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## Adorno and Musical Analysis

Nicholas Cook has defined musical analysis as “the practical process of examining pieces of music in order to discover, or decide, how they work.”<sup>1</sup> Analytical methods “ask whether it is possible to chop up a piece of music into a series of more-or-less independent sections. They ask how components of the music relate to each other, and which relationships are more important than others. More specifically, they ask how far these components derive their effect from the context they are in.”<sup>2</sup> Joseph Kerman has borrowed a definition from the *Harvard Dictionary of Music*, arguing that the focus of analysis is “the synthetic element and the functional significance of the musical detail.” Analysis sets out to discern and demonstrate the functional coherence of individual works of art, their “organic unity.”<sup>3</sup>

Analysis is concerned with form. The formalist approaches that have dominated musical analysis since the beginning of this century have increasingly come into question. On the one hand, formalism tends to isolate the musical work from any extramusical context. Analysis refers to exclusively musical parameters, seeing no need to invoke the cultural or political context within which works are produced or reproduced. The “meaning” of the work is expressed in terms of the relationships between elements within the work. This position may rest on the assumption that music is in itself incapable of depicting or referring to the nonmusical world, and that any such reference was the result of a purely subjective attribution. On the other hand, there has been a more or less explicit assumption that an objective, and therefore definitive, analysis of a work could be produced. In effect, the task of analysis is presented in terms of the identification of the inherent properties of the work itself, presupposing that these properties existed indepen-

dently of the act of analysis. The achievement of this goal is prevented only by the lack of refinement in analytic techniques.

The purpose of this essay is to outline a response to these issues, in part through reference to a late essay by Adorno on analysis. The first section of the essay will briefly outline how two contemporary analysts, Joseph Kerman and Edward T. Cone, articulate the problem of analysis. In the second part, the tensions found in contemporary analysis will be traced back to a nineteenth-century prehistory of analysis, articulated through the work of Herbart and Hanslick. In the final section, a radio address by T. W. Adorno is argued to offer a deliberately paradoxical formulation of the goal of analysis, which demands that reflection on these tensions becomes an explicit part of analysis (as an awareness, not merely of the cultural and political grounding of composition, but also of the cultural and political grounding of analysis and the way in which analysis informs and constitutes the composition).

### I

Joseph Kerman comments upon what he sees as the superficiality of what is called music criticism, in contrast to criticism in the literary and visual arts, and the corresponding isolation of what should be at least the foundation of a profound music criticism, that is to say, the isolation of analysis.<sup>4</sup> Kerman argues that the problems of contemporary analysis may be traced to a number of presuppositions that serve to define the goal of analysis, but also thereby to construct analysis as an ideology, legitimating a canon of Austro-German major works. The key presupposition is that of organicism.<sup>5</sup> The work of art is presumed to be an organic unity, so that the

task of analysis is to trace the relationship between parts (with the relationship being expressed in terms of the part's function in the whole). Analysis demonstrates its own worth by demonstrating that given works can be accounted for as functional wholes; but ideologically, the demonstration of organicism serves to legitimate the aesthetic primacy of those organic works. The major works by Bach, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, and Brahms are readily analyzed in terms of their organic unity. Schenker and Tovey, in the early years of the twentieth century, are presented as the modern founders of this approach. As Kerman notes, "the ideology did not receive its full articulation until the music in which it was rooted came under serious attack" by modernism.<sup>6</sup>

Kerman illustrates the limitations of organicism by countering Schenker's reading of Schumann's second *Dichterliebe* song, "Aus meinen Thränen sprissen." Schenker's concern with the music alone serves to reduce the song to a "background sketch" of, in this case, a mere twelve notes. At the heart of this background is the *Urlinie*, the arpeggiated tonic triad. Schenker finds this "chord of nature" to be manifest, albeit with slight variation, in all works of the Austro-German canon.<sup>7</sup>

Crucially, Kerman notes that Schenker's analysis serves to remove certain ambiguities in the song, and "ambiguities such as those set up by Schumann's cadences are likely to strike a critic as a good place to focus his investigation, to begin seeing what is special and fine about the song."<sup>8</sup> Kerman begins from the ambiguity of the three "rather haunting, contradictory" cadences at bars 4, 8, and 16–17 of the song, and pursues his analysis outward through reference to the poem, to the song's place within the cycle, to Schumann's personal symbolism, to the cycle as a traditional genre, and to what Cone has analyzed as the "personae" of vocal music.

Kerman's interpretation is left incomplete. This challenges organicism not least by leaving the initial ambiguity unresolved. It begs the question of whether or not a definitive and objective analysis can be given of a work. It was suggested above that analysis has tended to assume that it can account for an objective musical reality that pre-exists analysis and is unaffected by analysis. Kerman himself notes "that analysts have avoided value judgments and adapted their work

to a format of strictly corrigible propositions, mathematical equations, set-theory formulations, and the like—all this, apparently, in an effort to achieve the objective status and hence the authority of scientific inquiry."<sup>9</sup> He similarly comments of total serial music that "every pitch, rhythm, timbre, dynamic, envelope, and so on can be derived from the work's 'precompositional assumptions' by means of ... mathematics. ... The answer provided by serial analysis is, undeniably, objective."<sup>10</sup> These comments separate an evaluative critical enterprise from a descriptive and explanatory analysis. The intimate relationship of serial composition and analysis leads to the possibility, with respect to a small corpus of works, of descriptions and explanations that correspond to the musical object. "Objectivity," in the sense of correspondence to the object, is highly problematic outside of this corpus. The criteria by which an analysis is judged to be correct, let alone right, are unclear.

