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A

ORGANICISM AND MUSIC ANALYSIS:  
THREE CASE STUDIES

by

MARVA DUERKSEN

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Music  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York

2003

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6/9/03

Date

*Philip Rupprecht (PR)*

Philip Rupprecht  
Chair of Examining Committee

6/9/03

Date

*David Olan (DO)*

David Olan  
Executive Officer

Richard Kramer

William Rothstein

Joseph Straus

Leo Treitler

Joel Lester

Supervisory Committee

THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

## ABSTRACT

### ORGANICISM AND MUSIC ANALYSIS: THREE CASE STUDIES

By Marva Duerksen

Adviser: Richard Kramer

“Organicism and Music Analysis: Three Case Studies” consists of an introduction to historical and philosophical issues engendered by organicism (chapter 1); three case studies that demonstrate the centrality of those issues in music-analytic writings of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (chapters 2-4); and a conclusion that suggests directions for further research (chapter 5). Chapter 1 begins with Kerman’s ideological critique of organicism. I examine the terms of Kerman’s critique and suggest alternative avenues of investigation: definitions of organicism; philosophical content of organicism; and analyses by Heinrich Christoph Koch, Johann Christian Lobe, and Alexander Ul’ibishev.

The three case studies illuminate in greater depth the philosophical streams with which organicism intersects and the historical constraints under which it operates. The first concentrates on E.T.A. Hoffmann’s review of Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony. Topics explored include Burke’s and Kant’s philosophy of the sublime; concepts of unity; pantheism and the organic metaphor; shared issues in the reception of Beethoven and Shakespeare; and the concept of *hohe Besonnenheit*.

The second study concerns Nottebohm’s work on Beethoven’s sketches. Nottebohm’s work greatly problematizes the notion of the organic. He claims in his

introductions that Beethoven's music is organic, and that it came into being via an organic process. At the same time, however, he argues that the sketches yield no trace of this organic process. His reticence provides the springboard for a probing analysis of his assumptions about the organic—what exactly it is, and where scholars might find traces of it.

The final study centers on the writings of Heinrich Schenker. The complex relationship between strict counterpoint and free composition preoccupied Schenker throughout his entire publishing career. My discussion has two foci: first, demonstrating how Schenker employs the mechanical/organic opposition to shape his discourse about this thorny topic; and second, elucidating the ways in which counterpoint occupies both mechanical and organic realms.

Chapter 5 rehearses a central theme of the dissertation: the ongoing need to clarify terminology in order to carry on meaningful scholarly dialogue. Commensurate with this is the necessity to understand and define organicism as a more complex phenomenon than a purely ideological critique admits.

## PREFACE

“Organicism and Musical Analysis: Three Case Studies” consists of an introduction to historical and philosophical issues engendered by organicism (chapter 1); three case studies that demonstrate the centrality of those issues in selected music analytic writings in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries (chapters 2-4); and a conclusion that suggests directions for further research (chapter 5). In the introduction I begin with Kerman’s well-known ideological critique of organicism. I examine the terms of Kerman’s critique and suggest alternative avenues of investigation: definitions of organicism; philosophical content of organicism; and analyses by Heinrich Christoph Koch, Johann Christian Lobe, and Alexander Ul’ibishev.

The three case studies illuminate in greater depth the philosophical streams with which organicism intersects and the historical constraints under which it operates. The first concentrates on E.T.A. Hoffmann’s review of Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony. Topics explored include Burke’s and Kant’s philosophy of the sublime; concepts of unity both ancient and contemporary; pantheism and the organic metaphor; shared issues in the reception of Beethoven and Shakespeare; and the concept of *hohe Besonnenheit*.

The second study concerns Nottebohm’s work on Beethoven’s sketches. Nottebohm’s work greatly problematizes the notion of the organic. He claims in his introductions that Beethoven’s music is organic and that it came into being via an organic process. At the same time, however, he argues that the sketches yield no trace of this organic process. His reticence provides the springboard for a probing analysis of his assumptions about the organic—what exactly it is, and where scholars might find traces of it.

The final study centers on the writings of Heinrich Schenker. The complex relationship between strict counterpoint and free composition preoccupied Schenker throughout his entire publishing career. My discussion has two foci: first, demonstrating how Schenker employs the mechanical/organic opposition to shape his discourse about this thorny topic; and second, elucidating the ways in which counterpoint occupies both mechanical and organic realms.

Chapter 5 rehearses a central theme of the dissertation: the ongoing need to clarify terminology in order to carry on meaningful scholarly dialogue. Commensurate with this is the necessity to understand and define organicism as a more complex phenomenon than a purely ideological critique admits.

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## Chapter 1: Why Organicism? Thoughts on the History and Survival of an Idea

Recent investigations into the powerful and pervasive presence of organicism in music-analytic writings have emphasized the ideological force inherent in the concept itself and in the practice of musical analysis that it has spawned. In *Contemplating Music*, Joseph Kerman takes a sharply polemical stance on the matter: “None of the arts has been affected more deeply than music by the ideology of organicism,” he writes, “its baleful influence is still very much with us.” In his article, “How We Got Into Analysis, and How to Get Out,” Kerman contends that “the true intellectual milieu of analysis is . . . ideology.” In both of these publications, Kerman views organicism as a central component in a grander ideological program, a fundamental tenet of which is “the orthodox belief, still held over from the late nineteenth century, in the overriding aesthetic value of the instrumental music of the great German tradition.”<sup>1</sup> Thus, for Kerman, organicism constitutes not the totality of the ideology but one of its essential elements. When paired with musical analysis, moreover, its force is necessarily negative.

Jim Samson’s article, “Romanticism,” in the *New Grove Dictionary of Music*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., gives some indication of the staying power of Kerman’s assessment:

This . . . second essential meaning of Romanticism . . . might be described as an investment in the self-contained, closed work of art. . . . [T]his ‘work concept,’ itself a product of the growing autonomy of the aesthetic, resulted in a significant change of focus in the relation between art and the world, *as mimesis (imitation) made way*

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<sup>1</sup> The first quotation is from Joseph Kerman, *Contemplating Music* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1985): 65. The second and third are from *idem*, “How We Got Into Analysis, and How to Get Out,” in *Write All These Down* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1994): 14, 15. Reprinted from *Critical Inquiry* 7 (1980): 312-31.

*for what has been termed an 'ideology of organicism' [emphasis added].*<sup>2</sup>

The inequality of terms is conspicuous. Samson identifies mimesis as a neutral aesthetic model, organicism as an ideology. He tenders no claim that other aesthetic frameworks carry with them their own ideologies; he offers no explanation for organicism being identified primarily as an ideology.

W.J.T. Mitchell's preface to *The Politics of Interpretation* sets forth a well-reasoned response to the style of critique Kerman adopts. Mitchell begins like this:

. . . the observation that some particular interpretive practice has 'political implications,' that it is not 'innocent' or neutral, has all too often been the occasion for finishing a discussion, not starting one.<sup>3</sup>

Initiating the very discussion he believes such an observation should bring about, Mitchell poses two questions: first, "So what?"; and second, "For what?" Expanding upon the first question, Mitchell asks, "What follows from the discovery that an interpretive practice is politically loaded? What effect does the demonstration that an interpretive procedure is not innocent have on its claims to truth?" Mitchell then argues:

The politics of interpretation need not be just a name for bias, prejudice, and unprincipled manipulation; it can also be an agenda for progressive action, *a conception of interpretation as the liberation of suppressed or forgotten meanings*, or as the envisioning of new meanings which may give direction to social change [emphasis added].<sup>4</sup>

In adapting Mitchell's directives for my own purposes, I propose moving beyond the "negative moment of unveiling concealed ideology" (Mitchell's formulation) to an

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<sup>2</sup> Jim Samson, "Romanticism," *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. L. Mace (Accessed 18 October 2002), <<http://www.grovemusic.com>>

<sup>3</sup> W.J.T. Mitchell, Introduction to *The Politics of Interpretation* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1983): 3. I am indebted to Leo Treitler for referring me to this introduction.

<sup>4</sup> Mitchell, *The Politics of Interpretation*: 4, 5.

investigation of “suppressed or forgotten meanings,” both of organicism and of the practice of music analysis.

Exploring such philosophical and historical issues fits well with a method of inquiry expounded by Leo Treitler in his “‘To Worship that Celestial Sound’: Motives for Analysis.” In setting forth what he terms “interpretive reflections” on Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony, Treitler “argue[s] for the dependence of understanding [a musical work] on the work’s tradition—both the tradition in which it was composed and the tradition that it has generated. . . .” Continuing his argument, Treitler writes that “We are not obliged to commit ourselves to those interpretations, but only to respond in awareness of them as aspects of the field in which the work presents itself to us. The critical task is to interpret the text again (and again and again) against that background and from our present point of view.”<sup>5</sup> Applying Treitler’s method to the present study, I argue for an examination of organicism in its own tradition, “both the [philosophical] tradition in which it [originated] and the tradition that it has generated.” This will involve a study of the concept of organicism in ancient Greek writings, a significant source for late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century thought, as well as scientific and philosophical works from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In addition, it will require an examination of selected music-analytic writings that demonstrate writers’ engagement with the concept and, especially, their shaping of its meaning through the means by and for which they employ it.

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<sup>5</sup> Leo Treitler, “‘To Worship that Celestial Sound’: Motives for Analysis,” in *Music and the Historical Imagination* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989): 56.

## I. Elements of Kerman's Critique

### - Organicism

What kind of working definition of organicism can we set forth that facilitates a discussion of its meaning and that allows us to evaluate its presence and influence in music-analytic writings? In fact, no single definition exists. And so I submit here a selection of definitions, elements of which inform the ensuing discussion.

In his own working definition of organicism Kerman identifies the assumption, common among writers of the nineteenth century, that the musical masterwork exhibits a "perfect, organic relation among all [its] analyzable parts."<sup>6</sup> Kerman's definition includes terms central to the concept of organicism: the notion of *perfection*; the centrality of *relationships* among *parts*; the process of *analysis* required to reveal those relationships; and the assumption that the works of art under consideration are *masterpieces*.

The *locus classicus* for the organic concept appears in Plato's *Phaedrus*, a dialogue concerning principles of rhetoric. Here Plato includes the organism as an essential element of his theory of how things are related. Socrates says to Phaedrus:

Well, there is one point at least which I think you will admit, namely that any discourse ought to be constructed like a living creature, with its own body, as it were; it must not lack either head or feet; it must have a middle and extremities so composed as to suit each other and the whole work.<sup>7</sup>

Plato (through Socrates) expresses two concerns: first, that the speech have a living quality, in opposition to a haphazard or mechanical quality; and second, that the speech

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<sup>6</sup> Kerman, "How We Got Into Analysis": 15.

<sup>7</sup> Plato, *Phaedrus*, trans. R. Hackforth (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1952): 264C. Plato applies the definition to fields other than rhetoric within the dialogue.

exhibit reciprocal and mutually complementary relationships of parts to whole. How does the orator give a speech a living, as opposed to a haphazard or mechanical, quality? Plato argues that the quality comes from the method of arranging the parts. In the case of an organic unity, the parts of the speech, like those of a body, exhibit a necessary order. Such an order produces a whole in which the parts make sense in relation to one another. The relationships in question are determined by function. A peroration, for instance, cannot appear at the beginning of the speech. Such a reversal would disturb the relationships among the parts and produce the very haphazard quality that Plato disdains.

Aristotle, in his *Poetics*, carries forward the organic language established by Plato. He compares the plot of a tragedy to an organism because it displays an effective relationship between parts and whole:

. . . the structural union of the parts [must be] such that, if any one of them is displaced or removed, the whole will be disjointed and disturbed. For a thing whose presence or absence makes no visible difference is not an organic part of the whole.<sup>8</sup>

For Aristotle, the connection between the parts is so intimate that none can be displaced or removed. Furthermore, nothing extraneous to the whole can be considered organic.

In his dictionary of cultural terms, *Keywords*, Raymond Williams supplies two important definitions for the organic: first, a means to refer to “the processes or products of life, in human beings, animals or plants”; and second, a metaphorical description of “certain kinds of relationship and thence certain kinds of society.”<sup>9</sup> Both senses of the term are relevant to the current study. The origins of the former lie with applied biology, especially important to nineteenth-century science; the latter resonates forcefully both

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<sup>8</sup> Aristotle, *Poetics*, trans. S.H. Butcher (New York: Hill and Wang, 1961): 67.

<sup>9</sup> Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*, rev. ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985): 227.

with ancient Greek philosophy and with late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century theories of culture. Williams introduces another significant aspect of the organic in his definition: the opposition between the organic and the mechanical. Though the contrast originates in ancient Greece, the nineteenth-century interest in it arose in part as a reaction against the increasing mechanization that propelled the industrial revolution. “Mechanical” thus became a term of denigration, “organic” one of praise.

Central elements of the ancient Greek definitions proliferate in writings of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832) peppered his writings with references to the ancient doctrines of organicism, expressing concern for the reciprocal relationship of parts to whole. In the opening scene of *Faust*, for example, the Director and poet discuss the drama they will present on their stage. The Director, proffering a formula for mass appeal, makes the following telling remark:

And let your piece be all in pieces too!  
 You'll not go wrong if you compose a stew:  
 It's quick to make and easy to present.  
 Why offer them a whole? They'll just fragment  
 It anyway, the public always do.

The poet's response is a potent indicator of organicist criticism's centrality as an evaluative criterion for art:

I note you don't despise such a *métier*,  
 And have no sense of how it ill beseems  
 True art.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Faust I*, trans. David Luke (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987): lines 99-105. The figure of Faust preoccupied Goethe intermittently throughout his adult life. He worked intensively on the first volume of the drama from 1797-1801. The second was, by the author's own design, published just after his death in 1832.

In his 1802 Bach biography Johann Nikolaus Forkel (1749-1818) engages the issue of mechanical and organic. Counterpoint, for Forkel the means by which the genius masters the mechanical resources of his art, figures centrally in the discussion.<sup>11</sup> As he learns the arts of counterpoint, Forkel argues, the composer at the same time develops a sensitivity for composing music that manifests organic properties. In an encomium on Bach's fugues, Forkel cites features which fulfill central requirements of the organic: first, "the exclusion of every arbitrary note not necessarily belonging to the whole"; and second, "a life diffused through the whole, so that it sometimes appears to the performer or hearer as if every single note were animated. . . ."<sup>12</sup> The former feature refers to the Aristotelian model; the latter reflects the influence of late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century vitalist theories of the organism and of life.<sup>13</sup>

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[Direktor:

“Gebt ihr ein Stück, so gebt es gleich in Stücken!  
Solch ein Ragout, es muss Euch glücken;  
leicht ist es vorgelegt, so leicht als ausgedacht.  
Was hilft's, wenn Ihr ein Ganzes dargebracht?  
Das Publikum wird es Euch doch zerpfücken.”

Dichter:

“Ihr fühlet nicht, wie schlecht ein solches Handwerk sei!  
Wie wenig das dem echten Künstler zieme!”

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Faust I*, in *Goethes Werke*, Vol. 3 (Hamburg: Christian Wegner, 1967): lines 99-105. Unless otherwise noted, all references in German to Goethe's works are from this 'Hamburger Ausgabe' which, from 1950 through 1967, was published by Christian Verlag in Hamburg. After that time Oscar Beck in Munich took over the publishing.]

<sup>11</sup> Johann Nikolaus Forkel, *On Johann Sebastian Bach's Life, Genius, and Works*, in *The New Bach Reader*, ed. Hans T. David and Arthur Mendel, rev. Christoph Wolff (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1998): 477. With the term "counterpoint" Forkel refers not to species counterpoint but to a texture in which individual lines take precedence over vertical sonorities.

<sup>12</sup> Forkel, *On Bach's Life, Genius and Works*: 450.

