countless publications during this period, especially in Protestant north Germany, three important ones can be singled out: Johann Heinrich Ernesti's *On the Nature and Constitution of Secular Hermeneutics* of 1699, Johann August Ernesti's *Textbook for the Interpreter of the New Testament* of 1761, both in Latin and Johann Martin Chladenius's (i.e. Chladni's) *Introduction to the Correct Interpretation of Rational Discourses and Writings* of 1742, the first systematic treatise in German.⁴ The last of these works introduced the notion of the unique 'point of view' (*Sehe-Punkt*), and posited that the prime cause of misunderstanding of a thing was the differences that arise between points of view of

2 Schleiermacher delivered two addresses in 1829: 12 August and 29 October. Together, they outlined – and were the first public declaration of – the theory of hermeneutics that he had been formulating since 1805. See *Hermeneutics: the Handwritten Manuscripts*, Eng. trans. James Duke and H. Jackson Forstman, American Academy of Religion Texts and Translation Series, vol. 1 (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1977), pp. 175–214, esp. pp. 204–05. Other dates cited in notes below refer to earlier and later manuscript materials.

3 *Hermeneutica sacra sive methodus exponendarum sacrarum litterarum* (Strasbourg: Staedellius, 1654).

4 *De natura et constitutione hermeneuticae profanae* (Leipzig: n.p., 1699); *Institutio interpretis novi testamenti* (Leipzig: le Mair, 1761, 2/1762), later much cited by Schleiermacher, and of which two English translations appeared during the nineteenth century – Moses Stuart, *Elements of Interpretation* (Andover: Flagg and Gould, 1822), and Charles H. Terrot, *Principles of Biblical Interpretation* (Edinburgh: T. Clark, 1832–3); *Einleitung zur richtigen Auslegung vernünftiger Reden und Schriften* (Leipzig, 1742; reprint edn Düsseldorf: Stern, 1969), two sections of which appear in English in *The Hermeneutics Reader*, ed. and trans. Kurt Mueller-Vollmer (New York: Continuum, 1992), pp. 55–71.

that thing. Chladenius was a pioneer in seeking to recast the heterogeneous field of hermeneutics as a single general field. What he failed to do in 1742 Schleiermacher succeeded in doing between 1805 and 1833, assimilating biblical, classical and juridical hermeneutics and at the same time extending far beyond that – he imagined its being applied to oriental literature, for example, to German Romantic literature (significantly, as we will see) and ultimately to all kinds of text.⁵

In unifying the field, he drew on the work of two now largely forgotten philologists, Friedrich Ast (1778–1841) and Friedrich August Wolf (1759–1824), the latter of whom had defined hermeneutics in 1807 as ‘the art of discovering with necessary insight the thoughts contained in the work of an author’,⁶ and had articulated the underlying notion that every text, whatever its language, and however close to or remote from our experience, is in some degree ‘foreign’ to us and demands to be ‘understood’. This notion of ‘understanding’ (*Verstand*, the capacity to understand; *Verstehen*, the act of understanding) is central to hermeneutics. It is as well for us to try to distinguish here four disciplines that existed side by side in the eighteenth century: *philology* was the study of language, and focused on characteristics of discourse that were common to a culture; *criticism* was the detection of defects in a text and the restoration of damaged passages (in modern parlance, this is still precisely what distinguishes a ‘critical edition’ from any other edition);⁷ *exegesis* was the expounding of the possible meanings of words and phrases in a text, and centred upon the text itself rather than the author. *Hermeneutics*, by contrast, treated text as message; its concern lay with the intention of the author; its purpose was to facilitate understanding; as Chladenius declared, it was ‘a discipline in itself, not in part, and can be assigned its place in accordance with the teachings of psychology’.⁸ Hermeneutics started with the ‘distance’ (Wolf’s ‘foreign’-ness) that separated reader from author; it took as its premise that misunderstanding was more likely to arise than not to arise;⁹ only by neutralizing this ‘distance’, which could be done solely by entering the mind of the author – Wolf’s ‘necessary insight’ (*Einsicht*, literally ‘seeing-into’, the very power that the *hermeios* possessed) –, could one eliminate all misunderstanding.