Edward T. Cone, in contrast to Kerman, begins from irresolvable ambiguities within the analyses of serial works.<sup>11</sup> Specifically, he is concerned with a number of aspects of serial and total serial works of which current analytical techniques appear to be incapable of providing adequate explanations. Notably, analysis cannot explain why the composition as a whole could not be subjected to the serial techniques of inversion and retrograde (crudely, that the composition could not be played upside down or backward) without any loss in quality or coherence. His suggestion of three responses to this uncertainty are instructive as to the presuppositions that ground analysis. First, one can merely accept what the composer did, as their choices may not always be open to a rational account, and as such are left unexplained. Cone finds this to be too ready an admission of failure. Second, one can assume that analytical theory is currently incomplete. Further development of the theory will encompass even these seemingly ambiguous dimensions. It is therefore also presupposed that definitive, which is to say exhaustive, analysis is a possibility. Finally, one can assume that the composer's choices are underpinned by what Cone calls "absolute decisions." Such decisions allow for no adequate analytical explanation, but can still be rationally justified (unlike the purely subjective whim, to which the first response appeals).<sup>12</sup>

Cone finds the second response to be incoherent, and it is here that his reservations concerning conventional analysis become clear. Analysis focuses upon the internal structure of the work. As such, explanation (and in effect justification) of any aspect of the work must rest upon the explication of its determinate relationship to all other properties and dimensions of the work. Cone suggests that any analytical explanation based upon this model would be inherently unstable or arbitrary. “Deprived of all natural bases,” Cone asks, “what appeals could the conventional system make against ... rivals save those of convenience, tradition, custom and familiarity?”<sup>13</sup> In effect, Cone is arguing that a reliance upon (or perhaps faith in) a purely intrinsic analytic explanation to account for the entire work is akin to a coherence theory of truth. It is, in Cone’s terms, purely concerned with syntax. To avoid instability and arbitrariness, it must smuggle in some extrinsic ground (such as a more or less naive appeal to nature, for example, the over-tone series or Schenker’s chord of nature). Analysis rests upon an implicit correspondence theory of truth. As such, the concern with pure syntax is in fact supported by an unconsidered semantics.<sup>14</sup>

Cone’s third response, the appeal to “absolute decisions,” makes explicit that which is presupposed by the second response: “the need to stabilize and fix the analysis through reference to that which is extrinsic to the structure of the composition. Such extrinsic reference points may include acoustics, psychology, physiology, or history.”<sup>15</sup> The composer is seen to ground the choices he or she makes in natural associations (such as the relationship between rhythm and heartbeat), expressive conventions, or intuitions, or in the more or less taken for granted cultural conventions that govern composition at a particular time. A need to go “beyond analysis” (as indicated by the title of Cone’s paper) therefore entails that analysis is complemented by a broadly defined awareness of the extrinsic relations of the composition, that Cone labels “critical listening.”<sup>16</sup>

In summary, Kerman and Cone alike point to the inadequacy and ultimate incoherence of analysis understood as a concern with that which is purely intrinsic to the composition’s structure. Both therefore complement analysis with some broader form of understanding and awareness

(so that criticism or critical listening is set against analysis). The positions of Cone and Kerman differ insofar as Cone seems to retain a desire to ground analysis, and thus to generate definitive analyses. In effect, the demands for objectivity are deferred from pure syntax to syntax complemented by semantics. Yet Cone still seems to hanker after some fixed point for this semantic explanation. “Beyond Analysis” may therefore be seen implicitly to respond to the arguments of an earlier essay, “Analysis Today.” While recognizing the need for analysis to account for the diverse ways in which a score can be heard, Cone there makes unguarded references to the natural propensity of humans to hear musical phenomena within certain broad parameters. “Modern melody can not get rid of stepwise motion, because that is the way we hear melody,” for “the ear will naturally connect each tone with those nearest it in pitch.”<sup>17</sup> While this may be a further example of the naive appeal to nature of which he is critical in “Beyond Analysis,” the later essay fails to reflect thoroughly upon the implications of extrinsic reference. Kerman, in contrast, begins to question the very presupposition of definitive or objective analysis, and thus to recognize the way in which analysis and criticism may actually be constitutive of the works to which they respond.

## II

Contemporary musical analysis, and particularly the formalism that informs it, may trace its philosophical grounding back to Kant and Herbart, through their influence on the critic Hanslick. It may be suggested, however, that contemporary formalism is grounded in a restricted reading of this tradition, and that specifically the works of Hanslick contain tensions that serve to question the possibility of writing about music, and to question the possibility of any stable (cultural or natural) grounding of music. A fuller reading of this tradition therefore throws new light on the tensions posed by Kerman and Cone.