<sup>13</sup> The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines vitalism like this: "The doctrine or theory that the origin and phenomena of life are due to or produced by a vital principle, as distinct from a purely

One final definition is required here: that for organic form. Its classic formulation appears in the *Course of Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature* by August Wilhelm von Schlegel (1767-1845). For Schlegel, organic form constitutes the defining feature of great literature. He places this in opposition to mechanical form. “Organical form is innate;” he writes, “it unfolds itself from within, and acquires its determination contemporaneously with the perfect development of the germ.”<sup>14</sup>

- Music Analysts

In “How We Got Into Analysis” and *Contemplating Music*, Kerman discusses music analysts from the early nineteenth century until well into the twentieth, beginning with J. N. Forkel (1749-1818) and E.T.A. Hoffmann (1776-1822), and continuing through to Heinrich Schenker (1868-1935), Arthur Komar, and Allen Forte. Kerman’s attention to Forkel and Hoffmann is anything but accidental. Both writers exerted great influence in their own time, and both continue to shape our discourse about music. Furthermore, both published their music criticism at a time when the practice of music analysis achieved great momentum owing to the coalescence of factors both historical and aesthetic. Newly established music conservatories demanded pedagogical texts, many of which included lengthy musical excerpts or complete movements as exemplars

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chemical or physical force.” “Vitalism,” *Oxford English Dictionary* (accessed 19 October 2002 <[http://dictionary.oed.com/cgi/entry\\_main/](http://dictionary.oed.com/cgi/entry_main/)>

<sup>14</sup> August Schlegel, *Course of Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature*, trans. John Black (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1846): 340. [“Die organische Form hingegen ist eingeboren, sie bildet von innen heraus und erreicht ihre Bestimmtheit zugleich mit der vollständigen Entwicklung des Keimes.” Schlegel, *Vorlesungen über dramatische Kunst und Literatur*, Vol. 2 (Berlin: W. Kohlhammer, 1967): 109.] Schlegel delivered these lectures in Vienna in 1807-8.

of formal types.<sup>15</sup> Johann Christian Lobe's (1797-1881) *Lehrbuch der musikalischen Composition*, published in 1850-56, for example, includes as an analytic centerpiece the first movement of Beethoven's String Quartet in A major, Op. 18, no. 2 (to be discussed later in this chapter). Interest in complete oeuvres of composers, moreover, spurred the publication of large-scale biographies, many of which included analyses of the composer's works as a central component. Ul'ibishev's biography of Mozart, discussed later in this chapter, exemplifies this trend.

In early nineteenth-century aesthetics, the organism replaced mechanism as the prevailing explanatory model for artistic processes. The concurrent shift in music-analytic models involved replacing linguistic and rhetorical models of explanation with those proffered by organicism. Whereas a writer like Johann Mattheson (1681-1764) relied heavily on rhetorical models, and Heinrich Christoph Koch (1749-1816) depended upon what he termed mechanical rules of melody, nineteenth-century analysts appropriated the language and images of organicist criticism to account for the functioning of the musical work and to describe the mysterious process by which the genius composer worked. An especially compelling aspect of organic theory that attracted music analysts was its claims about creative processes. Organic theory posited a *geistig* process of production by which the artist, surrendering to an initial creative impulse, produced his works without the intervening force of his own consciousness.<sup>16</sup> This initial moment of inspiration—the seed of the artwork to follow—proved especially provocative to the pedagogue Johann Christian Lobe, whose instruction in composition

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<sup>15</sup> The Paris Conservatoire, founded in 1795, marked an important shift from church- to government-funded musical training.

<sup>16</sup> I discuss the importance of the term *geistig* throughout the dissertation. In most cases, I leave it untranslated. Important nineteenth-century definitions appear on p. 40.

included an organicist account of compositional procedure. Eduard Hanslick (1825-1904), Gustav Nottebohm (1817-1882), and Heinrich Schenker (1868-1935) expressed a similar fascination with these mysterious initial moments of composition.

I noted above that, for Plato, organicism constitutes a theory of how things are related, both the parts to each other and those parts to the larger whole. Nineteenth-century music analysts devoted considerable effort to parsing musical works and explaining how those parts related to each other. The term they sometimes used for this process, *zergliedern*, is the German term for dissection, the means by which biologists gained knowledge of organic subjects.<sup>17</sup> The parts that writers on music identified included themes (an analysis of the *Eroica* symphony, to be discussed in Chapter 2) and motives (E.T.A. Hoffmann's Fifth Symphony analysis, also discussed in Chapter 2), as well as large-scale divisions, such as the first and second parts of sonata-form movements. Early in the century such parsing was intended to aid the listener's comprehension. Both analyses cited in this paragraph appeared in weekly musical journals with broad readership, including both the professional and the amateur musician. Analysis in this form supplied an aural roadmap for listening, a quite radical departure from eighteenth-century rhetorical analysis, whose emphasis lay with codifying a highly rationalized system of emotion. The audience for rhetorical analysis was the composer, who would employ its techniques to arouse particular emotional responses in his own audiences. The audience for organic analysis included the amateur listener, the beginning composer, and the more musically educated connoisseur, all of whom might employ its language to understand and describe the processes of individual musical works.

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<sup>17</sup> Ian Bent includes a valuable discussion of the term in his introduction to *Music Analysis in the Nineteenth Century*, Vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994): 7, 8, 21-3.

- Ideology

The following, from the *Oxford Companion to Philosophy*, provides a starting point for a discussion of ideology:

Ideology . . . stands for a collection of beliefs and values held by an individual or group for other than purely epistemic reasons, e.g. bourgeois ideology, nationalist ideology, or gender ideology. The normative use of the term typically involves two elements. First, a particular style of *explanation* in which the prevalence of certain beliefs and values is attributed . . . to a nonepistemic role that they serve for the individuals who hold them or for society at large. . . . Second, a particular style of *criticism* in which beliefs and values are called into question precisely by giving this sort of interest-based or social-symbolic explanation of their prevalence—an explanation characteristically not known by the believers themselves [emphasis original].<sup>18</sup>

For the present investigation, the system of beliefs is organicism. The believers, their work based largely on unarticulated assumptions, are music analysts. The critic practicing the ideological critical method is Kerman.

Kerman submits two principal complaints about the ideological marriage of organicism and musical analysis. First, he argues that the ideological underpinnings, though endemic to and prolific in the practice of musical analysis, have wielded their power in a largely unacknowledged manner. Kerman cites significant historical figures, Forkel and Hoffmann, in whose writings he locates the inception of the ideological bond between music analysis and organicism. Both writers adduce organic imagery to describe works of German masters: Bach, in the case of Forkel, and Beethoven, in the case of Hoffmann; both link organic compositional method with German artistic

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<sup>18</sup> Peter Railton, "Ideology," in *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy*, ed. Ted Honderich (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995): 392. The first part of this definition matches Kerman's very closely. He writes: "By ideology I mean a fairly coherent set of ideas brought together not for strictly intellectual purposes but in the service of some strongly held communal belief." See Kerman: "How We Got into Analysis": 15.

greatness. The unacknowledged belief Kerman unmasks is this: describing a musical work in organic terms becomes a means of validating a repertory of highly valued musical works, namely the instrumental music of the great German tradition. A symbiotic and circular relationship results, argues Kerman, in which “analysis exists for the purpose of demonstrating organicism, and organicism exists for the purpose of validating a certain body of works of art.”<sup>19</sup>

Second, Kerman is frustrated with a music-analytic practice that neglects features of the music he finds central to his own experience. This neglect arises from analysts’ exclusive attention to features of the music highlighted by Schenker’s analytic notation. Kerman includes as an example of such neglect Schenker’s analysis of Schumann’s “Aus meinen Thränen spriessen.” Example 1-1 gives Schumann’s song; Example 1-2 gives Schenker’s analysis.

Kerman levels strong criticisms against Schenker and writers who have commented on Schenker’s analysis: Allen Forte and Arthur Komar.<sup>20</sup> Kerman’s first point of attack concerns the debate about structural tones. Schenker’s analysis shows an interruption structure: tones of the *Urlinie* descend from  $\wedge^3$  to  $\wedge^2$ , after which there is an interruption; the *Urlinie* begins again, this time completing its descent to  $\wedge^1$ . Forte and Komar offer revised readings of Schenker’s analysis, focusing in each case on the precise

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<sup>19</sup> Kerman, *Contemplating Music*: 15.

<sup>20</sup> The original analysis is by Schenker, Figure 22a from the *Anhang* to *Der freie Satz*. Forte’s commentary appears in his important 1959 article, “Schenker’s Conception of Musical Structure,” *Journal of Music Theory* 3 (1959): 1-30. Komar’s commentary appears in Arthur Komar, “The Music of *Dichterliebe*: The Whole and Its Parts,” in *Robert Schumann, “Dichterliebe,”* Norton Critical Scores, ed. Arthur Komar (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1971): 70-73.

location of the structural tones. While Schenker locates the second  $\wedge^3$  on the upbeat to bar 13, Forte shifts it to the  $C^\sharp$  in bar 14 (beat 2).

**Nicht schnell.**

Aus meinen Thränen sprissen viel blühende Blumen hervor, und meine Seufzer werden ein  
 Nach-ti-gal-len-chor. Und wenn du mich lieb hast, Kind-chen, schenk' ich dir die Blu-men  
 all', und vor deinem Fenster soll klingen das Lied der Nach-ti-gall.

*ritard.*

*ritard.*

The score consists of three systems of vocal and piano accompaniment. The first system covers bars 1-4, the second covers bars 5-8, and the third covers bars 9-12. The piano part includes circled numbers 3 and 12, and various dynamic markings such as *p*, *pp*, and *ppp*. The tempo marking is **Nicht schnell.** and there are two *ritard.* markings.

**Example 1-1**  
**Schumann's "Aus meinen Thränen sprissen"**

This diagram shows Schenker's analysis of the piano accompaniment from the previous score. It features three staves with various annotations:
 

- Staff 1: Shows the melodic line with structural tones and a circled 3.
- Staff 2: Shows the harmonic structure with annotations like (n.n.) and (u-7).
- Staff 3: Shows the bass line with annotations like (n.n.), (i), and (mp).

 At the bottom, a figured bass line is provided: **Fgd. I (A1) IV (p.t.) V-I B V-( ) -I (A2)**. The analysis uses Roman numerals and letters to denote harmonic functions and structural levels.

**Example 1-2**  
**Schenker's Analysis of Schumann's "Aus meinen Thränen sprissen"**

Komar accepts Forte's revised reading and proposes a parallel reading for the first  $\wedge$ 3: the C<sup>#</sup> in bar 2. Kerman responds like this: "More serious interest might attach to this debate if someone would undertake to show how its outcome affects the way people actually hear, experience, or respond to the music. In the absence of such a demonstration, the whole exercise can seem pretty ridiculous."<sup>21</sup> Why the flurry of activity over the structural prominence of a single pitch? Does it amount to nothing more than proverbial rage over a lost penny?

I believe that there is something more fundamental at stake here. In critiquing debates over structural tones, Kerman overlooks the listening to, the experience of, and the response to the music that precedes any such disagreements. The analytic debate concerns precisely the issues that Kerman is raising: how might one hear, experience, or respond to the music? Which points of musical articulation are most important to the listener's comprehension? Schenker's own writings supply crucial data for the discussion. He argued that his musical examples were "not merely practical aids; they have the same power and conviction as the visual aspect of the printed composition itself. That is, the graphic representation is part of the actual composition, not merely an educational means." He believed moreover that his analytic sketches shared a crucial identity with the score, having been developed only after much experience in listening to and reflecting upon the music. "Is not learning to hear the first task?" he asks—this, as essential prerequisite for the student of composition.<sup>22</sup> Schenker's analytic sketches

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<sup>21</sup> Kerman, *Contemplating Music*: 24.

<sup>22</sup> Heinrich Schenker, *Free Composition*, trans. and ed. Ernst Oster (New York: Schirmer Books, 1979): xxiii, 9. ["Man nehme die hier dargebotenen Notenbeispiele nicht allein für einen praktischen Behelf, sie sind vielmehr von der gleichen Kraft und Überredung wie das Notenbild

presuppose countless hearings and re-hearings of the music. The process is hardly static. In fact, many contemporary practitioners of Schenker's work would argue that the process is the point.<sup>23</sup>

Kerman highlights another shortcoming of his selected analysts. Drawing attention to the climactic phrase in the song (mm. 13, 14), Kerman writes: ". . . for a moment the emotional temperature spurts up into or nearly into the danger zone." Kerman points to the role of these technical elements in producing the climax: "thickened piano texture, intensified rhythms, a crescendo, and harmonic enrichment by means of chromaticism."<sup>24</sup> In terms of Kerman's critical agenda, both Schenker and Forte founder at this point in their analyses. Schenker barely acknowledges the chromaticism, while Forte merely terms it "striking." For Kerman, Schenker and Forte fail to account for what Kerman experiences as living qualities of the work, the music's emotional temperature. Kerman's conclusion echoes that of Hanslick who, after performing a brief technical analysis on the opening measures of Beethoven's "Prometheus Overture,"

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des Vordergrundes. Oder anders: das Beispiel hat nicht als Lernmittel, sondern mit als die wirkliche Komposition in Frage zu kommen. . . ;" and "Wäre Hörenlehren denn nicht die nächste Aufgabe, bei der man sogar des Komponierens entraten könnte?" Heinrich Schenker, *Der freie Satz*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., ed. Oswald Jonas (Vienna: Universal Edition, 1956): 19, 37.]

<sup>23</sup> William Rothstein has suggested to me that Schenker himself would have argued otherwise. Though Schenker clearly valued the process of analysis necessary to discover the essence of masterworks, he nevertheless believed that his task was to discover the "true content" of the works he studied. In his monograph on Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, for instance, he defines three goals for himself: (1) to reveal the musical *content* of the work; (2) to establish new performance standards based on results gleaned from the analysis; and (3) to insulate the symphony "against any possible future errors." This last goal he achieved by submitting to a vigorous critique earlier accounts of the symphony. See Heinrich Schenker, *Beethoven's Ninth Symphony*, trans. and ed. John Rothgeb (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992): 3, 4.

<sup>24</sup> Kerman, "How We Got Into Analysis": 25.

concludes that “[s]uch a *Zergliederung* turns a flourishing body into a skeleton. . . .”<sup>25</sup> In other words, it takes the life out of it.

Kerman’s assessment brings to the forefront a pertinent issue for our current understanding of organicism and one of its applications to musical analysis. The analytic diagrams on the page—Schenker’s notation, in this case—carry with them a veritable trove of metaphoric and philosophical association that both Kerman and music analysts have largely ignored, at least until recently.<sup>26</sup> In Schenker’s terms, the notation has its own living qualities, central aspects of which I explore in Chapter 4. Schenker’s essay “*Rameau oder Beethoven? Erstarrung oder Geistiges Leben in der Musik*” makes explicit his claims for “spiritual” content in music. The voice-leading principles he posits as the basis for this spiritual music, furthermore, he calls “living.”<sup>27</sup> The introduction to a

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<sup>25</sup> Eduard Hanslick, *On the Musically Beautiful*, trans. Geoffrey Payzant (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1986): 14. [“Solche Zergliederung macht ein Gerippe aus blühendem Körper. . . .” Eduard Hanslick, *Vom Musikalisch-Schönen: Ein Beitrag zur Revision der Aesthetik der Tonkunst*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed. (Leipzig: Johann Ambrosius Barth, 1876): 25.]

<sup>26</sup> Important contributions to this philosophic and metaphoric understanding of Schenker’s thought include: Ruth Solie, “The Living Work: Organicism and Musical Analysis,” *19<sup>th</sup>-Century Music* 4 (1980): 147-156; William Pastille, “Ursatz: The Musical Philosophy of Heinrich Schenker,” Ph. D. Diss., Cornell University, 1985; David Montgomery, “The Myth of Organicism: From Bad Science to Great Art,” *The Musical Quarterly* 76 (1992): 17-66; Robert Snarrenberg, “Competing Myths: the American Abandonment of Schenker’s Organicism,” in Anthony Pople, ed., *Theory, Analysis, and Meaning in Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994): 29-56; Robert Snarrenberg, *Schenker’s Interpretive Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); and Leslie Blasius, *Schenker’s Argument and the Claims of Music Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996). I discuss the contributions of some of these writers in Chapter 5.

<sup>27</sup> Concerning Rameau’s fundamental bass theory Schenker writes: “How, then, did *the creeping paralysis caused by these theoretical endeavors* take effect in this same period? In Rameau’s fundamental idea there lurked an element of the mechanical—turned away from the living art of voice-leading—right from the start, but that first mechanical element engendered mechanism upon mechanism in its train.” Heinrich Schenker, “Rameau or Beethoven? Creeping Paralysis or Spiritual Potency in Music?” in *The Masterwork in Music*, Vol. 3, trans. Ian Bent, ed. William Drabkin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997): 5. [“Und nun, wie äusserte sich die Erstarrung der theoretischen Bestrebungen in der gleichen Zeit? Lag ein Mechanisches, weil von der lebendigen Stimmführung Abgewandtes schon im Grundgedanken Rameaus, so zeugte das erste Mechanische nun Mechanisches um Mechanisches auch in der Folge.” Schenker, “*Rameau*

recent collection of essays by Carl Schachter fleshes out our understanding of Schenker's analytic notation. In a question-and-answer session with the editor of the volume, Joseph Straus, Schachter comments on the problems of translating Schenker's writings and, especially, of losing the vitalistic aspects of the notational symbols in the graphs.

Schachter suggests:

The only way of counteracting that is by stressing as much as possible the aesthetic and perceptual components of the analysis rather than simply the concepts that are there. . . . Apparently, Schenker taught at the piano and played the graphs in order to get people to hear what they meant.<sup>28</sup>

At least at one level, Schenker's emphasis lay with hearing and perceiving the music.

A final criticism Kerman levels at Schenker, Komar, and Forte is their failure to comment on the song as a musical work with text. Kerman writes: "Sooner or later we shall have to retrace the course taken by the composer himself and peek at the words of the poem. . . ." <sup>29</sup> Such criticism ties in with Kerman's larger argument that organic music analysis is deeply complicit in perpetuating a belief in the "overriding aesthetic value of the instrumental music of the great German tradition (see above, p. 1)."