Schleiermacher identified two distinct modes of extracting such ‘insight’ from a text: the *comparative* method and the *divinatory* method. To gain insight into a given passage by the former involves locating similar passages elsewhere in the work,

5 Schleiermacher, *Hermeneutics*, pp. 178–9 (1829).

6 *die Kunst, die Gedanken eines Schriftstellers aus dessen Vortrage mit nothwendiger Einsicht aufzufinden*: ‘Darstellung der Alterthums-Wissenschaft nach Begriff, Umfang, Zweck und Werth’, in *Museum der Alterthums-Wissenschaft*, 1 (1807), 37, quoted in Schleiermacher’s first address (see *Hermeneutics*, p. 180); Schleiermacher questions the necessity of insight in all cases (ibid., 183–4). The definition is embedded in a remark that hermeneutics was still searching for a widely based theoretical foundation ‘in studies of the nature of the meanings of a word, the sense of a sentence, the coherence of an utterance, and many other points in *grammatical, rhetorical and historical interpretation*’ (italics original).

7 Even Droysen, in lectures delivered from 1857 onwards, used to teach that ‘Criticism has done away with all sorts of imperfections and impurities which the material initially had. Not only has it purified and verified them, but it has organized them so that they may lie well ordered before us.’ (*The Hermeneutics Reader*, p. 127)

8 *Einleitung*, in *The Hermeneutics Reader*, p. 60.

9 Schleiermacher, *Hermeneutics*, p. 110 (1819): ‘the assumption that misunderstanding occurs as a matter of course, and so understanding must be willed and sought at every point’.

in other works by the same author and in works by kindred authors, and then filling in the gaps in understanding by inferring from these similar passages. To do so by the ‘divinatory’ – i.e. prophetic, oracular, presentient – method involves the interpreter’s standing outside himself and entering into the mind of the author, so grasping the author’s personality and state of mind from within.¹⁰ The first of these methods is at its most efficacious when dealing with an author whose works adhere to a tradition, the second method when dealing with an ‘author of genius’ (*genialer Autor*) – an author who coins new language and conceives novel ideas.¹¹ Since in reality all texts occupy a position somewhere between these two extremes, the interpreter always uses both methods.

§3 The hermeneutic circle

More than that, though. It is characteristic of hermeneutics that the interpreter *shifts constantly between one method and the other*. We can relate this notion to our opening quotation from Schleiermacher and say that the interpreter *shuttles back and forth* between the *linguistic* relations of a text and its *psychic* process – what Schleiermacher more frequently called the ‘grammatical’ aspect and the ‘psychological’ (or ‘technical’) aspect. The first of these aspects views a given utterance in relation to the general, impersonal language system of which it forms a part; the second views it in relation to the mental world of its author, his inner life, his personal history. These two aspects of a text, and consequently the two methods of seeking insight, complement one another, yet by their very nature the two aspects cannot be held in view simultaneously since each obscures the other; oscillation between them is the only possibility for joint consideration. Eventually such oscillation results in their fusing into a single, unified interpretation of the text. This back-and-forth exemplifies a process that is at the very heart of hermeneutics: the process, first stated by Ast, of the *hermeneutic circle*.¹²

The image conveyed by this phrase is that of an interpreter whose actions are in constant circular orbit – an orbit that intersects on one side with a particular object, and on the other with a more general and related set of objects. A good example would be the message of the New Testament, over against the sum total of messages transmitted by Greek and Hebrew texts of the time; or more narrowly one

10 *ibid.*, 42 (1805: ‘In interpretation it is essential that one be able to step out of one’s own frame of mind into that of the author’), 150 (1819: ‘By leading the interpreter to transform himself, so to speak, into the author, the divinatory method seeks to gain an immediate comprehension of the author as an individual’), 185 (1829: ‘a divinatory certainty which arises when an interpreter delves as deeply as possible into an author’s state of mind’), 192 (‘to reconstruct the creative act that begins with the generation of thoughts which captivate the author and to understand how the requirement of the moment could draw upon the living treasure of words in the author’s mind in order to produce just this way of putting it and no other’). This idea is adumbrated in Wolf, ‘Darstellung’ (37–8), and divination discussed (40).