Johann Friedrich Herbart developed the potential for a philosophy of music that was latent within Kant’s *Critique of Judgment*. While Kant could see little in instrumental music beyond an agreeable play, Herbart finds in Kant’s analysis of the disinterestedness of aesthetic judgment a criterion for distinguishing what he terms “ap-

perceptions” from the perception of the essence of the artwork. The judgment that a work is beautiful rests on the correspondence between the structure of that work and the pure structure of ideas within the human mind. The purity of this relationship entails both that the object is perceived independently of any extra-aesthetic purposes or associations it may have, and that the perceiver is not sullied by subjective, emotional frames of mind.<sup>18</sup> While a work of art may give rise to an emotional response, or a concern with its subject matter, its history, or its price, such responses cannot be to the work’s essence. Herbart emphasizes the precision of mathematical relationships within music by grounding judgments of musical beauty ultimately in the mathematical relationships that exist between notes, and in the manner that composers exploit these relationships. He glibly indicates that the essence of music is to be found in “the universal laws of simple or double counterpoint.”<sup>19</sup> He thereby focuses the aesthetic response to music exclusively on the musical material (so that even a concern with opera libretti is bracketed as apperception). The sundering of the aesthetic from the extra-aesthetic leads to the objectification of music as text, remarking that “notes need only be heard (or, indeed, merely read) for them to give pleasure.”<sup>20</sup>

Herbart provides key steps toward analysis (not least as it is revealed in Kerman’s account of organicism and Cone’s of purely syntactic analysis). First, the artwork as such is sundered from all that is heterogeneous. It is a closed structure, legitimated only by its relationship to the human mind. Second, the beauty of the work can be described precisely. In part such descriptions are grounded in art theory, which provides “instructions as to how ... a pleasing whole can be formed by the confluence of aesthetic elements.”<sup>21</sup> More precisely, Herbart suggests the arranging of model ideas, shorn of all apperceptions, in order purely to reveal beauty.<sup>22</sup> Finally, he separates the admirer from the critic. The admirer confronts and understands a beautiful work that is resistant to change; the critic proposes changes to the work in accordance with taste.<sup>23</sup> Having reinterpreted Herbart’s (ultimately psychological) relations in terms of functionalism, the analyst can then occupy the space outlined for the admirer. A technical language, shorn of apperceptions, is used to grasp the work, in apparent indifference to the subjective evaluations of the critic.

Eduard Hanslick’s *The Beautiful in Music* reproduces Herbart’s sundering of musical aesthetics from a concern with the extramusical. Hanslick proposes two related theses: negatively, that the office of music is not to represent feelings; and positively, that “the beauty of a composition is *specifically musical*—i.e., it inheres in the combinations of musical sounds and is independent of all alien, extra-musical notions.”<sup>24</sup> Music’s essence is sound and motion.<sup>25</sup> This summary definition encapsulates two strands of Hanslick’s argument. On the one hand, music is conceived as an essentially acoustic phenomenon, appealing to the ear and thereby to the intellect (and not primarily to the feelings).<sup>26</sup> A composer’s ideas emerge as acoustic material, which is to say as a musical theme, and are articulated acoustically through “euphonic” and rhythmic relationships. The composer does not begin with an extramusical object, emotion, or concept that is to be represented in musical terms.<sup>27</sup> On the other hand, music is not to be grasped as a static architectonic, but as the manifestation of a disciplined intellectual process, developing materials and relationships between materials as a dynamic that articulates musical time. As Hanslick expresses this: “the forms created by *sound* are not empty; not the envelope enclosing a vacuum, but a well, replete with the living creation of inventive genius.”<sup>28</sup>

At the center of Hanslick’s work is the problem of how to describe music and the beautiful in music. He poses this problem as follows:

It is extremely difficult to define this self-subsistent and specifically musical beauty. As music has no prototype in nature, and expresses no definite conceptions, we are compelled to speak of it either in dry, technical terms, or in the language of poetic fiction. Its kingdom is, indeed, “not of this world.” All the fantastic descriptions, characterizations, and paraphrases are either metaphorical or false. What in any other art is still descriptive, is in music already figurative. Of music it is impossible to form any but a musical conception, and it can be comprehended and enjoyed only in and for itself.<sup>29</sup>

Two significant ambiguities run throughout the text. First, in the above passage, it is unclear whether the classification of descriptions as “metaphorical or false” includes or excludes “dry, technical terms.” Second, Hanslick does not al-

ways clearly distinguish the problem of describing music from that of describing beauty.

With reference to the second ambiguity, it may be noted that while beauty may be the primary focus of Hanslick's argument, presupposed as the perfection and therefore the goal of music, the term is at no point adequately defined. "Beauty" is defined only negatively. Under the guise of offering a definition of the "beautiful in music," Hanslick provides detailed accounts of three mistaken theories of musical beauty.<sup>30</sup> These are the analysis of beauty in terms of historical style (which serves only to conflate aesthetics to art history); technical analysis of music as an architectonic or mathematical structure; and the subordination of music to speech patterns. In the first of these, Hanslick presupposes a static and definitive science of aesthetics, akin to Herbart's. The second is of most relevance to analysis. Hanslick's point is that beauty cannot be reduced to proportions (such as regularity or symmetry). Further, although musical phenomena may be analyzed in terms of mathematical relationships, these are irrelevant to the creative and original powers of the artist. Hanslick ridicules the idea that "the lifetime of several 'mathematicians would suffice to calculate all the beauties in *one* Symphony by Mozart."<sup>31</sup> This grounds Hanslick's actual distance from Herbart. Beauty is an original surplus, escaping Herbart's codification.

Analysts can only appropriate Hanslick if they can negotiate this tension between Hanslick and Herbart. Music must be explained non-metaphorically, in a value-free language. Implicitly, the dichotomy between dry, technical language and poetic fiction is to be mapped onto a series of further dichotomies: objectivity versus metaphor; analysis versus criticism; science versus value judgment.