#### - Metaphor

A recently published dictionary of literary terms defines metaphor simply as "a figure of speech in which one thing is described in terms of another. A comparison is

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*oder Beethoven? Erstarrung oder Geistiges Leben in der Musik,*" in *Das Meisterwerk in der Musik*, Vol. 3 (Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1974): 17.]

<sup>28</sup> Carl Schachter, "A Dialogue between Author and Editor," in *Unfoldings: Essays in Schenkerian Theory and Analysis*, ed. Joseph N. Straus (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999): 11.

<sup>29</sup> Kerman, "How We Got Into Analysis": 26.

usually implicit; whereas in simile it is explicit.”<sup>30</sup> A more detailed definition appears in an essay by Morse Peckham. He writes: “We perceive a metaphor as a metaphor . . . when we encounter words . . . which conventionally do not belong to the same category. A metaphor, then, is an assertion that they do.”<sup>31</sup> For the present discussion, it is music that is described in terms of an organism. Because music and organisms do not conventionally belong to the same category, it is metaphor that asserts that they do.<sup>32</sup> The metaphor of the organism enables writers on music to invoke the organic not as the thing itself but as a selection of attributes which can be applied to descriptions of music. These include a living as opposed to a mechanical quality and a suitable relationship of parts to whole.

Nelson Goodman offers a provocative definition of metaphor in his *Languages of Art*. He writes: “A metaphor is an affair between a predicate with a past and an object that yields while protesting.” In conjunction with this definition, Goodman emphasizes that “[w]here there is metaphor, there is conflict. . . . Application of a term is metaphorical only if to some extent contra-indicated.”<sup>33</sup> Applying his definition to the current discussion yields these terms: the organic is “a predicate with a past”; music is

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<sup>30</sup> J.A. Cuddon, *A Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed., rev. C.E. Preston (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1998): 507.

<sup>31</sup> Morse Peckham, “Metaphor: A Little Plain Speaking on a Weary Subject,” in *The Triumph of Romanticism: Collected Essays by Morse Peckham* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1970): 405.

<sup>32</sup> Herein lies a central point of my argument. Describing music in organic terms has become so habitual to many contemporary writers as to seem not merely conventional but obvious and necessary. A useful discussion of such “naïve” applications of organic models to discussion of music appears in Robert Fink, “Going Flat: Post-Hierarchical Music Theory and the Musical Surface,” in *Rethinking Music*, ed. Nicholas Cook and Mark Everist (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999): 102-105.

<sup>33</sup> Nelson Goodman, *Languages of Art: An Approach to a Theory of Symbols* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co., 1976): 69. I am grateful to Leo Treitler for referring me to this definition.

the “object that yields while protesting.” Both Peckham and Goodman call attention to the resistance produced by the confrontation of the metaphor’s opposing terms.

Peckham’s description posits metaphor as an assertion that the two opposing terms in fact belong to the same category; Goodman’s definition dramatizes the relation between the terms with the metaphor of a sexual affair in which one partner “yields” only “while protesting.” Important to both definitions, and to discussions of metaphor more generally, is the awareness that metaphor differs pointedly from literal language. Thus, when writers adduce the organic as a metaphor to describe music, they assume that music cannot in fact be *literally* organic.<sup>34</sup>

Reliance upon metaphor and other figurative language presupposes an audience familiar with the terms of the comparison. The science of biology was immensely important for the nineteenth century and information about organisms multiplied as scientists developed the practice of dissection. When early nineteenth-century writers compared musical works to organisms, they assumed a readership familiar with contemporaneous views of the organism, with the centrality of the image of the organism in intellectual life, and with the selection of attributes intended by the comparison.

Metaphor held a place of central importance in nineteenth-century thought, continuing a propensity for figurative language established already in the eighteenth. Johann Gottfried von Herder (1744-1803) repeatedly advocates and uses an analogical method, as does Charles Bonnet (1720-1793).<sup>35</sup> The latter called for a “*Traité de l’Analogie*” to examine fully the implications of analogy. Goethe, developing further this

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<sup>34</sup> I am grateful to Leo Treitler for this clarification.

<sup>35</sup> Herder’s interest in metaphor and other figurative language receives a full discussion in Chapter 2.

proclivity for figurative language, based his novel *Die Wahlverwandtschaften* (*The Elective Affinities*) on the idea “that human behavior and chemical reactions may be in some ways analogous.”<sup>36</sup> Finally, for Romantic poets and critics, poetry, truth and metaphor belonged in a class of equals.<sup>37</sup> Through the power of metaphor in poetry, they believed, one can gain access to the hallowed realm of truth. Schenker, writing in the first third of the twentieth century, carried forward this nineteenth-century proclivity for metaphor and pushed this relationship even further. In his later writings (1920s and forward), as he became increasingly invested in his theory of the *Urfinie* and *Ursatz*, he believed that the work of art is not merely *like* an organism but *is* the thing itself. He thus pressed beyond metaphorical to metaphysical attributions of the organic to music. (More on that in Chapter 4.)

## II. Nineteenth-Century Contributions to the Concept of Organicism

The discussion so far, with its attention to Kerman’s arguments and its identification of components central to the notion of organicism, lays the groundwork for my study of late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century contributions to the concept and to three primary terms associated with it: organic, organism, and organization. The writers discussed below engage the concept as a central element of contemporaneous scientific and philosophical discourse, and as a metaphor whose associations and implications gained widespread currency in scholarly disciplines, as well as in more broadly based cultural dialogues.

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<sup>36</sup> H.B. Nisbet, *Goethe and the Scientific Tradition* (London: Institute of Germanic Studies, 1972): 15, 16.

<sup>37</sup> Peckham, “Metaphor”: 401.

- The Organic

Herder's philosophy of history, written between 1784-1791, posits three levels of organic life—the individual, the *Volk*, and humanity—each of which grows in accordance with an inner genetic principle.<sup>38</sup> Imagining a person who first sees the wonders of the creation of a living being, Herder assumes this kind of response: “There . . . is a *living organic power*: I know not whence it came, or what it intrinsically is, but that it is there, that it lives, that it has acquired itself organic parts out of the chaos of homogeneal matter, I see: this is incontestable [emphasis original] (Herder, *Reflections*: 20).”

Herder's comment reveals that it is easier to determine what this inner genetic principle *does* than what it is, and herein lies a crucial aspect of what is meant by organic. The organic is bound up more with the notion of creative force than with physical entity. Put another way, to describe something as organic is to point not to the thing itself but to the force that brings it into existence and that maintains its vitality. In keeping with his view that “The whole course of a man's life is change, [that] the different periods of his life are tales of transformation, and the whole species is one continued metamorphosis” (Herder, *Reflections*: 4), Herder emphasizes the formative action of this organic power. Even in the finished creature he sees this “vital power . . . continu[ing] to display itself actively” (Herder, *Reflections*: 21).<sup>39</sup> Herder's formulation directly opposes mechanistic views of matter and life which require forces acting from without.

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<sup>38</sup> Johann Gottfried von Herder, *Reflections on the Philosophy of the History of Mankind*, trans. Frank E. Manuel (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968): xxi. Additional references to the translation are given in parentheses in the main body of the text.

<sup>39</sup> (1) “Da ist . . . eine *lebendige, organische Kraft*; ich weiss nicht, woher sie gekommen, noch was sie in ihrem Innern sei; aber dass sie da sei, dass sie lebe, dass sie organische Teile sich aus dem Chaos einer homogenen Materie zueigne, das sehe ich, das ist unleugbar.”

Herder's *Gott: Einige Gespräche* offers another perspective on the organic. Herder poses the theological problems of the book within a series of conversations, a primary thrust of which concerns establishing the nature of God. Three aspects of Herder's deity are of special significance here. First, Herder's God acts out of an inner necessity. Theophron, the most well informed character in the conversations and the one who expresses Herder's thought most directly, argues:

all around us in nature we are guided by the example of our Father Himself, who acts in the smallest and largest things entirely without weak arbitrariness, but with the whole beauty and goodness of a self-dependent reason, truth and *necessity* [emphasis added].<sup>40</sup>

Second, Herder adduces an organic image to represent God. Theano, the only woman to participate in the dialogues, describes God as "the eternal root of the immeasurable tree of life which is entwined throughout the universe" (Herder, *God*: 168). All beings, both large and small, "like branches draw from His eternal root the

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(2) "Der ganze Lebenslauf eines Menschen ist Verwandlung; alle seine Lebensalter sind Fabeln derselben, und so ist das ganze Geschlecht in einer fortgehenden Metamorphose."

(3) "... diese lebende Kraft . . . sondern sich in ihm *tätig zu offenbaren fortfahre*. . . ." Johann Gottfried von Herder, *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit* (Darmstadt: Joseph Melzer Verlag, 1966): 188; 178; 189.

<sup>40</sup> Johann Gottfried von Herder, *God, Some Conversations*, trans. Frederick H. Burkhardt (New York: Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1940): 165. Additional references to the translation appear in parentheses in the main body of the text. ["... ja warum dürften wir bei ihnen stehen bleiben, da uns allenthalben in der Natur das Vorbild unsres Vaters selbst verleuchtet, der im Kleinsten und Grössesten ohn' alle schwache Willkühr mit der ganzen Schönheit und Güte einer selbständigen Vernunft, Wahrheit und Notwendigkeit handelt." Johann Gottfried von Herder, *Gott: Einige Gespräche*, in *Sämtliche Werke*, Vol. 16, ed. Bernhard Suphan (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1967): 535.] The *Conversations* involve two principal characters: Philolaus, who represents the attitudes of a typical cultured gentleman of his day prejudiced *against* Spinoza, and whose attitudes undergo transformation in the course of the discussions; and Theophron, the voice of Herder, who instructs Philolaus in the philosophy of Spinoza and helps him to understand it. Theano, the third character and the only woman, enters for the fifth and final conversation.

eternal sap of life” (Herder, *God*: 169).<sup>41</sup> Finally, Herder’s deity possesses just one essential force, “which we call power, wisdom and goodness” (Herder, *God*: 171).<sup>42</sup>

This essential force functions organically. For Herder, this means that it reveals itself in bodies. We apprehend its existence because we see it operating in bodies. The organism is thus a vehicle for nothing less than the life force of the universe. Furthermore, it is only by virtue of this force that a body has life: “. . . as soon as this [life force] leaves the smallest or largest member, that member . . . is no longer in the realm of the living forces of our humanity” (Herder, *God*: 172).<sup>43</sup>

#### - The Organism

Goethe developed his theory of the organism in part through empirical observation in the plant world. Excerpts from his *Italienische Reise* illustrate his attempts both to discover and to define what he believed to be the primordial plant, or *Urpflanze*. A diary entry from September 27, 1786, when Goethe visited the University of Padua, records his experiences in the university’s botanical garden:

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<sup>41</sup> “So Gott, die ewige Wurzel vom unermesslichen Baum des Lebens, der durch das Weltall verschlungen ist. . . .” Herder, *Gott: Einige Gespräche*: 539, 540. “Gott hat den Grund seiner Seligkeit Wesen mitgeteilt, die auch wie er, das Kleinste wie das Grösseste, Daseyn geniessen und damit ich Ihr Gleichniss brauche, Theano, als Zweige von seiner Wurzel ewigen Lebensfast schöpfen.” Herder, *Gott: Einige Gespräche*: 541.

<sup>42</sup> “Die Gottheit, in der nur Eine wesentliche Kraft ist, die wir Macht, Weisheit und Güte nennen. . . .” Herder, *Gott: Einige Gespräche*: 543.

<sup>43</sup> “. . . von der Spitze des Haars bis zum Aeussersten Ihres Nagels ist alles von Einer erhaltenden, nährenden Kraft durchdrungen und sobald diese das kleinste oder grösseste Glied verlässt, trennt es sich vom Liebe.” Herder, *Gott: Einige Gespräche*: 545.

Here in this newly encountered diversity that idea of mine keeps gaining strength, namely, that perhaps all plant forms can be derived from one plant. . . . My botanical philosophy remains stuck on this point, and I do not yet see how to proceed.<sup>44</sup>

The great diversity of plants available to Goethe in the botanical garden fed his already teeming appetite for botanical research through observation. By April of the following year he was in Palermo. On a visit to the public garden there, his imagination was once again fired up about the possibility of an *Urpflanze*. With the great variety of plants open to observation, plants that he had otherwise known only in tubs and pots, Goethe writes:

Confronted with so many kinds of fresh, new forms, I was taken again by my old fanciful idea: might I not discover the primordial plant amid this multitude? Such a thing must exist, after all! How else would I recognize this or that form as being a plant, if they were not all constructed according to one model?<sup>45</sup>

Several features of Goethe's theorizing are important for the present discussion: first, he believes he can discover the plant through observation; and second, it is the very richness

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<sup>44</sup> Goethe, *Italian Journey*, in *Goethe's Collected Works*, Vol. 6 (New York: Suhrkamp Publishers, 1989): 54. Additional references to this translation appear in parentheses in the main body of the text. ["Hier in dieser neu mir entgegnetretenden Mannigfaltigkeit wird jener Gedanke immer lebendiger, dass man sich alle Pflanzengestalten vielleicht aus einer entwickeln könne." Goethe, *Italienische Reise*, in *Goethes Werke*, Vol. 11: 60.] Goethe's trip to Italy spanned the years 1786-1788. He intended from the outset to write and talk about the journey when he returned to Weimar. It was not until the end of 1813, however, after completing the first three parts of *Poetry and Truth*, that he began working with the diary and letters written during the Italian visit. The first volume of the *Italian Journey* was published in 1816, the second in 1817. See Thomas P. Saine, Introduction to Goethe, *Italian Journey*, in *Goethe's Collected Works*, Vol. 6: 5, 6.

<sup>45</sup> Goethe, *Italian Journey*: 214. "Im Angesicht so vielerlei neuen und erneuten Gebildes fiel mir die alte Grille wieder ein, ob ich nicht unter dieser Schar die Urpflanze entdecken könnte. Eine solche muss es denn doch geben! Woran würde ich sonst erkennen, dass dieses oder jenes Gebilde eine Pflanze sie, wenn sie nicht alle nach einem Muster gebildet wären?" Goethe, *Italienische Reise*: 266. In his article, "The Myth of Organicism," David Montgomery argues that Goethe's *Urtypen* were not an original formulation. Rather, some twenty years before him, Jean-Baptiste Robinet had developed the concept of an original life form which, though different in detail from Goethe's, stems from a widely-held eighteenth-century belief in the existence of fantastic, prototypical life forms. See Montgomery: 18.

and diversity of the observation field that drives him to hypothesize simple origins for all that is visible to him. For Goethe, simplicity is the source for fecundity.<sup>46</sup>

A final pertinent quotation comes from a letter to Herder, written in Naples, May 17, 1787:

. . . I must confide to you that I am close to discovering the secret of plant generation and structure, and that *it is the simplest thing imaginable*. . . . I have quite clearly and unquestionably found the main feature, the location of the bud [*Keim*], and I already see everything else in a general way; . . . The primordial plant is turning out to be the most marvelous creation in the world, and nature itself will envy me because of it. With this model and the key to it an infinite number of plants can be invented, which must be logical, that is, if they do not exist, they *could* exist, are not mere artistic or poetic shadows and semblances, *but have an inner truth and necessity*. The same law will be applicable to every other living thing [emphasis added].<sup>47</sup>

I have highlighted several items in the text for further discussion. First, Goethe continues to search for a simple solution. This feature sheds light on criticisms Kerman has leveled at Schenkerian analysts. Kerman criticizes Schenker, Komar, and Forte for their application of a reductive analytic paradigm to music that Kerman believes sifts out too

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<sup>46</sup> The following is apropos: “My odd botanical notions are reinforced by all this, and I am on the way to discovering beautiful new conditions under which nature—that invisible immensity—develops the greatest variations from a simple entity.” Goethe, *Italian Journey*: 142. [Meine botanischen Grillen bekräftigen sich an allem diesen, und ich bin auf dem Wege, neue schöne Verhältnisse zu entdecken, wie die Natur, solch ein Ungeheures, das wie nichts aussieht, aus dem Einfachen das Mannigfaltigste entwickelt.” Goethe, *Italienische Reise*: 175.]