11 Schleiermacher, *Hermeneutics*, pp. 192 (1829); 102–03 (1819: ‘The term “absolute” is reserved for statements that achieve a maximum of both linguistic creativity and individuality: works of genius [*das Genialische*].’)

12 *ibid.*, 100, 113, 115–16 (1819), 190–96 (1829: where the idea is attributed to Ast with the classic statement: ‘just as the whole is understood from the parts, so the parts can be understood only from the whole’).

particular message from the New Testament, over against the totality of messages transmitted by that work. Hermeneutic writers generalize these polar opposites as *part* over against *whole*, or as *subjective* over against *objective*, either of which is easier for the music analyst to grasp. A model for the implementation of the circle is Schleiermacher's own analysis of Plato's *Republic*:¹³

He started [writes Dilthey] with a survey of the structure, comparable to a superficial reading, tentatively grasped the whole context, illuminated the difficulties and halted thoughtfully at all those passages which afforded insight into the composition. Only then did interpretation proper begin.

None of the three writers cited so far, Ast, Wolf or Schleiermacher, investigated music interpretation; nevertheless, it is not difficult for us to translate their images into musical terms, nor is it unreasonable since Schleiermacher argued for the subjection of spoken as well as written language to the processes of hermeneutics, and did at least once allude to such processes in music and painting.¹⁴ Thus we can translate their whole-and-parts image into that of a listener-interpreter who has expectations of a musical composition that he is about to hear – expectations of the whole that are based on his prior knowledge of the piece's declared form or genre – and who then, as he hears the moment-to-moment details of the piece in performance, repeatedly shifts back to his expectation and modifies it, this modified view of the whole in turn colouring the way he hears the subsequent particulars; and so on, back and forth, until the end is reached, when preconception of the whole and experience of the bar-by-bar details fuse into a single, fully mediated understanding of the work. (Such a process is almost perfectly exemplified by Marx's interpretation of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony (1859), given below, Analysis 12.)

Nor is it difficult to translate these three writers' objective–subjective image into music, envisaging a reviewer-interpreter or an analyst-interpreter who examines a score for what musicians might call its 'technical' features – its phrase structure, themes and motifs, harmonic syntax, modulatory plan, rhythmic scheme, etc. (quite the opposite of what Schleiermacher meant by 'technical!') –, who equally and intermittently seeks to transport himself into the composer's mind to 'divine' the psychological motivation behind such writing, and who allows each stage of investigation to inform the succeeding, opposite stage. Successfully concluded, the product of this oscillatory process would be a psychological understanding of the work that included *but transcended* a technical understanding of the same work. (There are elements of such an interpretation in E. T. A. Hoffmann's multi-layered essay on Beethoven's Fifth Symphony (1810), Analysis 9 below; perhaps a more definitive example is the essay on Beethoven's String Quartet Op. 132 (1885), Analysis 13, below, by Helm, half of whose attention is constantly on the issue of intentionality.)

13 Description by Dilthey in a lecture to the Prussian Academy of Sciences in 1896/97, published as 'Die Entstehung der Hermeneutik', in *Philosophische Abhandlungen, Christoph Sigwart zu seinem 70. Geburtstag 28. März 1900 gewidmet* (Tübingen, 1900), pp. 185–202; *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. v (Leipzig and Berlin: Teubner, 1924), pp. 317–31; Eng. trans. H. P. Rickman in *W. Dilthey: Selected Writings* (Cambridge: CUP, 1976), pp. 246–63, the quoted passage on p. 259.