Hanslick may be seen to use technical language at a number of points throughout his text. For example, he remarks that a "theme, harmonized with the common chord, sounds differently if harmonized with the chord of the sixth," or that an "intelligent musician will ... get a much clearer notion of the character of a composition ... by being told that it contains, for instance, too many diminished sevenths, or too many tremolos, than by the most poetic descriptions of the emotional crises through which the listener passed."<sup>32</sup> Such passages can readily be adopted as models for

analysis, as a precise, value-neutral description, wholly distinct from poetic fictions and metaphors.<sup>33</sup> In context, however, the use of such language appears to be tightly constrained. Hanslick considers the possibility of establishing the "philosophical foundation of music." This project would involve identification of each musical element (hence to differentiate a common chord and the chord of a sixth); the establishing of the effect of each element; and finally, explanation in terms of more general aesthetic laws.<sup>34</sup> Even if a philosophical foundation was viable, and Hanslick doubts this, technical language would merely serve to label and classify the elements of music. The adequacy of this classification is, however, thrown into question when music is presented as an overwhelmingly dynamic and creative art. "There is no art which, like music, uses up so quickly such a variety of forms. ... Of a great number of compositions ... it would be quite correct to say that there *was* a time when they were beautiful."<sup>35</sup> In contradistinction to Herbart, Hanslick appears to reject the stasis of a purely beautiful (classical) work. Music is continually being recreated, so that the criteria of beauty (the perfection of music) shift. Herbart's distinction between critic and admirer therefore collapses. The space of the analyst is problematized.

The problem of describing music is further grounded in music's thoroughgoing sundering from nature. The choice between technical language and fiction is posed because music has "no prototype in nature," and is "not of this world."<sup>36</sup> Ambiguity again abounds. On the one hand, the "logic in music ... rests on certain elementary laws of nature, which govern both the human organism and the phenomena of sound." Hanslick refers specifically to the law of harmonic progression.<sup>37</sup> On the other hand, "harmonic progression on the Aeolian harp ... is grounded ... on some natural law; but the progression itself is not the immediate product of Nature. Unless a ... fundamental tone be sounded ... there can be no auxiliary tones and consequently no harmonic progression. Man must ask before Nature can reply."<sup>38</sup> Similarly, and more radically, nature is seen as containing no harmony or melody, and only an "unmusical" rhythm.<sup>39</sup> Further, while humans may rely on natural materials to make music, they do not rely on natural models. The subject of a piece of music (a succession of notes) is not an imitation of the nat-

ural world, as would be the subject of even an imaginary portrait or landscape. "Not the voices of animals, but their gut is of importance to us; and the animal to which music is most indebted is not the nightingale, but the sheep."<sup>40</sup>

In summary, there is "nothing beautiful in Nature as far as music is concerned," and the composer creates with no prior, extramusical, model.<sup>41</sup> While it is a product of the human community, ultimately composers are responsible for every aspect of their music. They must choose and create everything.<sup>42</sup> The problem of describing music thereby becomes one of finding common ground to mediate between an ordinary language, implicitly grounded by Hanslick in a fixed natural order, and the flux of music. Technical terms may have an apparent stability, fixing their objects, but only because of the stability of the culture within which they are used. Hanslick observes that the most erudite medieval composers were unable to do what any nineteenth-century peasant can do, to sing in thirds.<sup>43</sup> The dry, technical term "third" is therefore culturally specific. Its adequacy, even as a label, is temporary.

The tension between technical and poetic language paradoxically brings Hanslick's position at once close to and yet most distant from Herbart's. Metaphors and other associations amount to apperceptions, deflecting language from its task of grasping the musical object. But Hanslick asserts that music "is a language we speak and understand, but which we are unable to translate." He comments on the metaphorical implications of a quasi-technical term such as *Satz*, to refer to the logical consummation of a part of a composition.<sup>44</sup> This suggests that for Hanslick all writing about music is necessarily metaphorical. It may be noted that Hanslick's own text is rich in metaphor.<sup>45</sup> Hence, while a variety of terms, including those that appeal to emotions, may be used to refer to music, one must recognize that this is because the musical phenomenon "happens to present certain analogies."<sup>46</sup> In sum, music has "both meaning and logical sequence, but in a *musical* sense."<sup>47</sup> The terms "meaning" and "logic" have been displaced, becoming overtly metaphorical. Even that which merely seeks to label is ridden with cultural assumptions. Herbart's language without apperception is exposed as an illusion, so that the space of the admirer (or analyst) is further undermined. The philosophy that would isolate the

musical from the extramusical also isolates it from language and culture. The analysts do not therefore merely construct their objects in the process of analysis, they also blind themselves to the presuppositions of this construction. Hanslick is, albeit obscurely, self-aware of his cultural grounding.

The recovery of the philosophical prehistory of analysis therefore suggests that the impetus, found in Herbart, to allow an admirer/analyst to generate a universal and definitive account of the work, based purely on intrinsic (or syntactic) relationships, is only superficially adopted and pursued by Hanslick. Hanslick's arguments rather lead into a series of ambiguities. Unable to define beauty (although equating it with the object of composition), except by what it is not, he leaves it as an undefinable and historically changing surplus. Its status is further problematized insofar as the very possibility of a purely intrinsic approach to analysis is revealed to be incoherent, in that it lacks any nonarbitrary grounding. While requiring semantic grounding, intrinsic (or syntactic) analysis can never be unproblematically complemented by semantic analysis. More significantly (and this is the point that will be found to be taken up by Adorno), Herbart therefore suggests that analysis is as historically and culturally conditioned as composition (and the nature of the beautiful) itself.