<sup>47</sup> Goethe, *Italian Journey*: 256. “Ferner muss ich Dir vertrauen, dass ich dem Geheimnis der Pflanzenzeugung und -organisation ganz nahe bin, und dass es das einfachste ist, was nur gedacht werden kann. . . . Den Hauptpunkt, wo der Keim steckt, habe ich ganz klar und zweifellos gefunden; alles übrige seh’ ich auch schon im ganzen und nur noch einige Punkte müssen bestimmter werden. Die Urpflanze wird das wunderlichste Geschöpf von der Welt, um welches mich die Natur selbst beneiden soll. Mit diesem Modell und dem Schlüssel dazu kann man als dann noch Pflanzen ins Unendlich erfinden, die konsequent sein müssen, das heisst: die, wenn sie auch nicht existieren, doch existieren können und nicht etwa malerische oder dichterische Schatten und Scheine sind, sondern eine innerliche Wahrheit und Notwendigkeit haben. Dasselbe Gesetz wird sich auf alles übrige Lebendige anwenden lassen.” Goethe, *Italienische Reise*: 323, 324.

coarsely the individuality of a piece. Organicist critical frameworks, however, by their very nature seek underlying principles common to many examples of a particular phenomenon.<sup>48</sup> Just as Goethe sought primordial types (*Urtypen*)—whether in the sphere of plants, animals, or other phenomena—organicist musical analysis, especially as practiced by Schenker, sought the principles operative in many items of the same class. Second, the central feature of Goethe's *Urpflanze*, the key that unlocks the mystery, is the bud (*Keim*). This concept assumes great importance for nineteenth-century music analysts, as I demonstrate later in the chapter. Finally, the primordial plant exhibits the same features as did Herder's God: inner truth and necessity.

Further significance for Goethe's *Urpflanze* lies with its engagement of the ideal/real opposition that figures so centrally in early nineteenth-century idealist philosophy. The *Urpflanze*, as described by Goethe, seems to exist in the natural world. Its ontological status, however, is ambiguous. In the *Italienische Reise* Goethe writes of the possibility of discovering the plant in a Sicilian garden he visited, thereby implying its material existence and the potential to know it through experience (see quotation on p. 24, n. 45). Goethe's later description of the plant as a logical principle—a set of instructions, as it were, for propagation—confounds definitions of it as material or ideal. In the letter to Herder, Goethe writes of plants that need not exist since they could exist merely by virtue of the principle. A letter exchange between Goethe and Schiller makes

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<sup>48</sup> This is especially true of the examples in *Der freie Satz*, which constitute not so much as analyses of pieces as exemplars of specific tonal procedures. An interesting and important tension arises in this formulation, especially as evidenced in Schenker's writings. His commitment to organicist tenets let him to posit a common origin for tonal masterworks; in his later writings he termed this the *Ursatz*. His in-depth analyses of individual pieces, however—the works included in the *Meisterwerk* essays, the late piano sonatas of Beethoven—shift attention to the individuality of those particular pieces. Notably, the same nexus of basic tonal relations constitutes the foundation for all pieces to which he devotes an essay or book.

explicit the gap between idea (*Idee*) and experience (*Erfahrung*): Goethe argues for an entity which can be perceived and known through experience, while Schiller insists that the *Urpflanze* is an intellectual construct. Ultimately, Goethe claims that his *Urphänomen* bridge the gap between ideal and real: they represent the ideal, and at the same time embody the real and concrete instance. In this way they effect a unity of idea and experience.<sup>49</sup>

Friedrich W.J. Schelling (1775-1854) set forth one of the most abstract notions of the organism in a grand philosophical system consisting of three principal branches: a philosophy of nature (real potency), a philosophy of the spirit (the transcendental philosophy—the ideal potency), and a philosophy of art (the potency of indifference).<sup>50</sup> In keeping with his organicist commitments, Schelling demands of his philosophical system that it exhibit the features of an organism first set forth by Aristotle in his *Poetics*: “a unified system, a system from which no part can be extracted without damaging the whole . . . and outside of which no single part can be comprehended (Stott: xlii).”

The following features of Schelling’s system are significant for the current discussion. First, the division between real and ideal constitutes a fundamental operative principle of Schelling’s philosophy. The preponderance of one or the other produces what Schelling terms a potency [*Potenz*] of difference [*Differenz*]; a balance of the two produces a potency of indifference [*Indifferenz*].<sup>51</sup> Second, Schelling posits an abstract

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<sup>49</sup> Valuable discussions of this topic appear in Nisbet, *Goethe and the Scientific Tradition*: 39ff, and in Gary Don, “Goethe and Schenker,” *In Theory Only* 10 (1988): 1-14.

<sup>50</sup> The following is based on Douglas Stott’s Introduction to Friedrich W.J. Schelling, *The Philosophy of Art*, trans. Douglas W. Stott (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989). Page number references appear in parentheses in the main body of the text.

<sup>51</sup> Concerning the translation of the terms *Potenz* and *Indifferenz*, Douglas Stott writes: “The German *Potenz* could be translated as power, exponential, or potential. The translation ‘potence’

principle that transcends the system. Depending upon the precise stage of his own philosophical thinking, Schelling defines this principle variably as “the absolute—absolute identity,” “God—Universe—All,” or “self-affirmation.” This principle infuses itself into both the ideal and the real worlds. It transcends the potences of difference and indifference, but includes them all. It is noteworthy that, even when Schelling terms this principle “God,” he refers not to a being but to an organizational principle for the universe (Stott: xxxiv).

It is within the philosophy of nature that we can begin to understand the importance of the organism to Schelling’s system as a whole. Schelling posits a tripartite structure for the real world of nature, with three potences. The real potency takes the form of matter; it involves the movement of the infinite into the finite. The ideal potency takes the form of light; in it, the finite moves into the infinite. Finally, the potency of indifference, represented in the natural world by the organism, unites these two movements and produces the mirror image of the absolute in Nature. I highlight these features of Schelling’s organism: first, the organism represents the balance between opposing worlds of real and ideal; and second, it provides a symbol of the absolute, a

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follows that of Coleridge in his *Biographia Literaria*. Schelling took the term from Giordano Bruno’s *De la causa*, but not directly. He borrowed it, already translated into German, from an appendix to the second edition of Johann Heinrich Jacobi’s *Ueber die Lehre des Spinoza* (1789). August Schlegel also used it in his lecture series *Schöne Literatur und Kunst*, though not in this strictly philosophical context. The term *Indifferenz*, as used by Schelling, implies nondifference rather than indifference in the sense of apathy or lack of concern.” Douglas W. Stott, Introduction to Schelling, *The Philosophy of Art*: xxxv, and 287, n. 13. The translator of Schelling’s *Bruno* defines indifference like this: “Only transcendental or purely metaphysical attributes—truth and beauty, identity and difference, reality and ideality, essence and form—can be indifferently related, i.e. ‘identical’ in the limited and technical sense of each member of a pair of opposites being equal and independent, while expressing the same content in irreducibly different ways.” Michael G. Vater, Introduction to Friedrich W.J. Schelling, *Bruno, or On the Natural and the Divine Principle of Things*, ed. and trans. Michael G. Vater (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1984): 18.

perpetual reminder of the transcendent organizing principle that constitutes the basis of Schelling's philosophy.

These excerpts from Goethe's and Schelling's writings demonstrate the centrality of the organism to early nineteenth-century philosophical discussions about epistemology, the nature of reality, and methods of scientific investigation. These writings also introduce significant ontological issues, specifically the organism's variable existence within a real or ideal realm. This latter issue has significant ramifications for musical analysis: an analyst's orientation within a particular philosophical tradition suggests not only a distinctive existence for the musical work but also a distinctive way of knowing or experiencing it.

#### - Organization

The last of three terms bound up with the organic concept—organization—appears in the earlier discussion of Schelling. There we learned that relational principles and organization lie at the heart of Schelling's philosophical system. In his *Ideas for a Philosophy of Nature* Schelling emphasizes the centrality of organization as a feature of organic products. Organization exists when a plant begins its life, and it is this very organizing principle that allows the plant to develop, to take in things outside it to further its own growth, and to persist in its organized state. In Schelling's words, "organization constructs itself only out of organization." In a characteristic early nineteenth-century formulation, Schelling contrasts organic with mechanical organization. In the former, the "basic character of organization is . . . that it be in reciprocity with itself, at once both

producer and product;” in the mechanical, everything depends upon a linear sequence of cause-and-effect.<sup>52</sup>

The philosophy of mind and of artistic creation set forth by Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834) provides a succinct summary of the three terms discussed so far. Coleridge developed a philosophy of mind and imagination that accounts for both the activities and the product of the poet who worked organically. Unlike his empiricist contemporaries, Coleridge posited a mind active in perception.<sup>53</sup> He predicated his philosophy on a fundamental distinction between imagination and fancy, with a further division of imagination into primary and secondary categories. While primary imagination belongs to the standard psychological equipment of every human being, it is only the artist who possesses the secondary imagination. With the power of the secondary imagination the artist unifies chaotic experience into the significant form of art.<sup>54</sup>

Reflecting his commitments to idealist philosophy, Coleridge imputes a dialectical struggle to the artist’s act of creation, a struggle involving the opposing forces of the conscious and unconscious aspects of his being. Fancy, the category to which Coleridge opposes and contrasts secondary imagination, reformulates the organic-mechanical opposition that shapes much early nineteenth-century thinking. While the poetic imagination operates organically, fancy operates mechanically. While the poetic

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<sup>52</sup> Friedrich W. J. Schelling, *Ideas for a Philosophy of Nature*, trans. Errol E. Harris and Peter Heath (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988): 31.

<sup>53</sup> This discussion is based on Michael Moran, “Coleridge, Samuel Taylor,” in *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Paul Edwards (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1967), Vols. 1, 2: 134-138.

<sup>54</sup> Jean Paul Richter’s theory of *Besonnenheit*, explored in Chapter 2, relates closely to Coleridge’s two types of imagination.

imagination functions in a symbolic mode, producing true analogues of God's creation as the instrument of genius, fancy functions only imitatively. It is the instrument not of genius but of talent. In a favorite analogue Coleridge compared the mind to a living plant.<sup>55</sup> The mind functions organically in the act of artistic creation, an act characterized by a particular principle of organization, the end result of which is an organic product.

### III. Analyses from the Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries

#### - Heinrich Christoph Koch

If the philosophical ideas discussed above suggest something of the breadth of meaning given the terms organic, organism, and organization in late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century philosophical, scientific, and critical writings, they point up as well the central role of the organism in defining the shift away from mechanical models that dominated the eighteenth century. A concurrent revolution was underway in musical analysis, with fundamental bass and rhetorical systems yielding to the newly ascendant organic model. Rameau's fundamental bass theory drew from both Cartesian and Newtonian scientific methods.<sup>56</sup> Rationalist philosophers such as Descartes, Bacon, and Leibniz shaped rhetorical models, whose primary focus lay with codifying emotional affects and with awakening particular emotions in audiences. Both Johann Mattheson

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<sup>55</sup> Coleridge presents the analogue in *The Statesman's Manual*, Appendix C. See Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Lay Sermons*, in *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, Vol. 6, ed. R.J. White (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1972): 71, *et passim*. M.H. Abrams discusses the Coleridge's analogue in *The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., Inc., 1958): 68.

<sup>56</sup> Thomas Christensen details Rameau's interaction with eighteenth-century scientific models in *Rameau and Musical Thought in the Enlightenment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

and Heinrich Christoph Koch drew heavily on rhetorical concepts for their theories about music making and composition.<sup>57</sup> Excerpts from Koch's *Versuch einer Anleitung zur Composition*, published in three volumes in 1782, 1787, and 1793, provide an effective foil for the organicist analysts I consider next.

Koch's commitment to rationalized emotional expression shows itself in the introduction to the second volume of the *Versuch*:

. . . the proper aim of music is to awaken feelings. Accepting this as a given, we now wish to consider more closely the principal aspect of this art, that is, compositions and the works arising therefrom. First, I consider it necessary to examine the conditions under which the composer can awaken feelings and which feelings he is able to arouse. Then I can proceed to my real purpose and can try to show the beginner how a composition must form in the mind of the creating composer and what it must be like in order to attain the aim of art.<sup>58</sup>

Koch's foremost belief about music's purpose is that it awakens feelings. In close conjunction with this primary belief is his conviction that these feelings behave in

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<sup>57</sup> George J. Buelow's article, "Rhetoric and Music," in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., ed. Stanley Sadie and John Tyrell, Vol. 15 (London: Macmillan, 2001): 801, details philosophical roots of rhetoric. Buelow cites sources from ancient Greece and the Renaissance that likely contributed to ideas about explaining and controlling the human passions. He believes Descartes' *Les Passions de l'âme* to be the most significant source more nearly contemporaneous to the eighteenth century. Another important treatment of the subject appears in Patrick McCreless, "Music and Rhetoric," in *The Cambridge History of Western Music Theory*, ed. Thomas Christensen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

<sup>58</sup> Heinrich Christoph Koch, *Introductory Essay on Composition*, Vol. 2 (1787), in *Aesthetics and the Art of Musical Composition in the German Enlightenment*, ed. Thomas Christensen and Nancy Kovaleff Baker (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995): 144, 145. Additional page number references to this translation appear in parentheses in the main body of the text. ["Empfindungen zu erwecken ist also auch die eigentliche Absicht der Tonkunst, und dieses ist zugleich der Gesichtspunkt, aus welchem wir anjezt den vorzüglichsten Theil dieser Kunst, nämlich die Composition und die dadurch entstehenden Producte etwas näher betrachten wollen. Ehe ich aber zu meinem eigentlichen Zwecke gehen und versuchen kann, dem angehenden Tonsetzer zu zeigen, wie ein Tonstück in der Seele des schaffenden Componisten entstehen, und wie es beschaffen sein muss, wenn es die Absicht der Kunst erreichen soll, halte ich es für nöthig, erst zu untersuchen, unter welchen Umständen der Componist Empfindungen erwecken kann, und welche Empfindungen es sind, die er zu erwecken vermögend ist." Heinrich Christoph Koch, *Versuch einer Anleitung zur Composition*, Vol. 2 (Georg Olms: Hildesheim, 1969): 16, 17.]

rational ways. They can be identified and described, and it is possible to predict which feelings can be aroused and by what means. These assumptions comprise the basis of his pedagogical method for beginning composers. In addition, they give voice to central doctrines of rationalist views of art.

As Koch moves to the specifics of composition, he proposes a three-stage process for the young composer: the plan [*Plan*], the realization [*Ausführung*], and the elaboration [*Ausarbeitung*]. He describes the plan like this:

. . . we must understand by the plan of a composition the main ideas of the piece already connected with one another which together present themselves to the composer as a complete whole, combined with its principal harmonic features. . . . His plan is completed as soon as he has thought out how the harmony is to contribute to the effect, in other words, as soon as he has decided on the main features or the movements and figures of notes which are to support this envisaged whole in the accompanying parts.<sup>59</sup>

An aria by Carl Heinrich Graun (1703/4-1759), stripped of details acquired (according to Koch) through the processes of realization and elaboration, exemplifies the initial stage. Noteworthy in this description is Koch's emphasis on the "complete whole," and his inclusion of harmonic features that "contribute to the effect." The effect the young composer strives for is the arousal of particular feelings in his audience.

The process cited above is the ideal one. Another process also exists, which Koch describes like this:

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<sup>59</sup> Koch: 161. ["Und wir werden finden, dass wir unter der Anlage eines Tonstückes verstehen, die schon mit einander in Verbindung gebrachten Hauptgedanken des Satzes, die sich zusammen dem Tonsetzer als vollkommenes Ganzes darstellen, nebst den harmonischen Hauptzügen desselben, verstehen müssen. . . . nun ist seine Anlage vollendet, sobald er sich die Wirkung ausgedacht hat, welche die Harmonie dabei thun soll, das heisst, sobald er die Hauptzüge oder die Bewegungen und Figuren der Noten bestimmt hat, die dieses erfundene Ganze in den begleitenden Stimmen unterstützen sollen." Koch, *Versuch einer Anleitung zur Composition*: 53, 54.]

The composer working in the fire of imagination may be fortunate enough to invent the main ideas of his piece directly in such an order and connection that these different ideas, as it were, immediately appear to him as a complete whole. . . . If the composer is able to invent his plan in this way, then he has great serendipity with regard to the effectiveness of his genius and his inspiration. But . . . when the composer hits upon no such auspicious moment, the situation is entirely different. . . . Often many ideas adequate to the aim of the whole occur to him at the same time, making either their selection or connection more difficult for him. . . . Here the working composer often meets an unpleasant difficulty which slows down the completion of his plan. . . . The composer is obliged to wait for the lucky moment in which he finds the thought which enables him to connect to his entire satisfaction the ideas which beforehand would not let themselves be joined appropriately without offending his sensitivities.<sup>60</sup>

Koch's description makes clear the importance of the "fire of imagination," the "genius" and "inspiration" to compose quickly and with ease. All of these terms figure in nineteenth-century explanations of musical composition but in vastly different philosophical frameworks. If these faculties do not operate optimally, then the composer plays a waiting game, hoping to chance upon the "lucky moment" in which the solution to his dilemma appears.