14 Schleiermacher, *Hermeneutics*, p. 105 (1819); on oral language, see *ibid.*, e.g. 109 (1819), 200 (1829).

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To return now to general hermeneutics, in the following statement the two images, whole-and-parts, and objective–subjective, coexist:¹⁵

The ultimate goal of technical [i.e. psychological] interpretation is nothing other than a development of the beginning [of that interpretation], that is, to consider the whole of the author's work in terms of its parts and in every part to consider the content as what moved the author, and the form as his nature moved by that content.

Here we can see hermeneutic circles spinning simultaneously in two distinct planes: between the whole and the parts, and likewise between the subjective and objective aspects of the text ('content' and 'form'). Even the allusion to goal and beginning implies that the interpretation finally 'comes full circle'. At the same time that the hermeneutic circle denotes motion ('the hermeneutical task moves constantly', remarked Schleiermacher graphically in 1828,¹⁶ emphasizing the dynamic nature of all hermeneutic activity), it also denotes each level of the whole-and-parts scheme of things. To take our earlier examples, the Greek and Hebrew writings of the early years AD form a circle within which the New Testament message is situated ('the whole circle of literature to which a writing belongs'¹⁷); and the totality of New Testament messages forms a circle within which one particular message is situated; that message forms a circle within which some particular is situated, and so forth. Each circle represents the whole within which the particular is located, and provides the 'horizon' within which it has its existence. 'Circle' is no passive usage here: it is symbolic, in that whatever it denotes is seen as a 'unity', whether it be a single word, a sentence, a section, a work, an author's style, or a body of literature.

Before going further, it is important to know that Schleiermacher had from the mid-1790s been in close contact with leading members of the German Romantic movement. The occasional references in his hermeneutic writings to Friedrich and August Wilhelm von Schlegel and to Ludwig Tieck bear witness to this fact. Indeed, Friedrich von Schlegel (1772–1829) lodged with him in 1797–9, and the two men shared ideas and collaborated closely until they fell out in 1804. Schleiermacher came to know and be influenced by Schlegel's friends, and was also briefly but intensely in contact with the poet Novalis (Friedrich von Hardenberg). Schleiermacher's first book, *On Religion: Speeches to its Cultured Despisers* (1799) – one of the major works of modern Christian thought, yet a product of the very publishing house that had issued *Confessions from the Heart of an Art-Loving Friar*, Wackenroder's landmark work of Romantic aesthetic criticism that sought to elevate art to the status of religion, only two years earlier – reached out to those who felt estranged by the Enlightenment's dogmatic theology and tried to persuade them that religion was rooted first and foremost in immediate feeling and intuition. It told its Romantic contemporaries that they were not as far from religion as they believed, beckoning them with statements such as 'Recall how in religion everything strives to expand the sharply delineated outlines of our personality and gradually to lose them in the infinite in order that we, by intuiting the universe, will become one with it as much

15 *ibid.*, 148 (1819).

16 *ibid.*, 95 (1828 marginal note to the 1819 Compendium).

17 *ibid.*, 115 (1819), also 202 (1829). Instances of the opposite sense are 113, 116 (1819); 186–7 (1829: 'This path leads us in a kind of circle').

as possible'.¹⁸ In this work, unity is a crucial property of religion, the organic a pervasive metaphor (see volume 1, General Introduction, §§ 6–7 for a discussion of the organic metaphor), and the circle a frequently used image – all of these being central to Romantic thought.

It should not surprise us, then, that the influence of Romanticism spilt over into Schleiermacher's hermeneutic writings, such that they spoke often of the unity of literary composition ('Both technical and grammatical interpretation begin with a general overview of a text designed to grasp its unity and the major features of its composition'), of unity emerging as purposive ('Discover the author's decision, i.e., the unity and actual direction of the work (psychological); then, understand the composition as the objective realization of that decision'), of interpretation 'reducing' particulars to their unity, or (most telling for our discussion of Beethoven below) of the underlying connections of a work being withheld from view so as to produce a 'hidden unity'.¹⁹ Nor is it surprising that organic images are often found in these writings ('Organic with nature. Each plant carries out a special modification of pre-established processes'; 'there are only two types of combination, organic and mechanical, i.e., an inner fusion and an external adjoining of parts'²⁰).