### III

Superficially, Adorno is a proponent of orthodox musical analysis. He defends the great Austro-German tradition (and indeed Kerman credits Adorno with having added Mahler and Schoenberg to that tradition).<sup>48</sup> He proposes that analysis is "concerned with structure, with structural problems, and finally, with structural listening."<sup>49</sup> He appears to deploy organicism, not least when he describes the meaning [*Sinn*] of a work in terms of the association or coherence [*Zusammenhang*] of its parts, and defends Schenker for having pointed analysis in this direction.<sup>50</sup> The following passage presents his initial position:

Analysis must be immanent—that, in the first instance, the form has to be followed *a priori*, so that a composition unfolds itself in its own terms. Or, to put it another way, one has to allow the composition something in advance: that is, one must let it *assert itself*,

in order to be able to enter into its structure analytically.<sup>51</sup>

He thereby also appears to defend the objectivity of analysis.

The substance of this analytic procedure is, however, more problematic. Adorno explains that his concern with structure is not with traditional schemata (for example, the sonata, fugue, or rondo). Rather, he is concerned with what is going on underneath the formal schemata, and thus with the deviation from the schemata.<sup>52</sup> In *Aesthetic Theory* Adorno notes that “there may never have been an important work that corresponds to its genre in all respects. Bach, the source from which others abstracted rules about the fugue, did not write a single episode in accordance with the sequential model in double counterpoint; ultimately the need to deviate from a schematic rule became incorporated into the rules of the conservatory.”<sup>53</sup> The point is the same, and like Hanslick, Adorno points to the historical dynamic of music. Conservatory rules codify the surface schemata and propose that a work may be adequately and coherently grasped in terms of those rules. They become the coagulation of historically specific expectations of what music is. At a distinct, more profound but nevertheless equally mistaken level, Schenker’s analysis of music in terms of the *Urlinie* performs its own codification. The Schenkerian abstraction removes as inessential the specific details of the work through which it engages with and deviates from the schemata. The conservatory and Schenker alike disregard “the thoroughly historical structure of all musical categories.”<sup>54</sup> Good composition (and Hanslick’s beautiful in music) is always surplus to its codification.

This might suggest that analysis is irrelevant to composition (being little more than a conservative hindrance to compositional invention). Adorno, however, instates analysis anew, by a reconsideration of the role of analysis within the history of composition. If Kerman was critical of organicism because of its ideological role in constructing the Austro-German canon, this was because all the works within the canon could be subject to organic analysis. Adorno defends the canon on subtly different grounds. The canon depends not upon a supposedly universal organicism (akin to Herbartian classical beauty) that is common to all the works, but rather upon

the fact that each work in the canon is to be understood as a determinant response to its predecessors. This determinant response rests upon analysis. To argue, as Adorno does, that Brahms’s early works depend upon his analysis of Beethoven<sup>55</sup> is to argue that Brahms responds not merely to the surface detail of Beethoven (and so does not merely derive compositional procedures from Beethoven), but rather recognizes contradictions and deviations in Beethoven’s works that demand resolution in further composition. The deviation points to a surplus in the works (akin to that unwittingly uncovered by Hanslick in the attempt to define beauty). This surplus is the work’s “truth content.”<sup>56</sup> Adorno’s most accessible presentation of “truth content” in *Aesthetic Theory* uses the metaphor of art as a riddle or enigma. One artwork presents a technical problem that another seeks to resolve. The new work is the truth of the old. As an enigma, the artwork is incomprehensible, not least in that its contradictions and tensions are not resolved by systematic codifications. Analysis should articulate the artwork in its aspect as enigma. If “truth content is the objective answer or solution to the riddle,”<sup>57</sup> then that solution is primarily proposed by another work of art. Adorno thereby integrates the Austro-German tradition insofar as each composer is seen to provide not merely a response to the problems (or enigmas) posed by his predecessors, but rather the objective or definitive response (thereby articulating truth content).

While Adorno may be seen to respond to the problem of the historical condition of music (and beauty), and indeed to the historical condition of analysis itself (for analytic techniques will develop in tandem with those of composition), he can, at this point, only avoid the problems associated with the position of Herbart’s admirer (or of Cone’s purely syntactical analysis) by sleight of hand. The tension between admirer and critic (and thus between the syntactical and semantic) is avoided only by collapsing analysis into composition. The analyst-composer has no need to step outside Hanslick’s purely musical understanding. Hanslick’s assertion that only a “musical conception” of music is possible<sup>58</sup> is borne out, for the analyst need never be anything other than a musician. Thus, the problem that Hanslick has with metaphor (and thus with speaking about music) is seemingly resolved by denying the ne-



cessity of such speech. Music is presented as a purely autonomous activity.