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<sup>60</sup> Koch: 161, 162. ["Der in dem Feuer der Einbildungskraft arbeitende Tonsetzer ist entweder so glücklich, die Hauptgedanken seines Stücks so gleich in derjenigen Ordnung und Verbindung zu erfinden, dass ihm diese verschiedene Gedanken die er verbindet, gleichsam unmittelbar mit der Erfindung selbst als ein vollkommenes Ganzes erscheinen. . . . Ist der Tonsetzer im Stande auf diese Art seine Anlage zu erfinden, so hat er in Rücksicht der Würksamkeit seines Genies und der Begeisterung den glücklichsten Zeitpunkt getroffen. . . . aber, wenn der Componist keinen so glücklichsten Zeitpunkt trifft, verhält er sich ganz anders. . . . ohne dass sich ihm zugleich mehrere ähnliche, und der Absicht des Ganzen entsprechende Gedanken zudrängen sollten, die ihm entweder die Wahl oder die Verbindung derselben erschweren. . . . Hier zeigt sich oft dem arbeitenden Componisten eine unangenehme Schwierigkeit, welche die Vollendung seiner Anlage verzögert. . . . Es finden sich also in diesem Zustande bei allem Ueberflusse der Gedanken zugleich ein wirklicher Mangel, der den Tonsetzer nöthigt auf den glücklichen Augenblick zu warten, welcher ihn denjenigen Gedanken finden lässt, vermittelt welchem er nun diejenigen mit völliger Befriedigung seines Gefühls verbinden kann, die sich vorhin ohne Beleidigung seines feinen Gefühls nicht vollkommen passend vereinigen lassen wollten." Koch, *Versuch einer Anleitung zur Composition*: 54-56.]

These descriptions are all drawn from the introduction to the second volume of Koch's *Versuch*. He devotes the remainder of the volume to "The mechanical rules of melody," those aspects of composition for which he has developed pedagogically appropriate principles and directives. These mechanical rules comprise the centerpiece of his method.

The organic model supplied analysts with a new vocabulary and repertory of images. These helped them to account for the initial moments of compositional process and for relations within the finished musical work, aspects that had previously been referred to only obliquely. Koch, for instance, when confronted with the need to explain the very earliest stages of composition, remarked that it is a matter "which is better felt than described, and in connection with which one runs the risk of being misunderstood." He goes so far as to say that he would prefer to pass over the matter in silence, though he ultimately refers to it as a "spiritual condition [*Seelenzustande*]," a moment of "inspiration [*Begeisterung*]." <sup>61</sup> Writers like Lobe and Ul'ibishev, to whom I turn now, adapted organic models of artistic creation to account for precisely these aspects of music's genesis. Their inability to account for these moments rationally counted not as a pointed challenge but rather as a corroboration of the organic philosophy to which they subscribed.

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<sup>61</sup> Koch: 159, 160. Notably, Koch does not use the adjective *geistig*, which figures so centrally in nineteenth-century writings about music. ["Diese Frage ist weit schwerer zu beantworten als die vorhergehende, weil sie sich besser empfinden als beschreiben lässt, und bey welcher man sich, indem man davon spricht, leicht der Gefahr aussetzt missverstanden zu werden. Ich würde daher diesen Gegenstand lieber mit Stillschweigen übergehen; . . ." "Von dem besondern Seelenzustande aber, in welchem sich der Componist bey der Erfindung seiner Tonstücke zu setzen suchen muss, und den man mit dem Ausdrücke Begeisterung zu bezeichnen pflegt. . . ." Koch, *Versuch einer Anleitung zur Composition*: 51, 71.]

- Johann Christian Lobe

Johann Christian Lobe's analysis of Beethoven's String Quartet in A Major, Op. 18 No. 2/I, appears in his *Lehrbuch der musikalischen Composition* (1850). Like Koch's *Versuch*, Lobe's *Lehrbuch* is directed to beginning composers. The following passages from his introduction to the analysis present central elements of Lobe's organic theory. Underlined phrases in the quotations highlight Lobe's organic terminology: "germ-cell," "birth," "development," and "brought into existence."

(a) No composer can invent his works other than—bar-by-bar. One bar springs up in his imagination, a second adds itself to it, then a third and so it proceeds until the entire piece is born. \*\*This is, however, in no way to be understood as if it happens with one procedure—the composer invents and writes in score the entire piece at once, in complete form from beginning to end. He needs rather many different procedures one after another for his creations. Indeed, he has available to him certain mechanical means which come to the aid of his spiritual [*geistig*] operations and make them easier. Like all artists, painters, sculptors, and so forth, the composer first searches for and sketches individual ideas, gathers and combines them, and gradually brings the entire work together.

(b) I shall now indicate to the student the way in which a composition is invented and brought into existence, from the first and tiniest germ right through to full development and execution; and I shall show him the various processes as they, as a rule, follow on one from another. . . . [The pupil] will be able technically to form complete pieces out of minute germ cells—which for now is the main purpose of our course of instruction.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> (a) "Es kann . . . kein Komponist seine Werke anders erfinden, als—taktweise. Ein Takt entsteht in seiner Phantasie, daran hängt sich ein zweiter, dritter, und so geht es fort, bis das ganze Tonstück geboren. \*\*Dies ist aber keineswegs so zu verstehen, als geschähe das mit einer Prozedur, als erfinde und schreibe der Komponist das ganze Tonstück gleich in vollendeter Gestalt von Anfang bis zu Ende in Partitur. Er braucht vielmehr zu seinen Schöpfungen gar viele und verschiedene Prozeduren nach einander, ja, er hat dabei selbst gewisse mechanische Mittel, welche seinen geistigen Operationen zu Hülfe kommen und sie erleichtern. Wie alle Künstler, Maler, Bildhauer u.s.w., sucht und skizzirt auch der Komponist zunächst erst einzelne Züge, sammelt, verbindet sie dann, und bringt so nach und nach das ganze Werk zusammen." (b) "Ich will nun dem Schüler die Erfindungs- und Entstehungsweise eines Tonstückes, vom ersten, kleinsten Keim an bis zur vollen Entwicklung und Ausführung hin, andeuten und die

Lobe's preface to his Beethoven analysis adduces organic images to explain the very earliest stages of composition. In Lobe's formulation, the piece comes into being in a manner that resembles that of organisms: it begins its life as a germ cell and, after passing through various stages of growth, is born.<sup>63</sup> In the first quotation the composer seems almost to be a surrogate for an idea that has a life of its own. Lobe claims that the first bar springs up in the composer's imagination and that other bars then add themselves to it. For Lobe, it is the individual measure that provides the starting point—a drastic change from Koch's *Plan*, which lays out the large-scale dimensions of the piece at the beginning of the compositional process.<sup>64</sup> In the second quotation Lobe qualifies this beginning as "the first and tiniest germ."

Lobe's explicit reference to birth, which marks the end of the process, evokes an image of the composer's imagination as a womb in which the piece undergoes its period of gestation.<sup>65</sup> At least two interpretations of this birth process and its eventual results are viable. One interpretation suggests an organic process that is perceptible in the piece itself; another puts forward a process of invention that takes place in the composer's

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verschiedenen Prozeduren zeigen, wie sie in der Regel auf einander folgen. . . . er wird aus geringen Keimen ganze Tonstücke technisch bilden können, was für jetzt noch allein der Zweck des bisherigen Lehrganges ist." Johann Christian Lobe, *Lehrbuch der musikalischen Komposition*, Vol. 1 (Leipzig: B&H, 1850): 333, 334. Unless otherwise noted, translations are by the present author.

<sup>63</sup> Lobe's description mixes biological and botanical metaphors: the German word "Keim" has associations in botany of "seed" or "bud," also "shoot or sprout"; images of birth ("geboren") recall the human or animal world.

<sup>64</sup> Ian Bent's article, "The 'Compositional Process' in Music Theory 1713-1850," *Music Analysis* 3 (1984): 29-55, provides a valuable discussion of the different processes Koch and Lobe ascribe to the composer.

<sup>65</sup> Ruth Solie describes the composer as a midwife. See "The Living Work": 155. I find the image of the womb compelling, nevertheless, since the composer does not merely assist in the birth. Instead, his mind provides the place in which the growth takes place and from which the piece is born.

imagination and that finally “gives birth” to the piece. Lobe adopts both, but seems more comfortable with the former. The description of the birth process holds only a brief moment in his description. Furthermore, since his intended audience is the competent amateur, and since analysis finds so central a place in his method, I believe that the former comes closer to his meaning. The last statement of quotation (a) confirms such an interpretation: “Like all artists . . . the composer first searches for and sketches individual ideas, gathers and combines them, and gradually brings the work together.” The sketches to which Lobe refers serve as material traces of this process.<sup>66</sup> The process of analysis then reveals these significant unifying features.

The second quotation, with its focus on development from the tiny germ cell to the final product, resonates with Goethe’s interest in metamorphosis and, especially, his life-long preoccupation with botany. In the *Metamorphosis of Plants*, Goethe posits a step-by-step process of development, “from the first seed leaves to the last formation of the fruit.” In his discussion of seed leaves Goethe observes “the successive steps in plant growth,” the starting point of which is “the plant as it develops from the seed.”<sup>67</sup> Lobe, too, sets forth a compositional process that begins with a tiny germ cell and then proceeds according to clearly defined stages, each of which he discusses in the remainder of his analysis.

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<sup>66</sup> Chapter 3 discusses Lobe’s use of a small collection of Beethoven’s sketches and the impact these had on his method. See pp. 135-142.

<sup>67</sup> Goethe, “The Metamorphosis of Plants,” in *Goethe’s Collected Works*, Vol. 12: 76, 77. Goethe published this essay in 1790. [“. . . denn sie ist es, welche sich von den ersten Samenblättern bis zur letzten Ausbildung der Frucht immer stufenweise wirksam bemerken lässt. . . .”]; and “Da wir die Stufenfolge des Pflanzen-Wachstums zu beobachten uns vorgenommen haben, so richten wir unsere Aufmerksamkeit sogleich in dem Augenblicke auf die Pflanze, da sie sich aus dem Samenkorn entwickelt.” Goethe, “Die Metamorphose der Pflanzen,” in *Goethes Werke*, Vol. 13: 64-66.] The resonance between Lobe’s language and Goethe’s thought is no coincidence, since Lobe was a member of Goethe’s circle in Weimar. See Bent, *Music Analysis in the Nineteenth Century*, Vol. 1: 199.

The second half of the first quotation, at the passage beginning with the asterisks, marks the point at which Lobe adopts a new mode of explanation. He begins by describing the initial invention and birth process as something propelled forward with its own life force, something *geistig* occurring without the composer's conscious intervention. Now he shifts to a much-demystified process that consists of mechanical procedures. These Lobe sets forth as an eminently practical series of exercises that "come to the aid of [the composer's] *geistig* operations and make them easier." The exercises consist of a series of sketches. The student first writes individual motifs and then, step-by-step, he draws the separate musical ideas together into a whole. Lobe's invocation of mechanical procedures harks back to eighteenth-century models of artistic creation, recalling someone like Koch, the centerpiece of whose method consisted of mechanical rules of melody. It also gives voice to the Goethean motto Lobe inscribed on the frontispiece of his *Lehrbuch*:

There is much more in art that is *positive*, hence that *can be taught* and *passed on*, than is generally believed. And there are a great many such advantageous mechanical devices [*mechanische Vortheile*] by which truly *artistic effects* can be produced (assuming of course the presence of a creative mind). Once these little artistic tricks of the trade are known, much is child's play which outwardly appears miraculous.<sup>68</sup>

Lobe's description and method engage both the ideal/real and the organic/mechanical oppositions discussed above. When describing the initial, organic stages of composition, Lobe invokes the spiritual or intellectual: the initial bar arises in

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<sup>68</sup> Lobe printed this paragraph—taken from Goethe—as a motto for the beginning of his *Lehrbuch*. I have taken it from Bent's *Music Analysis in the Nineteenth Century*, Vol. 1: 210, 211, n. 7. ["Es ist weit mehr Positives, das heisst Lehrbares und Überlieferbares in der Kunst, als man gewöhnlich glaubt; und der mechanischen Vortheile, wodurch man die geistigsten Effekte (verstehet sich immer mit Geist) hervorbringen kann, sind sehr viele. Wenn man diese kleinen Kunstgriffe weiss, ist vieles ein Spiel, was nach wunder was aussieht. . . ." Goethe, *Italienische Reise*, in *Goethes Werke*, Vol. 11: 445.]

the composer's "*Phantasie* (imagination)," and he calls the initial stages of composition "*geistigen Operationen* [spiritual/mental operations]."<sup>69</sup> In nineteenth-century idealist and transcendentalist philosophy, the terms *Phantasie* and *geistig* carried with them rich, multifarious associations. *Phantasie* denotes a higher, more creative faculty than *Einbildung* (imagination), since it moves beyond the reproductive and mechanically associative to a force capable of "making all parts into a whole. . . ." The resonance with Coleridge's theory of artistic creation—a theory which depends upon a mind active and creative, a mind capable of recreating and synthesizing its raw materials into an effective whole—is obvious. "*Geist*" encompasses meanings ranging from overtly Christian associations (*der heilige Geist*), to a spirit, demon, or ghost, to mind or intellect, to the mental attitude, spirit, genius, or temper of an age (*Zeitgeist*). The adjectival form used by Lobe generally requires a translation as "spiritual."<sup>70</sup> It intersects with a prominent nineteenth-century theory of artistic creation explicated by, among others, Schelling, Coleridge, and Schopenhauer, which attributed to the organic process of composition a spiritual quality.<sup>71</sup> Lobe's explication of compositional process thus makes explicit the link between the organic and the spiritual.

In his pedagogical method Lobe describes what he calls mechanical stages of composition. These "can be acquired through teaching and practice."<sup>72</sup> For these stages the student engages in a hands-on process that requires numerous sketches and an

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<sup>69</sup> From Hegel, on "memory, recollection and imagination," and "spirit," in Michael Inwood, *A Hegel Dictionary*, Blackwell Philosopher Dictionaries (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1992): 186-87, 274.

<sup>70</sup> "Spirit," in Michael Inwood, *A Hegel Dictionary*: 274.

<sup>71</sup> These writers receive a full discussion in Chapter 3.

<sup>72</sup> Lobe, in Bent, *Music Analysis in the Nineteenth Century*, Vol. 1: 211.

eventual drawing together of the materials assembled. This kind of procedure mirrors very closely Coleridge's notion of fancy—a kind of assembly-line process relying on aggregative and associative powers that produce only a juxtaposition of parts rather than necessary connections between them.<sup>73</sup> Uliĭbishev, to whom I turn now, makes no such concession to mechanics.

- Alexander Uliĭbishev

Alexander Uliĭbishev (1794-1858) discusses Mozart's "Haydn" quartets in the analytic section of his large-scale Mozart biography, published in 1843. In this multi-volume work Uliĭbishev seeks not to instruct composers, as do Koch and Lobe, but rather to provide serious musicians with a thorough description of Mozart's music that moves beyond "the facts" and "tedious recitation of minutiae."<sup>74</sup> The result was a three-volume work, of which the last two volumes constitute the *partie analytique*.

The following passage describes the procedure for composing a string quartet, as envisioned by Uliĭbishev:

You start out, I suppose, in a melancholic or sad or downhearted frame of mind, or in a state of contrary feelings, or with whatever else you care to choose. There is a motif that presents itself at first simply and unified—that is, as a melody. The idea/feeling travels. It travels through the psychological mode within the limits in which it originated. On the way it encounters other themes which become principle or accessory ideas, according to the degree of sympathy

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<sup>73</sup> Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, in *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, Vol. 7, ed. James Engell and W. Jackson Bate (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1983): 304, 305. M.H. Abrams discusses this aspect of Coleridge's theory in *The Mirror and the Lamp*: 168.

<sup>74</sup> These were complaints Uliĭbishev leveled at Georg Nissen, an early biographer of Mozart, whose work was published in 1828. Uliĭbishev encountered Nissen's work in 1830. See Bent, *Music Analysis in the Nineteenth Century*, Vol. 1: 281.

that one recognizes in them with the mother idea,<sup>75</sup> and sometimes according to the gravity of dissent that seems to place them in opposition with it. After these varied aspects, modifications, nuances, commentaries, episodes or contradictions of the underlying psychological fundamental have passed successively before the mind,<sup>76</sup> the mind associates them and compares them. From that time on, it is necessary to resort to the contrapuntal style. Musical unity stops being simple. The four parts individualize themselves; they transform themselves into interlocutors. . . .<sup>77</sup>

The compositional process Ul'ibishev describes—a process he imputes to composers generally, but especially to Mozart—downplays active participation from the composer, at least in the initial stages. As with Lobe, the compositional process begins with the motif: “Voilà le motif qui se présente. . . .”<sup>78</sup> Ul'ibishev's account, also like Lobe's, gives the impression of a motif with a life of its own. In Ul'ibishev's description the mind enters briefly, to compare and associate the ideas that have arisen of their own accord. Immediately afterward, however, when the contrapuntal style becomes necessary, the parts once again operate independently of the composer's volition. It is the parts themselves that engage in discourse and not the composer who creates the discourse.

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<sup>75</sup> Ian Bent translates this as “original idea.” See *Music Analysis in the Nineteenth Century*, Vol. 1: 289, n. 24.

<sup>76</sup> “l'âme” can be translated soul, spirit, heart or mind.