Moreover, in the hermeneutics of the Enlightenment period, the author was only a shadowy figure lurking behind the real focus of the interpreter, the 'text'. Schleiermacher, under the influence of Romantic thought, replaced this automaton-like impersonality of mind with the dynamic notion of 'spirit' (*Geist*): spirit as the unconscious creator at work in the individual genius.²¹ With this all-important idea, hermeneutics was transformed from a set of rules for textual exegesis into an all-encompassing interpretative theory with the idea of author as creator, and of the text as the expression of creative self.²² Thus in creating a general hermeneutics, Schleiermacher fashioned so to speak the *practical arm* of Romantic aesthetics. General hermeneutics rested on the very foundations that supported Romantic aesthetics, particularly on the notions that the artist acts in an individual capacity rather than representing a society; that he or she is 'inspired', but inspiration comes from within the self or from some transcendent reality rather than from God or some external power; that the artist functions not according to rules or norms or traditions, but according to the dictates of the creative imagination; consequently, that the artist's thoughts are original, and when that originality is absolute they manifest genius; that art is a product of the human mind and spirit rather than of nature; that art is expressive, hence message-laden, rather than imitative; and that

18 Anon. [Friedrich Schleiermacher], *Über die Religion: Reden an die Gebildeten unter ihren Verächtern* (Berlin: Unger, 1799), Eng. trans. Richard Crouter as *Friedrich Schleiermacher: On Religion: Speeches to its Cultured Despisers* (Cambridge: CUP, 1988), 'Second Speech: On the Essence of Religion', pp. 96–140, esp. p. 139.

19 Schleiermacher, *Hermeneutics*, pp. 147 (1819), 223 (1832–3), 51 (1805, 1809–10: 'Everything complex must be referred back to what is simple; a multiplicity of meanings must be quite consciously reduced to their unity'), 225 (1832–3).

20 *ibid.*, 163 (1826–7), 129 (1819).

21 See Paul Ricoeur's lucid analysis of the working of this influence in 'The Task of Hermeneutics [I]', *Philosophy Today*, 17 (1973), 112–28, esp. 114–15; retranslated in *Paul Ricoeur: Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences*, ed. and trans. John B. Thompson (Cambridge: CUP; Paris: Editions de la Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, 1981), esp. p. 46.

22 See Kurt Mueller-Vollmer's discussion in *The Hermeneutics Reader*, pp. 9–12.

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art moulds the prior experience that the beholder brings to it, enriching, deepening and transforming it.

Thus, having earlier distinguished hermeneutics from philology, criticism and exegesis in the eighteenth century, we can now distinguish it from *aesthetics* in the nineteenth century. As a term, 'aesthetics' was coined much later than hermeneutics – by Baumgarten in 1750 – although the concerns of both go back to antiquity. Aesthetics is a set of ideas (whether one calls it science, theory, or philosophy) about the meaning and value of art. Aesthetics addresses art and artistic activity in their own right. Hermeneutics, by contrast, addresses the interstice between a 'text' and an apprehending mind. Hermeneutics, to use Ricoeur's working definition, is 'the theory of the operation of understanding in its relations to the interpretation of texts'.²³ Even where hermeneutics is applied to a 'text' of art (which is by no means its full range of application) it moves, as it were, constantly between art and mind, its focus residing in neither, but rather in understanding. It is hermeneutics, therefore, ever active as it is, that provides the theoretical basis for the *criticism* (now in its nineteenth-century sense) and *analysis* of individual works.

I have dwelt on the work of Schleiermacher and his predecessors at greater length than might seem proportionate for two reasons. First, hermeneutics is still a relatively little known and poorly understood field among musicians. Second, such accounts of it as exist have tended to take as their sources the work of Dilthey later in the nineteenth century and of Gadamer in the twentieth, thus giving it different emphases and introducing ideas not yet present in Schleiermacher's work. At the same time, Schleiermacher's ideas are highly suggestive for music, even though the lines of influence to writers on music are admittedly tenuous.