This sleight of hand may be explicated in other terms by questioning the criteria of determinate analysis. Adorno appears to be suggesting that an analysis is secured through the impact that it has upon composition. The objectivity of the analysis depends upon its realization in composition. Given the autonomy of compositional practice, this then suggests that objectivity is a matter of internal coherence and not of correspondence. The determinate nature of immanent analysis is illustrated, by Adorno, through reference to Schenker. Schenker's approach is suitable for Beethoven, precisely because Beethoven is seen to "reconstruct tonality," but Schenker cannot recognize the possibility of alternative criteria for inner coherence in Debussy's work.<sup>59</sup> To present immanent analysis so, as finding methods appropriate to the individual work, suggests an early comment of Cone's, to the effect that "a work of art ought to imply the standards by which it demands to be judged," and therefore the analytic methods that should be brought to it.<sup>60</sup> Yet this begs the question of the degree to which the method of analysis (the determinacy of which depends upon coherence and not correspondence) constructs its own object. If Adorno cannot address the problem posed by Cone's invocation of the semantic, or Hanslick's struggle with the metaphorical status of talk about music, then he would seem to have no resources by which to determine that an analysis is appropriate to its object, for coherence criteria would appear simply to validate the constitution of the object (that is, the composition) in analysis.

Adorno's response to these problems is initially implied by the remark that every analysis of value is a squaring of the circle.<sup>61</sup> In discussing the relationship of interpretation to performance, in *Aesthetic Theory*, he notes that because of "the antinomies of works, completely satisfactory performances are actually impossible."<sup>62</sup> If analysis requires the squaring of a circle, then it too is impossible, and for the same reason. Like Hanslick's beauty, completely satisfactory analysis can be only negatively defined; but where Hanslick remains perplexed by this, and Kerman later remains satisfied with an analysis that ends in ambiguities, Adorno grounds impossibility in a precisely articulated challenge. The impossibility of analysis is not a counsel of despair, but

rather the stimulus to self-reflection on the part of the analyst and composer. The impossibility is marked, not by Kerman's ambiguity or Hanslick's ineffability, but rather by determinate contradictions. Adorno articulates this impossibility, and thereby responds to the problem of determinacy and objectivity, through two metaphors. On the one hand, musical analysis is compared to psychoanalysis; on the other it is compared to Hegelian logic.

Adorno's suggestion that musical analysis should not hesitate before the unconscious brings about an overt, but at first limited, confrontation with psychoanalysis.<sup>63</sup> It serves to disrupt the autonomy of the composer subject, and thus, perhaps, of composition itself. The assertion that a "self-conscious art is an analyzed art" is, however, a more subtle and more productive development of the metaphor.<sup>64</sup> Akin to the conception of psychoanalysis in the Frankfurt tradition, musical analysis is an unveiling, taking that which had a seemingly causal hold over the patient's behavior and returning it to conscious control. Analysis of the musical work therefore aims to expose its causal determination, breaking the thrall of second nature and so returning it to human control. (Indeed, it strives toward Hanslick's ideal of making the composer responsible for everything.) Orthodox, or purely syntactical, analysis would conceal this critical momentum. Exclusive emphasis upon an autonomous form depicts and reproduces only the illusory moment of art, where the illusion is crucially that of the coherence of the work. Thus, *Aesthetic Theory* identifies the harmonious (and therefore the organic) nature of the artwork with its illusory moment.<sup>65</sup> As a harmonious and coherent whole the work seems to be comprehensible. Precisely because it can conform to pre-given conceptions of meaning, it serves to reproduce the social conventions of communication and understanding that are sedimented (or reified) as second nature. Adorno is therefore demanding that analysis disrupts second nature, responding not to the coherence of the internal structure of the work, but rather to the inevitable antinomies of the work, and hence recognizing it as enigmatic. The work's death wish is exposed.<sup>66</sup> The moment of contradiction (or the fact that the preceding artwork fails) that analysis explicates is, according to the metaphor of psychoanalysis, taken as symptomatic of the heterogeneous (and

previously unconscious) determination of the work. It is here that Cone's semantics come into contact with the syntactical. Contra orthodox analysis, Adorno's analysis thereby explicitly recognizes the artwork's social facticity as a moment of its autonomy.<sup>67</sup> In sum, the autonomy of analysis within the purely musical language of composition is exposed as an illusion. Even if the analyst-composer does not resort to mundane language, his or her thought is still socially conditioned. The metaphor of psychoanalysis therefore demands that the analyst look to that conditioning. This in turn shifts the import of "truth content" and "surplus" away from the merely technical and toward the social and political.

If musical analysis is, metaphorically, a therapeutic dialogue between analyst and patient, objectivity will be achieved only if the analyst is wholly autonomous. The impossibility of musical analysis is therefore analogous to the impossibility of psychoanalytic cure, for, as Freud later recognized, the analyst can never be certain of his or her own autonomy. The Hegelian metaphor responds to this tension, and thus to the whole problem of analysis without a stable and external point of (semantic) grounding.

Hegel's *Encyclopedia* presents a system of philosophy through three moments: the logic; the philosophy of nature; and the philosophy of spirit. The logic expresses the abstract structure that articulates the realms of natural, psychological, and social existence.<sup>68</sup> For Hegel, in its final moments the logic goes over into material existence, such that the logic can only be true if it is concretely manifest, and the logic is revealed to consciousness in the final moments of the philosophy of spirit. The system is thereby closed. The logic is not then simply one possible structuring of reality amongst others, as is the cognitive structure of Kant's transcendental ego. Hegel is not articulating reality as it appears to us, but as it is in itself. The objectivity of the logic is a correspondence to the object that is guaranteed by the coherence of the system.