<sup>77</sup> “Vous partez, je suppose, d'une disposition à la mélancolie, à la tristesse, au découragement, ou d'une disposition aux sentimens contraires, ou de telle autre qu'il vous plaira de choisir. Voilà le motif qui se présente d'abord simple et un, c'est-à-dire en mélodie. L'idée-sentiment voyage; elle parcourt le mode psychologique dans les limites duquel elle a pris naissance; elle rencontre en chemin d'autres thèmes qui deviennent des idées principales ou accessoires, selon le degré de sympathie qu'on leur reconnaît avec l'idée-mère et, quelquefois encore, selon la gravité du dissentiment qui semble les mettre en opposition avec elle. Après que ces divers aspects, modifications, nuances, commentaires, épisodes ou contradictions de la donnée psychologique fondamentale, ont passé successivement devant l'âme, l'âme les associe et les compare. Dès lors, nécessité de recourir au style contrapontique. L'unité musicale cesse d'être simple; les quatre parties s'individualisent; elles se changent en interlocuteurs.” Ul'ibishev, “Les quatuors de violon dédiés à Haydn,” *Nouvelle biographie de Mozart*, Vol. 3 (Moscow: August Semen, 1843): 8.

<sup>78</sup> Lobe writes: “One bar springs up in [the composer's] imagination.” Cited on p. 33, above.

Another aspect of Ul'ibishev's organic theory describes the organic relations of the finished product. He writes:

All of [the ideas] that Mozart has allied seem to have been made the one for the other. Their association, as well as their development, offers something organic. They relate among themselves as do the leaves on a tree to its branches, and [the branches] to the trunk that created them. This is the aesthetic necessity of which we spoke a little while ago. . . .<sup>79</sup>

Here Ul'ibishev's language resonates with Plato's analogy from the *Phaedrus*, where Plato compares a speech to a living creature (see p. 4, above). For both writers the organic quality describes an effective relationship among the parts. Like the style of oratory that Plato advocates, the ideas that Mozart puts together "always seem to have been meant for each other." Ul'ibishev refers here to the contrapuntal relationship of melodic motifs. For Ul'ibishev the hallmark of good quartet writing is the composer's ability to write motivic material that can pass fluidly from melodic to contrapuntal or accompanimental function.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> "Toutes celles que Mozart a alliées semblent avoir été faites l'une pour l'autre; leur association, de même que leur développement, offrent quelque chose d'organique; elles se rapportent entre elles comme les feuilles d'un arbre à ses branches et celles-ci au tronc qui les a produites. Voilà cette nécessité esthétique dont nous parlions tout à l'heure. . . ." Ul'ibishev, "Les quatuors de violon dédiés à Haydn": 18.

<sup>80</sup> Ul'ibishev on counterpoint: "But as we have remarked again and again, counterpoint, the element that brings strength and durability to music, represents our faculty of intelligence in musical works of art; it is logic in music. Moreover, we can see immediately that the works of Beethoven do not display to the extent that those of Mozart do that quality of aesthetic inevitability whereby the work of the contrapuntist appears to take shape of its own accord, as if there were no other way in which it could be done." Translation from Bent, *Music Analysis in the Nineteenth Century*, Vol. 1: 294, 295. ["Mais le contrepoint, l'élément fort et durable, est, comme nous l'avons déjà répété tant de fois, le représentant de l'intelligence dans les productions de notre art: il est la logique musicale. Aussi, voyons-nous d'abord que les oeuvres de Beethoven n'offrent pas au même degré que celles de Mozart, ce caractère d'une nécessité esthétique, en vertu de laquelle il nous semble que le travail du contrapontiste s'est arrangé de lui-même et qu'il ne pouvait autrement s'arranger." Alexander Dmitriyevich Ul'ibishev, "Les quatuors de violon dédiés à Haydn:" 15, 16.]

Uliūbishev's tree analogy supplies a concrete organic image to represent visually the relationships of the parts within the finished quartet. Invoking the tree places Uliūbishev's work in a music-critical line established by E.T.A. Hoffmann in his famous review of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony.<sup>81</sup> Situated within broader philosophical trends, Uliūbishev's appropriation of the tree as an analogy intersects with a provocative strain of early nineteenth-century criticism in which the tree became a potent symbol of the indwelling force or spirit that was believed to permeate the universe. Herder adduces precisely this image in his *Gott: Einige Gespräche* (see discussion above, p. 22). Thus, when writers like Uliūbishev compared works of art—Mozart's string quartets, in this case—to the tree, the terms of the comparison lay not with a living tree but with the living universe itself.<sup>82</sup>

The arguments and data presented so far demonstrate that organicism is a much more richly textured concept than Kerman's critique admits. Exploring the meanings of the key terms "organic," "organism," and "organization" in early nineteenth-century philosophical systems reveals tremendously powerful and far-reaching applications for these terms. Furthermore, these meanings share a significant common thread: namely, consistent emphasis on understanding the organism as a dynamic system of life-giving and sometimes opposing forces. Such study reveals too a dynamic field of meaning for these terms and for the concept to which they adhere. A close reading of selected musical analyses, finally, demonstrates not only distinctive content for each but also varying levels of success in integrating the analogy with the method. In Lobe's writing

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<sup>81</sup> Hoffmann's metaphor of the tree receives a full discussion in Chapter 2.

<sup>82</sup> James Benziger, "Organic Unity: Leibniz to Coleridge," *PMLA* 66 (1951): 34.

the exigencies of compositional instruction impinge heavily upon the mystical appeal of the organic image. Ulibishev, meanwhile, argues for the transcendent character of these works, overtly thumbing his nose at the detailed technical description admitted by Lobe's pedagogically driven approach. Ulibishev claims:

All criticism is reduced to a stunned silence before these works: there is nothing that can be said about them in words, and they resist all attempts at factual analysis.<sup>83</sup>

Finally, specific appropriations of the organic metaphor indicate each writer's commitment to distinct philosophical streams. These philosophical streams focus the discussion in the ensuing chapters.

#### IV. Three Case Studies

The main body of the dissertation consists of three case studies that examine selected writings of E.T.A. Hoffmann, Gustav Nottebohm, and Heinrich Schenker.<sup>84</sup> I have chosen these writers on the basis of criteria common to all three, and on the basis of

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<sup>83</sup> He continues like this: "All the same, I would know perfectly well how to circumvent this resistance if, as a contributor to some musical journal paid so much a page, I had to give a detailed account of the quartets of Mozart. There is a formula for the production of such articles. First comes the key of the movement, then the tempo and time signature; then its aesthetic character, indicated by an epithet or two, selected at random if suitable words do not come to mind; a phrase of melody here, a bit of the bass line there are picked out and quoted." Ulibishev, in Bent, *Music Analysis in the Nineteenth Century*, Vol. 1: 299, 300. [La critique s'arrête pleine de découragement devant ces ouvrages où il n'y a rien à critiquer et dont le caractère se refuse si complètement d'ailleurs à toute analyse positive. Je saurais bien pourtant me tirer d'affaire, si collaborateur, à tant la page, de quelque feuille musicale, j'avais à rendre un compte détaillé des quatuors de Mozart. Il y a une recette connue pour la fabrication de ces sortes d'articles. On indique le ton, le mouvement et le rythme du morceau; on en désigne le caractère esthétique par une ou plusieurs épithètes prises au hasard, lorsque la langue n'en fournit point de convenables; on relève une phrase de chant par-ci, un trait de basse par-là; . . ." Ulibishev, "Les quatuors de violon dédiés à Haydn": 24.]

<sup>84</sup> For an overview of the activities of each of these writers, see especially the second edition of *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. L. Mace, <<http://www.grovemusic.com>>; Gerhard Allroggen, "E.T.A. Hoffmann"; Douglas Johnson, "Gustav Nottebohm"; and Robert Snarrenberg, "Heinrich Schenker".

criteria unique to each. The unique criteria will become evident in the chapters devoted to each.

Common to all three writers are the groundbreaking character of their work in their own historical moment and the continuing importance of their work for current scholarship. E.T.A. Hoffmann's influence spread in large part through the medium of print. From 1809 through 1815 he served as a regular and widely read contributor to the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*. His reviews of Beethoven's works published therein contributed powerfully to contemporaneous assessments of Beethoven's music. Furthermore, his imaginative stories exerted a profound influence on composers of later generations, prominent among them Schumann and Wagner.

Nottebohm worked in Vienna from 1846 through 1882 as a teacher of theory and piano, as a composer and, in his last years, as a central member of an elite group of music scholars. Projects in which Nottebohm was involved include: the revised edition of Beethoven's works (1862-1865); a thematic catalogue of Beethoven's works (1868); a Schubert thematic catalogue (1868); and an edition of Mozart's works (begun in 1875). For present-day scholars, Nottebohm's most original and lasting contribution lies with his study of Beethoven's sketches and manuscripts.

Heinrich Schenker's contributions to his contemporary intellectual and musical milieu and to present-day scholarship require little introduction. His work connects directly with Nottebohm's by virtue of their mutual interest in studies involving sketches and manuscripts. Schenker's considerable and sustained interest in the music of Beethoven carries forward the commitments of both Hoffmann and Nottebohm.

## Chapter 2:           **Organicism in E.T.A. Hoffmann's Review of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony**

Theories of organic artistic creation granted theorists access to the composer's mind, or at least allowed them to believe that they possessed this power of observation. While a late eighteenth-century writer like Koch described the earliest stages of composition with both reverence and respectful distance, for writers of the mid nineteenth century these mysterious moments marking the inception of a musical work became a principal focus of explanation. E.T.A. Hoffmann is a central figure in the development of these ideas. As I noted earlier, Hoffmann's reviews of Beethoven's music enjoyed wide readership in his lifetime and influenced several generations of composers, Schumann and Wagner prominent among them. These same reviews continue to figure prominently in contemporary scholarly discourse as central documents in the early reception history of Beethoven's works.<sup>1</sup>

In the context of the current study, Hoffmann's review of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony records a significant early attempt to incorporate into music analytic discourse the organic imagery that already proliferated in contemporary literary theory and philosophy. The review also documents valuable traces of Hoffmann's intersections with prominent contemporaneous philosophical trends, central among them the sublime. We shall find in the course of this investigation that, forward-looking as Hoffmann appeared

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<sup>1</sup> See, for instance, Ian Bent, "Plato-Beethoven: A Hermeneutics for Nineteenth-Century Music?" *Indiana Theory Review* 16 (1995): 1-33; Stephen Rumph, "A Kingdom Not of This World: The Political Context of E.T.A. Hoffmann's Beethoven Criticism," *19th-Century Music* 19 (1995): 50-67; Scott Burnham, Review of *E.T.A. Hoffmann's Musical Writings*, ed. David Charlton, *19th-Century Music* 14 (1991): 286-96; and Carl Dahlhaus, "E.T.A. Hoffmanns Beethoven-Kritik und die Ästhetik des Erhabenen," *Archiv für Musikwissenschaft* 38 (1981): 79-92.

to be with his introduction of an organic interpretive apparatus into his music-analytic discourse, he remained with one foot firmly planted in the eighteenth century. Hailed by the editor of the recently published revised edition of *Strunk's Source Readings* as a "standard-bearer of German Romanticism,"<sup>2</sup> Hoffmann's writings show yet a deep and pervasive debt to eighteenth-century philosophical systems, especially that set forth by Immanuel Kant.

### I. Hoffmann's Fifth Symphony Review

Quotations from Hoffmann's review of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, published in the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* (henceforth *AmZ*) in July 1810, serve as a starting point for the discussion.<sup>3</sup> The review follows standard *AmZ* format, falling into three sections. The first, which serves as primary focus here, is devoted to an explication of aesthetic theories, with special attention given to the instrumental music of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven. Concerning Beethoven's instrumental music Hoffmann writes:<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Ruth Solie, ed., *Strunk's Source Readings in Music History*, rev. ed., vol. 6, *The Nineteenth Century* (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1998): 151.

<sup>3</sup> The review was Hoffmann's second piece of writing to be published in the journal. The first—a fantastic story of musical composition titled *Ritter Gluck*—appeared in 1809. Pauline Watts discusses Romantic imagery in Hoffmann's *Ritter Gluck* in *Music: The Medium of the Metaphysical in E.T.A. Hoffmann* (Amsterdam: Rodopi NV, 1972): 25-28. Hoffmann received copies of both the orchestral parts (in published form) and the score in manuscript copy in July 1809. He sent in the review on May 6, 1810. Friedrich Rochlitz published it in two parts in the July 4 and 11 editions of the journal. See David Charlton, ed., *E.T.A. Hoffmann's Musical Writings: Kreisleriana, The Poet and the Composer, Music Criticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989): 234.

<sup>4</sup> Much has been written about Hoffmann's praise of absolute music. A detailed historical discussion of the concept appears in Carl Dahlhaus, *The Idea of Absolute Music*, trans. Roger Lustig (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1989).

Beethoven's instrumental music opens to us *the realm of the mighty and the immeasurable*. . . . Beethoven's music sets in motion *the machinery of awe, of fear, of terror, of pain*, and awakens that infinite yearning which is the essence of romanticism [emphasis added].<sup>5</sup>

Later in the same paragraph Hoffmann engages more general aesthetic issues central to discussions of music and other arts at the time: unity, and inner coherence. His metaphor for the concept, not uncommon for the time, is a tree. He writes:

Just as our aesthetic overseers have often complained about the complete lack of *true unity* and *inner coherence* in *Shakespeare*, and only a more profound look shows *the beautiful tree*, buds and leaves, the blossoms and fruits as shooting forth from one seed, so only the most penetrating study of the inner structure of Beethoven's music unfolds the high rational awareness [*hohe Besonnenheit*] of the master, which is inseparable from true genius and nourished by the continuing study of the art [emphasis added].<sup>6</sup>

Italicized expressions in the two quotations draw attention to key terms, concepts and persons with which I shall be concerned. First is “the realm of the mighty and immeasurable,” the “machinery of awe, of fear, of terror, of pain”—all terms which resonate forcefully with the eighteenth and early nineteenth-century concept of the

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<sup>5</sup> “So öffnet uns auch Beethovens Instrumental-Musik das Reich des Ungeheueren und Unermesslichen. . . . Beethovens Musik bewegt die Hebel des Schauers, der Furcht, des Entsetzens, des Schmerzes, und erweckt jene unendliche Sehnsucht, die das Wesen der Romantik ist.” E.T.A. Hoffmann: [Unsigned Review], *AmZ* 12 (1809/10), No. 40 (4 July 1810), cols. 630-42, No. 41 (11 July 1810), cols. 652-9. All references to this review are from Stefan Kunze, *Ludwig van Beethoven: Die Werke im Spiegel seiner Zeit. Gesammelte Konzertberichte und Rezensionen bis 1830* (Laaber: Laaber Verlag, 1987): 101. Unless otherwise noted, translations are by the present author.

<sup>6</sup> “Wie ästhetische Messkünstler im Shakespeare oft über gänzlichen Mangel wahrer Einheit und inneren Zusammenhanges geklagt haben, und nur dem tiefern Blick ein schöner Baum, Knospen und Blätter, Blüthen und Früchte aus einem Keim treibend, erwächst: so entfaltet auch nur ein sehr tiefes Eingehen in die innere Structur Beethovenscher Musik die hohe Besonnenheit des Meisters, welche von dem wahren Genie unzertrennlich ist und von dem anhaltenden Studium der Kunst genährt wird.” Kunze, *Ludwig van Beethoven*: 102. I have given a common translation for *hohe Besonnenheit* as “high rational awareness.” In general, however, I leave it untranslated. At the end of the chapter I devote an entire section to an in-depth study of its meanings (pp. 108-125).

sublime. Second is true unity and inner coherence, both of which figure centrally in organicist explanations of art. Third is the “beautiful tree, bud and leaves, blossom and fruit as springing forth from the same seed.” In the early decades of the nineteenth century the tree frequently served as a metaphor or symbol for organic processes, but it also figured prominently in pantheistic religious explanation of the unity that inhered both in nature and in the universe as a whole. Fourth is Shakespeare, a literary figure predating both Beethoven and Hoffmann by several centuries but who engendered some of the same reception issues as did Beethoven in early nineteenth-century Germany. Finally is “*hohe Besonnenheit*,” a concept which embodies a more specific belief about compositional process that intersects closely with issues raised in the section on Shakespeare.