§4 General hermeneutics after Schleiermacher

The written transmission of Schleiermacher's hermeneutic ideas was, intentionally or unintentionally, cast in a form common for its age. Like Schlegel's novel *Lucinde* of 1799 (which Schleiermacher knew and wrote about; indeed, he is the basis of one of its characters), and many of the writings of Ludwig Tieck, Sébastien-Roch Chamfort and others, it was fragmentary and aphoristic. It fell to subsequent writers to systematize the method, among them the great scholar of language, philosopher and educational reformer Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767–1835), the historian Johann Gustav Droysen (1808–84) and the philologist Philip August Boeckh (1785–1867). Boeckh was the first writer to include musical notation, and also pictures, among the types of text that might be subjected to hermeneutic enquiry.²⁴ He reformulated the ideas of Schleiermacher and Wolf (of both of whom he had been a pupil) systematically, and expanded their range (e.g. to include allegorical interpretation as

²³ 'The Task', 112.

²⁴ 'This thing communicated is either a symbol of the thing known, different from it in form, e.g., in the shape of letters, musical notation, etc.; or it is a picture agreeing in form with the object expressed in it, as in works of art or craft. [. . .] Here [in special hermeneutics] belongs the branch of artistic interpretation, which has to explain works of plastic art as one explains works of literature.' (August Boeckh, *On Interpretation and Criticism*, ed. and trans. John Paul Pritchard (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1968), pp. 46, 48, 55; reproduced in *The Hermeneutics Reader*, pp. 134–5, 139.)

well as literal, and to permit intuition alongside precise observation – hence ‘the interpreter is born, not made’). Boeckh’s *Encyclopaedia and Methodology of the Philological Sciences*, embodying the lectures that he gave many times between 1809 and his death, and published posthumously in 1877, is a lucid account of the methods of philology, hermeneutics and criticism, the latter two both being subdivided into ‘grammatical’, ‘historical’, ‘individual’ and ‘generic’ interpretation.

Droysen’s perspicuous formulation ‘On Interpretation’, first published in 1858, was conceived around the interpretation of *historical events* rather than of a text, though it can readily be transferred to text. It articulates four stages: (1) pragmatic interpretation (of the historical ‘facts’ after critical reconstruction), (2) interpretation of conditions (surrounding the historical events represented by those facts), (3) psychological interpretation (of the will of those involved in events, and the moral forces driving them) and (4) interpretation of the ideas (in the minds of the individuals involved).²⁵ An even greater expansion of the scope of hermeneutics was accomplished by the most significant figure in the development of hermeneutics at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century, the philosopher and literary historian Wilhelm Dilthey (1833–1911), who himself wrote quite extensively on music. Dilthey saw hermeneutics on a vast scale as the potential foundation for what he called the *Geisteswissenschaften*, to which he published Book I of his *Introduction* in 1883. Literally ‘sciences of the mind’, these roughly corresponded to the humanities and social sciences (he lived at a time when psychology, sociology, economics and social anthropology were beginning to achieve independence as disciplines), conceived on a non-positivistic basis as distinct from the *Naturwissenschaften* or natural sciences, with their spirit of trenchant positivism. Whereas the natural scientist was seen as accounting for the particular *linearly* in terms of the general, the human scientist was left to account *circularly* for the relation between the part and the whole. This led to a fundamentally different mode of operation wherever the life of the human mind was an object of enquiry – a methodology in which there were no absolute starting points, no certainties, a methodology in which Schleiermacher’s hermeneutic circle was the indispensable way of proceeding.²⁶ At the end of the day, the natural scientist could particularize, could pinpoint, could run the gamut of the phenomena that he investigated – in a word, he could *explain* it; at best, the human scientist could surmise, could conjecture, could throw light upon the phenomena concerned – in a word, he could *elucidate* it. To explain and to elucidate, *erklären* and *erläutern* – these are the crucial terms, this is the distinction that will resonate throughout the present volume, the distinction to which I have already alluded in the opening remarks of this General Introduction.