Adorno's account of musical analysis plays upon this image. If analysis is the logic, then composition is analogous to the philosophies of nature and spirit. On the one hand, composition gives rise to analysis, in the initial demand to read and so interpret the score.<sup>69</sup> Composition, be it a particular work or the tradition of com-

position, has an inherent structure that analysis would seek to reveal and articulate. On the other hand, from the stimulus and determination that analysis poses to composition, composition becomes increasingly self-conscious, such that analysis becomes immanent to the composition. In Berg, Adorno claims, composition and analysis converge, such that the music "can be looked on as its own analysis."<sup>70</sup> Neither analysis nor composition are then static, but are rather parallel dynamics, such that a common structure is unfolded, on the one hand in the formal logic of analysis and on the other in the sensuousness of sound. The objectivity of analysis could thereby be justified in Hegelian terms.

Adorno's negative dialectics, however, is negative precisely because the final closing moment of the Hegelian syllogism, the individual, is problematized. The system is thereby fragmented. Abstract articulation of structure can therefore no longer claim the objectivity of Hegelian logic. The system is abandoned, or more precisely, in Ernst Bloch's terminology, opened. The open system retains, and is true to, the dynamic of the Hegelian philosophy.

In response to this, the second half of Adorno's lecture begins with a rudimentary phenomenology of analysis.<sup>71</sup> That is, Adorno responds to methods of analysis, and the terminology of these methods, as Hegel had to philosophical categories, subjecting each to an immanent critique until its contradictions and inadequacy are exposed. The contradictions are resolved by another method of analysis and a new terminology, albeit that method eventually manifests its own contradiction. The dialogue between analysis and composition is therefore not locked into the relentless, and arid, closure of a system, but is rather a free-play of interpretation and re-interpretation. Analysis cannot be examined abstractly, purely in its own terms, but only insofar as it is mediated by its other, composition. The phenomenology of composition is subject to a similar problematic, insofar as composition is revealed to be constituted by (a possibly mistaken) analysis. The Hegelian closure of logic and object is thereby something to be suspected, for the final, closing moment of phenomenological logic has not yet been achieved. There is therefore no guarantee that analysis does correspond to its object. The supposedly parallel movements of analysis and of composition do not necessarily correspond.

Objectivity (in the Hegelian sense) is thrown into question. The analyst thereby continually risks the failure of his or her analysis, in that it misses the truth (the surplus) of its object.

Analysis and composition must rather convince each other alike of their own inadequacies (and thus of the second nature that coagulates, neurotically, within their methodologies). It is a problem of describing music, and as such is subject to the same (political) tensions that Adorno explores in all concept use. Hanslick's struggle with the metaphorical nature of talk about music, for Adorno, is ultimately the struggle to explicate the social and political within the musical. To demand, as Adorno does, a "material theory of form in music"<sup>72</sup> that would lead to the concrete definition of analytic categories is not simply to demand that musical analysis is aware (as Cone suggests) of the influence of heterogeneous, cultural, natural, and psychological factors on the composition. It is rather to demand that analysis is a self-reflexive process, aware of its own distortion by a false society (and so by the analyst's unconscious). It is to recognize that analytical categories, while necessary, do not grasp their object. There is therefore no certainty or stability, as Cone would appear to desire; but nor is the analyst content with mere ambiguity, as Kerman implies.

Contractions are to be traced, provisionally and critically, to the material and social context within which music is produced and interpreted. Analysis is necessary to interpretation, performance, and composition, but there can be no guarantee that analysis will not betray the object analyzed, reducing the new (the surplus) to the already known. The demand that analysis be open to the object is a utopian one, for the object is necessarily constructed in analysis. Analysis may approximate openness only by continually convicting itself of its own falsehood. The objectivity and truth of analysis is therefore the utopia of Herbart's admirer of beauty. Adorno complements this position (and thus goes beyond analysis) by thematizing Hanslick's awareness of the analyst's blindness to his or her presuppositions, not least by recognizing that those presuppositions are fundamentally social and political.

The best work of the most recent generation of analysts, and not least those working within the parameters of feminist and queer musicology, already represents a major step to the real-

ization of Adorno's demand for self-reflection.<sup>73</sup> Such work has already begun to challenge the unquestioned presuppositions of organicism and the associated divorce of music from society. Analysis ceases, in their hands, to be an attempt to establish an objective account of the work, or a further legitimization of the canon, as they strive rather to open up new and multiple perspectives, struggling to find a form of analysis that is appropriate to the composition, and thereby to recover music's presence within sites of cultural and political struggle. If analysis ceases to be a neutral enterprise, being itself part of the cultural struggle, the importance of Adorno's response to analysis may lie in its continual attention to the concept of "truth content." The major implication is that a determinate and radical questioning of orthodox analytic techniques and presuppositions, and the language within which they are realized, is necessary, but not sufficient. Adorno's demand is that rejection of orthodoxy must be complemented by a self-critical recognition of the taken for granted presuppositions upon which the new analytical techniques themselves rest. Analysis must avoid both the complacency characteristic of the dogmatism of orthodox methodologies and the equal complacency of a collapse into relativism, where nothing beyond a purely heterogeneous political expediency privileges one interpretation over another. Faithfulness to Adorno's demand that analysis is open to the object does not simply require that the unavoidable contradictions and failures of analysis (as well as those of composition) are marked, but more profoundly that they are recognized as symptoms of the aspiration to true thought in a false society. Just as Hanslick could only define beauty in terms of what it is not, so the contradictions of analysis and composition indicate that there is a potential in music that is itself not yet understood or realized. For Adorno, the utopian aspiration to realize that potential must drive analysis.<sup>74</sup>