## II. The Sublime

The sublime is an aesthetic category that accounts for experiences that challenge and even exceed human perceptual and imaginative capacities.<sup>7</sup> Other ideas central to an understanding of the sublime include: first, essential tenets of the sublime directly oppose neoclassical aesthetic ideals of form and beauty; second, the sublime engenders a paradoxical emotional response that alternates between attraction and repulsion; and finally, the sublime carries with it religious connotations—an especially important quality

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<sup>7</sup> These ideas are summarized from R.W. Hepburn, “The Sublime,” in *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy*, ed. Ted Honderich (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995): 858.

for the forthcoming age of romanticism in which the fine arts, especially music, became an increasingly prominent medium for spiritual expression.<sup>8</sup>

The concept of the sublime originated with the Greek writer “Longinus.”<sup>9</sup> Longinus defined the sublime with reference to the rhetorical style in which he was educated, a system codified by Cicero about a century before Longinus’s own treatise. Longinus introduced an especially important distinction between sublime style and sublimity as a quality of mind and of experience. The former identifies a rhetorical device; the latter defines an aesthetic concept. Eighteenth-century writers took up this emphasis on sublimity as a quality of mind and developed it into a powerful aesthetic theory of their own. In the process, they gradually severed the sublime from its foothold in rhetoric and located it instead in experiences evoked by wild and unruly aspects of nature.<sup>10</sup>

Other essential developments in the eighteenth-century formulation of the sublime include: first, separating the sublime from the concept of beauty and, later, treating it in

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<sup>8</sup> M.H. Abrams notes what he calls the “secularization of the sacred” in his *Natural Supernaturalism: Tradition and Revolution in Romantic Literature* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1971). Cited in Kevin Korsyn, “Schenker’s Organicism Reexamined,” *Intégral* 7 (1993): 90, n. 23. Wackenroder’s *Herzensergiessungen einer kunstliebenden Klosterbruders* (Confessions from the Heart of an Art-loving Friar), published in 1797, is an early example of literature in which artistic experience is equated with religious experience.

<sup>9</sup> The treatise which the eighteenth century took up for its own purposes, a pseudo-Longinian work, *Peri Hupsous*, was known for over two centuries as Longinus, *On the Sublime*. Scholars now believe that the author of the treatise was not the Longinus known to history but an anonymous writer probably writing in the first century A.D. “Longinus’s” treatise is discussed in both Samuel Monk, *The Sublime: A Study of Critical Theories in XVIII-Century England* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1960): 10 and *passim*; and G.N. Giordano Orsini, *Organic Unity in Ancient and Later Poetics: The Philosophical Foundations of Literary Criticism* (Carbondale: University of Illinois Press, 1975): 91, 92. Additional page number references to Monk appear in brackets in the main body of the text.

<sup>10</sup> An important translator of the Longinus treatise, Nicolas Boileau-Despréaux, set this process in motion in the late seventeenth-century. His French translation of the work appeared in 1674. Monk discusses Boileau’s influence in detail. See Monk, *The Sublime*: 29-42.

opposition to beauty (this opposition is crucial to Kant's definition of the sublime); and second, formulating the sublime as a subjective principle. According to Kant's definition, it is not the object that is sublime but only the state of mind aroused in the observer. This latter distinction appears already in David Hume's *Treatise on Human Nature*, published in 1739, and remains prominent in Kant's *Critique of Judgment* (1790). Hoffmann's proclamation is also apropos: "Beethoven's music sets in motion the machinery of awe, of fear, of terror, of pain, and awakens that infinite yearning which is the essence of romanticism." In his formulation, the music awakens (*erweckt*) these extreme emotional states in the listener but does not necessarily express these states itself.

#### - Neoclassicism and the Sublime

Neoclassicism has been described as an "effort to return to antiquity and to recapture it."<sup>11</sup> A significant impetus for the movement came as a reaction to the "corruption" of the Baroque age, to the belief that art was in decline.<sup>12</sup> Several features distinguish eighteenth-century neoclassicism from earlier Classic revivals: its attempts to recreate classical antiquity by means of an archaeological program; and its conscious imitation of Antique art.<sup>13</sup> The antiquarian-critic was its principal practitioner, the Roman Academy of Art its institutional locus. Johann Winckelmann's *Thoughts on the*

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<sup>11</sup> Damie Stillman, "Neoclassical Art (Neoclassicism)," in *McGraw Hill Dictionary of Art*, Vol. 4, ed. Bernard S. Meyers (London: McGraw-Hill Publishing Co., 1969): 180.

<sup>12</sup> Such was the assessment of the learned cleric Giovanni Bellori (1615-1696), one of the presidents of the Roman Academy of Art during the seventeenth century. Cited in Moshe Barasch, *Theories of Art from Plato to Winckelmann* (New York: New York University Press, 1985): 315-317.

<sup>13</sup> Primary archeological sources included the ancient town of Herculaneum, buried by the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in A.D. 79, and discovered in 1738, and the excavation of Pompeii, begun in 1748. Imitation of ancient art became a reality as archeological work unearthed many ancient specimens.

*Imitation of Greek Works of Painting and Sculpture* (1755) encapsulated its essential doctrines.<sup>14</sup>

With the great emphasis in neoclassicism on principles formulated in ancient Greece and Rome, past-centeredness figured as a central component of the aesthetic. This was in sharp contrast to theorists of the sublime, who wished to free themselves from the constraints of an ancient tradition that seemed rigid and hopelessly out-of-date (Monk: 102). Ancient Greek and Roman writers had transmitted to later eras a practice of rhetoric based on rules.<sup>15</sup> Theorists of the sublime railed against the hegemony of rules, both its premises and the practice to which it gave rise. In his *Conjectures on Original Composition*, the British writer Edward Young argued that “servile following of the rules [could] never produce sublime art, and [that] . . . the free interpretation of original genius is the sole source of . . . ‘unexampled excellence’” (Monk: 102, paraphrasing Young). The essay’s title pointedly challenges neoclassical ideals: *original* composition and not slavish adherence to an ancient code. Implicit in Young’s argument is his belief that sublime art marks the pinnacle of artistic achievement. Explicit is his belief that rules cannot provide access to this hallowed realm.

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<sup>14</sup> Barasch, *Theories of Art*: 310-315.

<sup>15</sup> Three of the texts most important for the transmission of these ideas are Cicero’s *De inventione* (c. 87 BC) and *De Oratore* (completed 55 BC, after a lengthy period of development), and Quintilian’s *Institutio Oratoria* (92-94 AD). Elaine Sisman’s monograph, *Haydn and the Classical Variation* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), documents the importance of rhetoric in eighteenth-century education (see especially her Chapter 2). She points out as well the importance of rhetoric to eighteenth-century music theory. Mattheson’s *Der vollkommene Capellmeister*, for instance, relies heavily on rhetorical models for theories of both melodic invention and musical structure. Haydn knew Mattheson’s *Capellmeister* well, and showed familiarity with its principles on numerous occasions. Mozart, too, amply demonstrated his ease and acquaintance with rhetorical principles in his formal letters (Sisman: 22-25).

Early reviewers of Beethoven's music draw attention to precisely this original feature of his compositions. A contemporary assessment of the Op. 10 piano sonatas is typical:

It is undeniable that Herr van Beethoven is a man of genius, *who has originality and who, by all means, goes his own way. . . .* Nevertheless, his profusion of ideas causes him still to heap thoughts wildly upon one another . . . [emphasis added].<sup>16</sup>

Notably, originality did not guarantee coherence in the vast profusion of ideas produced by its powers.

The conception of nature favored by neoclassicists appeared orderly and harmonious, an expression of the universal regularity of the divine mind (Monk: 67). Aspects of nature championed by theorists of the sublime were rude, wild, overwhelming, and vast. In the definition given above, the writer cites objects that were "daunting and dreadful . . . : alpine crags and ravines, storms at sea. . . ." Hoffmann employs precisely such imagery when he describes the closing moments of the first movement of the Fifth Symphony. He writes:

The [alternating phrases] get shorter and shorter, first one bar, then half a bar. It is a pressing and a driving—a swelling torrent whose waves strike higher and higher. . . .<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> "Es ist nicht zu leugnen, dass Hr. v. B. ein Mann von Genie ist, der Originalität hat und durchaus seinen eigenen Weg geht. Seine Fülle von Ideen . . . veranlasst ihn aber noch zu oft, Gedanken wild auf einander zu häufen. . . ." Kunze, *Ludwig van Beethoven*: 16, from a 1798 review of the Piano Sonatas, Op. 10 in the *AmZ*. I explore this criticism of Beethoven in detail in the section on *Besonnenheit* (pp. 108-125). A recent essay by Elaine Sisman evaluates and contextualizes Haydn's claim that his situation at Eszterháza forced him to be original. See Elaine Sisman, "Haydn, Shakespeare, and the Rules of Originality," in Elaine Sisman, ed., *Haydn and his World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997): 3-56.

<sup>17</sup> "Immer näher und näher rücken sie zusammen, erst einen Takt, dann einen halben Takt; es ist ein Drängen und Treiben—ein schwellender Strom, dessen Wellen höher u. höher schlagen. . . ." Kunze, *Ludwig van Beethoven*: 106.

If the view of nature subscribed to by neoclassicists furnished a comparatively benign source of imitation for the rule-bound artist, the experiences of nature adduced by theorists of the sublime manifest themselves as overwhelming and intrusive, at once inspiring and repulsive. One did not imitate the sublime in nature but only sought to come to terms with it, to bring it under rational control.<sup>18</sup>

Neoclassicists viewed human experience, as they did nature, as well ordered, rational, and balanced. They rejected especially those experiences that pressed beyond perceptual or imaginative control.<sup>19</sup> Descartes' proclamation that: "*Toutes choses qui je connais clairement et distinctement sont vrais*" [All things that I know clearly and distinctly are true] aptly summarizes the purview of neoclassical human experience (cited in Monk: 94). Theorists of the sublime, by contrast, delved into precisely those aspects of human experience ignored by neoclassicism, aspects sometimes formulated under the category of "*Enthusiasmus*"<sup>20</sup> or "*Schwärmerei*."<sup>21</sup> *Enthusiasmus* encompassed passions,

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<sup>18</sup> Rational processing is especially important to Kant's theory of the sublime. I return to it later in the chapter (pp. 55-59).

<sup>19</sup> A significant shift from eighteenth- to nineteenth-century theories of emotion is important here. Whereas eighteenth-century writers dealt in "finite," distinct emotions, the nineteenth-century favored such imprecise responses as "infinite yearning." See Carl Dahlhaus, *Nineteenth-Century Music*, trans. J.B. Robinson (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989): 18. Koch's description of the composer's need to arouse specific, rationalized emotion is representative of eighteenth-century rationalist thinking. See discussion above, pp. 31, 32.

<sup>20</sup> Further discussion of this aspect of the sublime appears in Dahlhaus, "E.T.A. Hoffmanns Beethoven-Kritik": 80, *et passim*.

<sup>21</sup> During his *Sturm und Drang* period (1771-1776), Herder stressed the personal and inner life, and focused upon lyricism in poetry and mysticism in religion. Enlightenment philosophy denigrated such emphases because they exhibited traits of *Schwärmerei* [some translations: reveling, revelry; enthusiasm (for); idolization, worship; ecstasy; gush(ing); daydream(ing); esp. fanaticism, zeal]. Frederick H. Burkhardt, Introduction to Herder, *God, Some Conversations*: 11. Translations for *Schwärmerei* from *New College German Dictionary* (New York/Berlin: Langenscheidt, 1991): 475.

the imagination, the disorderly; *Schwärmerei* connoted reveling, idolization, fanaticism, or zeal. Both exploded the tightly drawn boundaries of neoclassicism.

If neoclassicism dwelled in the finite—the calculable, estimable, measurable, and computable—then one could scarcely imagine a more direct contrast than Hoffmann’s description of Beethoven’s instrumental music as “open[ing] the realm of the mighty and the immeasurable.” Beethoven’s music awakened not that which was estimable and computable, but that which was obscure, mysterious, and overwhelming. In his analysis of the development section of the first movement (the “second section,” in Hoffmann’s terminology), Hoffmann notes “sounds at which the breast, pressed and made anxious by presentiments of the monstrous/enormous (*Ungeheuren*), struggles for air.”<sup>22</sup>

Hoffmann’s characterization allies Beethoven’s music unequivocally with the aesthetic of the sublime, a concept that delved into the infinite, indeed, sought out the infinite as a central component of the artistic experience. As early as 1744, Mark Akenside, in his poem *The Pleasures of the Imagination*, expressed the belief that the human soul longs always for the infinite. Akenside believed further that the vastness of nature shared an affinity with the spirit of man. This affinity, he believed, constitutes a symbol of man’s divine origin (Monk: 72).

#### - Burke and Kant on the Sublime

The philosophies of Burke and Kant proved to be especially important sources for Hoffmann’s use of language and theoretical tenets of the sublime.<sup>23</sup> The Irish-born

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<sup>22</sup> “Es sind Laute, womit sich die Brust, von Ahnungen des Ungeheuren gepresst und beängstet, gewaltsam Luft macht. . . .” Kunze, *Ludwig van Beethoven*: 104.

<sup>23</sup> For Carl Dahlhaus, the impetus for Hoffmann’s review of Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony “is the theory of the sublime formulated in the late eighteenth century by Burke and Kant.” Dahlhaus,

philosopher and political writer Edmund Burke published his *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* in 1757. Two features of his inquiry merit our attention. First, Burke is concerned primarily with emotions and, more specifically, with emotions of terror. He defines the sublime in these terms:

Whatever is fitted in any sort to excite the ideas of pain and danger; that is to say, whatever is in any sort terrible, or is conversant about terrible objects, or operates in a manner analogous to terror, is a source of the *sublime*; that is, it is productive of the strongest emotion which the mind is capable of feeling.<sup>24</sup>

Burke's age produced a considerable volume of poetry dedicated to themes of the terrible, anything from the graveyard and the ruined castle or abbey to overpoweringly destructive forces of nature, among them desperate, starving, and emaciated wolves (Monk: 88). Burke's almost exclusive attention to emotion marks an important departure from the seventeenth-century Longinian-based theory of the sublime, which focused on sublimity of thought. Burke's enquiry thus links up with a more nearly contemporaneous tradition that paired the sublime with the pathetic, that tendency to "raise the passions to a violent and even enthusiastic degree" (Monk: 5).<sup>25</sup>

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*Nineteenth-Century Music*: 90. In this publication Dahlhaus gives little supporting evidence for his claim. A more detailed discussion of E.T.A. Hoffmann and the sublime appears in his "E.T.A. Hoffmanns Beethoven-Kritik": 79-92.

<sup>24</sup> Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (adapted to popular use by Abraham Mills) (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1846): I, vii, and 51. Additional references to Burke appear in parentheses in the main body of the text.

<sup>25</sup> Longinus included the pathetic within his definition of the sublime, but seventeenth-century writers emphasized his notion of sublimity of thought. The late seventeenth-century writer John Dennis revived the pathetic as a central aspect of the sublime (1696 publication), giving it fresh impetus which lasted well into the eighteenth-century. Dennis made the following distinction between ordinary passion and enthusiasm: "I call that ordinary Passion, whose cause is clearly comprehended by him who feels it, whether it be admiration, terror, or joy; and I call the very same Passions Enthusiasm, when their cause is not clearly comprehended by him who feels them." John Dennis, *The Advancement and Reformation of Modern Poetry* (London, 1701): 26. Cited in Monk, *The Sublime*: 48.

Second, a primary thrust of Burke's inquiry concerns the physiology of the sublime experience. Burke believed that beauty and sublimity act directly on the nervous system through sense impressions (Monk: 97). Thus his philosophy focuses on visceral aspects of the sublime experience, as witnessed in his description of a man suffering from violent pain:

I say, a man in great pain has his teeth set, his eyebrows are violently contracted, his forehead is wrinkled, his eyes are dragged inward, and rolled with great vehemence, his hair stands on end, the voice is forced out in short shrieks and groans, and the whole fabric totters. Fear or terror, which is an apprehension of pain or death, exhibits exactly the same effects . . . (Burke: IV, iii, 162).

Burke argues further that fear and pain produce the same physiological result, the former operating through the mind and affecting the body, the latter operating through the body to affect the mind. In both cases, the stimulus "produce[s] a tension, contraction, or violent emotion of the nerves . . ." (Burke: IV, iii, 163).

In the *Critique of Judgment* (henceforth *CJ*)<sup>26</sup> Kant retained Burke's interest in visceral aspects of sublime experience, as well as the later eighteenth century's subjective understanding of the sublime. Kant departed from Burke by assigning to reason a crucial role in the sublime experience. In this way he moved beyond Burke's exclusive interest in emotion and physiology. In this discussion I focus on three elements of Kant's theory: first, his definition of magnitude, which concerns his category of the mathematical

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<sup>26</sup> Kant's *Critique of Judgment*, published in 1790, constitutes a culmination of eighteenth-century theories of the sublime. Within an influential philosophy whose principal codification appeared in three *Critiques*—*of Pure Reason* (1781, rev. ed. 1786), *of Practical Reason* (1788), and *of Judgment*, respectively (1790)—Kant gave to aesthetics generally, and to the sublime specifically, a prominence hitherto unknown. All references to Kant are from Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, trans. J.H. Bernard (New York: Haffner Press, 1951) (English), and *idem*, *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, in *Immanuel Kant: Werke in sechs Bänden*, vol. 4 (Köln: Könnemann Verlagsgesellschaft, 1995).

sublime;<sup>27</sup> second, his description of the first moment in an experience of the sublime; and finally, his accounting for the role of reason in an experience of the sublime.