At the heart of the sciences of the mind, is ‘lived experience’ (*Erlebnis* or *Erleben*). As Dilthey cuttingly remarked:²⁷

25 *The Hermeneutics Reader*, pp. 126–31.

26 This paragraph is in part summarized from Rickman’s excellent introduction to *W. Dilthey: Selected Writings*, pp. 1–31.

27 *Introduction to the Human Sciences: [Book I] An Attempt to Lay a Foundation for the Study of Society and History*, Eng. trans. Ramon J. Betanzos (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1988; Ger. orig. 1883), p. 80. Book II, the core or positive part of the *Introduction*, was never written.

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so long as no one maintains that he can derive and better explain the essence of the emotion, poetic creativity, and rational reflection, which we call Goethe's life, out of the design of his brain or the characteristics of his body, then no one will challenge the independent position of such a science [of experience].

The outward manifestations of this lived experience are 'expressions' (*Ausdrücke* or *Äusserungen*: 'externalizations' might be a better word), but they only indirectly manifest this inner life of the mind. It is understanding (*Verstehen*) that illuminates these 'expressions' and relates them as parts to the whole. There is thus a paradigm: *Erlebnis* → *Ausdruck* → *Verstehen*, and this paradigm 'is the specific process whereby mankind exists for us as an object of the human sciences'.²⁸ The hermeneutic task involves what Wolf had glimpsed with his notion of *Einsicht*, what Ernesti and Schleiermacher had adumbrated in their references to 'the psychological' and the latter with his divinatory method, and what Dilthey now formulated as *Nachfühlen* ('sympathetic feeling') or later *Hineinversetzen* ('injecting oneself into the mind of another person') – both usually translated as 'empathy'. Given 'the profound mystery . . . of how a succession of sounds and rhythms can have a significance beyond themselves', given the 'opaque, indeterminate, often unconscious' nature of what goes on in a composer's mind, *Hineinversetzen* takes on a special urgency when applied to music. Dilthey was the first hermeneuticist in a position to do more than hint at such an application.

§5 Dilthey and musical hermeneutics

Dilthey's extensive writings about music include a novella dating from 1867, reviews from the late 1870s and studies of the history of German music and music aesthetics. Above all, Dilthey left a short but incisive essay entitled 'On Musical Understanding', conveniently available in translation within the current series.²⁹ This essay must be understood as part of a much larger document intended as Book II of his *Introduction to the Human Sciences*, drafted between 1906 and 1910. At the same time, it is important to realize that this larger document is an editorial compilation from Dilthey's posthumously surviving papers, the sequence of which we must not regard as sacrosanct. This document, entitled 'The Construction of the Historical World within the Human Sciences',³⁰ and arguably his most original and exciting work, first spells out the distinction between the natural and human sciences; laying a foundation for the latter, then proceeds to 'Drafts for a *Critique of Historical Reason*', intended as the critique that Kant did not provide to an area in which instead of causality there are only 'relations of striving and suffering, action and reaction'.³¹

28 *Wilhelm Diltheys Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. VII (Leipzig and Berlin: Teubner, 1927), p. 87.

29 Bujić, 370–74. For a list of Dilthey's writings on music see NGDM. A number of them are assembled in *Von deutscher Dichtung und Musik: Aus den Studien zur Geschichte des deutschen Geistes*, ed. Herman Nohl and Georg Misch (Leipzig: Teubner, 1933; reprint edn Stuttgart: Teubner, 1957).

30 *Der Aufbau der geschichtlichen Welt in den Geisteswissenschaften*, ed. Bernhard Groethuysen in *Wilhelm Diltheys Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. VII; 'Das musikalische Verstehen' is on pp. 220–24. The manuscript drafts for the latter survive in an envelope labelled 'Erleben und Verstehen', within which are four inner envelopes labelled 'Nachbilden', 'Theorie der Musik', 'Musik' and 'Verstehen (Auslegung)'.

31 *W. Dilthey: Selected Writings*, p. 212. The *Critique of Historical Reason* is divided into Part I 'Experience, Expression and Understanding' and Part II 'Recognizing the Coherence of Universal