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3. Joseph Kerman, "How We Got into Analysis, and How to Get Out," *Critical Inquiry* 7 (1980): 312.
4. *Ibid.*, pp. 311–312.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 315.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 316.
7. *Ibid.*, pp. 323–325.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 325.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 313.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 318.
11. Edward T. Cone, "Beyond Analysis," in Edward T. Cone, *Music: A View from Delft* (University of Chicago Press, 1989).
12. *Ibid.*, p. 66.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 67.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 70.
15. *Ibid.*
16. *Ibid.*, p. 74.
17. Edward T. Cone, "Analysis Today," in Cone, *Music: A View from Delft* (University of Chicago Press, 1989), p. 47.
18. Johann Gottfried Herbart in *Contemplating Music*, ed. Ruth Katz and Carl Dahlhaus (Stuyvesant, NY: Pendragon Press, 1987), vol. 1, pp. 362–364.
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21. Herbart in *Contemplating Music*, ed. Katz and Dahlhaus, p. 362.
22. *Ibid.*
23. *Ibid.*, p. 367.
24. Eduard Hanslick, *The Beautiful in Music*, trans. Gustav Cohen (New York: Da Capo, 1974), pp. 11 and 12.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 67.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 69.
27. *Ibid.*, pp. 73, 77, and 79–80.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 70.
29. *Ibid.*
30. *Ibid.*, pp. 86 ff.
31. *Ibid.*, p. 92.
32. *Ibid.*, pp. 75 and 77.
33. See Thomas Grey, "Metaphorical Modes in Nineteenth-Century Music Criticism: Image, Narrative, and Idea," in *Music and Text: Critical Inquiries*, ed. Steven Paul Scher (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).
34. Hanslick, *The Beautiful in Music*, p. 77.
35. *Ibid.*, p. 81.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 70.
37. *Ibid.*, p. 71.
38. *Ibid.*, p. 150.
39. *Ibid.*, pp. 144–146.
40. *Ibid.*, p. 152.
41. *Ibid.*, pp. 154 and 155.
42. *Ibid.*, p. 155.
43. *Ibid.*, p. 145.
44. *Ibid.*, p. 71.
45. Hanslick develops his discussion of the essence of music through a series of metaphors. Euphony is the primordial element of music, and rhythm "its soul," "the main artery of the musical organism," the regulator of harmony and melody (pp. 66–67). Music is compared to an arabesque and to the patterns found in a kaleidoscope, albeit that the limits of these metaphors are carefully noted, so that music is here (like beauty) negatively defined (pp. 67–68 and 70–71). Musical ideas crystallize (p. 80). Further, it is acknowledged that "we are perfectly justified in calling a musical theme grand, graceful, warm, hollow, vulgar; but all these terms are exclusively suggestive of the musical character of the particular passage" (p. 74).
46. Hanslick, *The Beautiful in Music*, p. 75.
47. *Ibid.*, p. 71.
48. Kerman, "How We Got into Analysis," p. 320.
49. T. W. Adorno, "On the Problem of Musical Analysis," *Musical Analysis* 1 (1982): 173.
50. *Ibid.*, pp. 175–176.
51. *Ibid.*, p. 175.
52. *Ibid.*, p. 173. Adorno here echoes Hanslick's concern with originality.
53. T. W. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, trans. C. Lenhardt (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1984), p. 285.
54. Adorno, "On the Problem of Musical Analysis," p. 174.
55. *Ibid.*, pp. 171–172.
56. *Ibid.*, p. 177.
57. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 186.
58. Hanslick, *The Beautiful in Music*, p. 70.
59. Adorno, "On the Problem of Musical Analysis," p. 175.
60. Cone, "Analysis Today," p. 54.
61. Adorno, "On the Problem of Musical Analysis," p. 177.
62. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 156.
63. Adorno, "On the Problem of Musical Analysis," p. 172.
64. *Ibid.*, p. 176.
65. See Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, pp. 160 ff.
66. Adorno, "On the Problem of Musical Analysis," p. 182. Adorno thereby plays upon both the psychoanalytic concept of "thanatos" and Hegel's argument for the death of art.
67. *Ibid.*, p. 185; see also *Aesthetic Theory*, chap. 12.
68. *Hegel's Logic*, trans. William Wallace (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975); *Hegel's Philosophy of Nature*, trans. M. J. Petry (London: Allen and Unwin, 1968); *Hegel's Philosophy of Mind*, trans. William Wallace and A. V. Miller (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971).
69. Adorno, "On the Problem of Musical Analysis," p. 172.
70. *Ibid.*, p. 176.
71. *Ibid.*, pp. 178 ff.
72. *Ibid.*, p. 185.
73. See, for example, Richard Leppert and Susan McClary, eds., *Music and Society: the Politics of Composition, Performance, and Reception* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987); Susan McClary, *Feminine Endings: Music, Gender, and Sexuality* (University of Minnesota Press, 1991); Lawrence Kramer, *Music as Cultural Practice, 1800–1900* (University of California Press, 1990); Ruth A. Solie, ed., *Musicology and Difference: Gender and Sexuality in Music Scholarship* (University of California Press, 1993); Philip Brett, Gary Thomas, and Elizabeth Wood, eds., *Queering the Pitch: The New Gay and Lesbian Musicology* (New York: Routledge, 1994).
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