Kant's most concise definition of magnitude is this: "the sublime is that in comparison with which everything is small." Closely related definitions include: "absolutely great in every point of view;" "great beyond all comparison;" and, "a magnitude which is like itself alone" (*CJ*: 88).<sup>28</sup> Somewhat later Kant introduces gradations of size, one of which characterizes the sublime, and another that exceeds it. In representations of rude nature, he writes, "nature contains nothing monstrous (either magnificent or horrible)," but rather is characterized by the *colossal*, that which

is almost too great for any presentation (bordering on the relatively monstrous [*Ungeheure*]), because the purpose of the presentation of a concept is made hard [to carry out] by the intuition of the object being almost too great for our faculty of apprehension (*CJ*: 91).<sup>29</sup>

Colossal counts as a term of approbation in Kant, a precise adjectival signifier for the magnitude he associates with the sublime. We shall encounter it again in our discussion of Beethoven. *Ungeheure* can be translated several ways. Its meanings range from vast, huge, and enormous, to immense or monstrous. For present purposes I shall consider it as Kant does, as one degree greater than colossal.

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<sup>27</sup> Kant defined two categories of sublime: the mathematical and the dynamical. The mathematical sublime makes demands upon the mind by magnitude or extent; the dynamical does this through power or force, the "might of nature." See Elaine Sisman, *Mozart: The 'Jupiter' Symphony*, Cambridge Music Handbooks (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993): 19. Kant's theory of the mathematical sublime serves as focus here.

<sup>28</sup> "Erhaben ist dass, mit welchem in Vergleichung alles andere klein ist." ". . . absolut, in aller Absicht (über alle Vergleichung) gross. . . ." "Es ist eine Grösse, die bloss sich selber gleich ist." Kant, *Kritik der Urteilskraft*: 116.

<sup>29</sup> "Kolossalisch aber wird die bloss Darstellung eines Begriffs genannt, der für alle Darstellung beinahe zu gross ist (an das relativ Ungeheure gränzt): weil das Gegenstandes für unser Auffassungsvermögen beinahe zu gross ist, erschwert wird." Kant, *Kritik der Urteilskraft*: 120. Hoffmann uses the term "*Ungeheuren*" in his description of the development section of the Fifth Symphony. See quotation above, p. 56.

The first moment of the aesthetical judgment of the sublime concerns quantity, because of the object's formlessness and size. Nature in its chaos or "in its wildest and most irregular disorder and desolation" exemplifies these features, producing an initial effect which Kant describes like this (*CJ*: 84):

. . . that which excites in us, *without any reasoning about it, but in the mere apprehension of it*, the feeling of the sublime may appear, as regards its form, to violate purpose in respect of the judgment, to be unsuited to our presentative faculty, and as it were to do violence to the imagination; and yet it is judged to be only the more sublime [emphasis added] (*CJ*: 83).<sup>30</sup>

Kant's description identifies challenges to three mental faculties: judgment, the presentative faculty, and the imagination. The last of these, imagination, involves two operations: apprehension and comprehension. While apprehension can continue indefinitely, "comprehension becomes harder the further apprehension advances." When apprehension exceeds the capacity of comprehension, what was first collected begins to vanish from the imagination. A frustrated experience results in which the observing (or listening) subject loses a sense of the whole.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> ". . . was in uns, ohne zu vernünfteln, bloss in der Auffassung das Gefühl des Erhabenen erregt, der Form nach zwar zweckwidrig für unsere Urtheilskraft, unangemessen unserm Darstellungsvermögen und gleichsam gewalthätig für die Einbildungskraft erscheinen mag, aber dennoch nur um desto erhabener zu sein geurtheilt wird." Kant, *Kritik der Urtheilskraft*: 111. Ludwig Tieck noted similar characteristics in the symphony. Among instrumental genres, he valued it most because of the "beautiful entanglement (*Verworrenheit*) of musical characters that it entails." The passage is cited in Leo Treitler, "Mozart and the Idea of Absolute Music," in *Music and the Historical Imagination* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989): 183. Treitler suggests that "in the word *Verworrenheit* there is the suggestion of a value for the chaotic." I would argue that Tieck's "entanglement," while assigning value to the chaotic, nevertheless seems tame when compared with Kant's initial moment in the apprehension of the sublime.

<sup>31</sup> Summarized from Kant, *Critique of Judgment*: 90. The passage in its entirety: "In receiving a quantum into the imagination by intuition . . . there are two operations of the imagination involved: *apprehension* (*apprehensio*) and *comprehension* (*comprehensio aethetica*). As to apprehension there is no difficulty, for it can go on *ad infinitum*, but comprehension becomes harder the further apprehension advances, and soon attains to its maximum. . . . For when apprehension has gone so far that the partial representations of sensuous intuition at first

Kant proffers a solution to this predicament: the power of reason. Reason desires to think objects or experiences as wholes, a stipulation extending even to the infinite, the favored realm of the sublime. In the initial moment in the apprehension of the sublime, the observer or listener loses the sense of the whole. In Kant's terms, apprehension exceeds comprehension. It is at this point that reason makes its signal contribution. Superseding the workings of the imagination, its comprehensive powers permit it to represent the overwhelming experience as a totality, as a whole. The observer can then profit from the experience (*CJ*: 93).

Kant elaborates on this last point:

Now in the immensity of nature and in the insufficiency of our faculties to take in a standard proportionate to the aesthetical estimation of the magnitude of its *realm*, we find our own limitation, although at the same time in our rational faculty, we find a different, nonsensuous standard, which has that infinity itself under it as a unity, in comparison with which everything in nature is small, and thus in our own mind we find a superiority to nature even in its immensity (*CJ*: 101).<sup>32</sup>

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apprehended begin to vanish in the imagination, while this ever proceeds to the apprehension of others, then it loses as much on the one side as it gains on the other; and in comprehension there is a maximum beyond which it cannot go." Kant, *Critique of Judgment*: 90. ["Anschaulich ein Quantum in die Einbildungskraft aufzunehmen, . . . dazu gehören zwei Handlungen dieses Vermögens: Auffassung (apprehensio) und Zusammenfassung (comprehensio aesthetica). Mit der Auffassung hat es keine Roth: denn damit kann es ins Unendlich gehen; aber die Zusammenfassung wird immer schwerer, je weiter die Auffassung fortrückt, und gelangt bald zu ihrem Maximum. . . . Denn wenn die Auffassung so weit gelangt ist, dass die zuerst aufgefassten Theilvorstellungen der Sinnenanschauung in der einbildungskraft schon zu erlöschen anheben indess dass diese zu Auffassung mehrerer fortrückt: so verliert sie auf einer Seite eben so viel, als sie auf der andern gewinnt, und in der Zusammenfassung ist ein Grösstes, über welches sie nicht hinauskommen kann." Kant, *Kritik der Urteilkraft*: 118, 119.] The example Kant supplies is that of the pyramids in Egypt. If one is too close to the pyramids, the eye takes some time to pass from the lowest to the highest tiers. By the time the observer has reached the highest tiers, the lower ones have already been forgotten. The comprehension of these massive objects is thus never complete. Kant, *Critique of Judgment*: 90.

<sup>32</sup> "Denn so wie wir zwar an der Unermesslichkeit der Natur und der Unzulänglichkeit unseres Vermögens einen der ästhetischen Grössenschätzung ihres Gebiets proportionirten Massstab zu nehmen unsere eigene Einschränkung, gleichwohl aber doch auch an unserm Vernunftvermögen zugleich einen andern, nicht-sinnlichen Massstab, welcher jene Unendlichkeit selbst als Einheit

Kant identifies two standards: the sensuous and the nonsensuous. The former includes visceral emotional responses stimulated in an experience of the sublime: the observer feels overwhelmed, struck with a sense of human limitation. Enter the power of a nonsensuous standard: reason. Because reason “has that infinity itself under it *as a unity* [emphasis added]” everything else in nature appears small. Reason’s power lies in its capacity to comprehend something—an object, an event—as a unity. It tames overpowering emotional and visceral responses which, in their raw form, confound rather than edify. The benefit lies not only in the observer’s having the experience without being overwhelmed, but also in the realization, through the power of reason, of her superiority over the forces of nature.

#### - Applications to Beethoven’s Music

How do these ideas apply to Beethoven’s music and to Hoffmann’s review of the Fifth Symphony? Beethoven’s music formidably challenged its early audiences, both popular and critical alike. Evaluated against the backdrop of his immediate Classical forebears, Haydn and Mozart, it appeared monstrous and ungainly in certain respects. According to Hoffmann’s characterizations,

Haydn comprehends the humanity in human life romantically; he is more congenial to the majority. Mozart takes as his claim the superhuman, the miraculous, that resides in the inner spirit. Beethoven’s music sets in motion the machinery of awe, of fear, of terror, of pain, and awakens that infinite yearning which is the

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unter sich hat, gegen den alles in der Natur klein ist, mithin in unserm Gemüthe eine Überlegenheit über die Natur selbst in ihrer Unermesslichkeit fanden. . . .” Kant, *Kritik der Urteilkraft*: 131.

essence of romanticism. Beethoven is a purely romantic, and therefore truly musical, composer.<sup>33</sup>

Johann Friedrich Reichardt, in his *Vertraute Briefe*, written at Vienna while Haydn was still alive, reports a performance of string quartets by Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven that he heard on Thursday, December 15, 1808. Reichardt's description foreshadows Hoffmann's in important ways:

Haydn created [the string quartet] from the pure, clean source of his charming and original nature. For naïvety and cheerful humour he therefore remains unique. Mozart's stronger nature and richer imagination grasped further and in many a movement he expressed the highest and deepest of his nature. . . . He built a palace upon the lovely and fantastic garden-house that was Haydn's. Beethoven had at an early age made himself at home in this palace and it only remained to him . . . to erect his daring, stubborn tower, on the top of which no one could easily build anything without breaking his neck.<sup>34</sup>

Hoffmann's and Reichardt's characterizations encapsulate an important moment in the reception history of Haydn's and Mozart's music: both writers ignore assessments of Haydn's and Mozart's later works in which reviewers identified and even criticized them for music exhibiting qualities of the sublime; both describe Beethoven as a composer not so much without predecessors as without adequate followers.

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<sup>33</sup> "Haydn fasst das Menschliche im menschlichen Leben romantisch auf; er ist commensurabler für die Mehrzahl. Mozart nimmt das Uebermenschliche, das Wunderbare, welches im innern Geiste wohnt, in Anspruch. Beethovens Musik bewegt die Hebel des Schauers, der Furcht, des Entsetzens, des Schmerzes, und erweckt jene unendliche Sehnsucht, die das Wesen der Romantik ist." Kunze, *Ludwig van Beethoven*: 101. Translation from Bent, *Music Analysis in the Nineteenth Century*, Vol. 2: 146, with small modifications.

<sup>34</sup> Cited in H.C. Robbins Landon, *Haydn: Chronicle and Works*, Vol. 5 (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1977): 409. A recent essay by Leon Botstein demonstrates the tenacity of this view of Haydn as an essentially "cheerful" composer throughout the nineteenth century and into the twentieth. See Leon Botstein, "The Demise of Philosophical Listening: Haydn in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century," in *Haydn and His World*, ed. Elaine Sisman (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997): 255-285.

Hoffmann's belief that Haydn "is more congenial to the majority" clearly resonates with the uniformly superlative reviews Haydn's music received in the 1790s. By the turn of the nineteenth century, however, as H.C. Robbins Landon reports, certain "aspects of Haydn's music were beginning to move faster than the critics . . . understood."<sup>35</sup> Reviewers criticized Haydn for strident dissonances, among other things, and for "mistakes and imperfections" that, although imperceptible in performance, should not be present in the first place.<sup>36</sup> In other words, in these reviewer's assessments, Haydn's music from this period was not necessarily "congenial to the majority" (Hoffmann's characterization), or stemming from the "pure clean source of his charming and original nature" (Reichardt's description).

In an article on Haydn's late vocal music, James Webster has developed a compelling theoretical framework for understanding the most dramatic and searching effects in *The Creation* and in Haydn's late masses as instances of the sublime.<sup>37</sup> Haydn's theatrical and justly famous setting of the text "'Let there be light'; and there was light," counts as a supreme example of the sublime in both poetic and musical effect. Longinus's early discussion of the sublime singled out this text as the preeminent exemplar; Haydn's musical setting, dramatized by an overwhelming C-major tutti, clinches the transporting effect. Haydn himself described his reaction to a particularly satisfying performance of *The Creation* like this:

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<sup>35</sup> Landon, *Haydn: Chronicle and Works*, Vol. 6: 609.

<sup>36</sup> One *AmZ* reviewer admonished that "in *Haydn* there should not really be anything that ought to be lost in the *melée*; in a man of whom it is rightly expected and demanded—that *everything* is good." From the 1799 *AmZ* review of Gombart's edition (Op. 91) of Haydn's Symphonies 100, 101, and 103. Cited in Landon, *Haydn: Chronicle*, Vol. 6: 576-82 and 605-609.

<sup>37</sup> James Webster, "The *Creation*, Haydn's Late Vocal Music, and the Musical Sublime," in *Haydn and His World*, ed. Elaine Sisman (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997): 57-102.

Now I would be ice cold in my whole body, now a burning fever would come over me, and I was afraid more than once that I should suddenly suffer a stroke.<sup>38</sup>

In her monograph on the ‘Jupiter’ Symphony, Elaine Sisman identifies aspects of the sublime in Mozart’s music, and cites letters written by Mozart that confirm his familiarity with essential tenets of the sublime, as articulated by both Burke and Kant. She also points to difficulties audiences encountered in their efforts to apprehend and appreciate Mozart’s music. A telling incident involving the publisher Franz Anton Hoffmeister, not cited by Sisman, concerns a commission for which Mozart was to write a total of six piano quartets. The first two, later catalogued as K. 478 and K. 493, yielded extraordinarily poor sales, and so Hoffmeister paid Mozart the full royalties “on condition that he should not compose the other four pieces.” Hoffmeister ordered him to “[w]rite in a more popular style, otherwise I can neither publish anything by you nor pay you.”<sup>39</sup> Finally, Sisman cites the tendency of eighteenth-century German writers to compare Mozart to Klopstock. Klopstock enjoyed a place of prominence in eighteenth-century German culture as heir to the exalted tradition of Pindaric odes, the touchstone of the sublime in Sulzer’s *Allgemeine Theorie*.<sup>40</sup>

In light of such evidence it is clear that terminology important to the concept of the sublime was original neither to Hoffmann’s review, nor, separately from Hoffmann,

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<sup>38</sup> Joseph Haydn, cited in *Joseph Haydn: Eighteenth-Century Gentleman and Genius*, trans. Vernon Gotwals (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1963): 38. [“Bald war ich eiskalt am ganzen Leibe, bald überfiel mich eine glühende Hisse, und ich befürchtete mehr als einmal, plötzlich vom Schläge gerührt zu werden.” Georg August Griesinger, *Biographische Notizen über Joseph Haydn* (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1810): 67, 68.]

<sup>39</sup> Gernot Gruber, *Mozart and Posterity*, trans. R.S Furness (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1994): 11, 12. These quartets, in G minor and E<sup>b</sup> major, respectively, are the only piano quartets Mozart published.

<sup>40</sup> Sisman, *Mozart: The ‘Jupiter’ Symphony*: 9-18.

as a concept adduced to account for oddities in Beethoven's music. The concept of the sublime held a central place in late eighteenth-century aesthetics. It received its musical codification in Schulz's articles written for Sulzer's *Allgemeine Theorie der schönen Künste*, published in 1771-4. Furthermore, the concept found fitting application in the music of both Haydn and Mozart, since both composers in their later works digressed significantly enough from eighteenth-century neoclassical listening standards as to warrant description in terms of the sublime. Notably, however, especially in the case of Haydn, the flavor of the sublime invoked by various reviewers evinced a distinctive Longinian parentage. These reviewers' emphases lay not in frightening or overwhelming features of Haydn's music, but in its grandeur and in its ability to "rouse and affect every emotion of the soul."<sup>41</sup> Furthermore, as explicated by both Hoffmann's and Reichardt's hierarchies, Beethoven's music fit in a vastly different category than did Mozart's or Haydn's. It is Hoffmann's and Reichardt's perception of Beethoven's music as extraordinarily new and shocking that I emphasize here.

Early reviews of Beethoven's music characteristically report that performances aroused consternation in audiences, in spite of an overall fascination and sometimes grudging approbation. Such a conflicted response counts as a hallmark of sublime experience, which Kant formulated like this:

. . . as the mind is not merely attracted by the object but is ever being alternately repelled, the satisfaction in the sublime does not so much involve a positive pleasure as admiration or respect, which rather deserves to be called negative pleasure (*CJ*: 83).<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Landon, *Haydn: Chronicle and Works*, Vol. 3: 234. The description is from a 1794 review of Haydn's Symphony No. 99 that appeared in the *London Morning Chronicle*.

<sup>42</sup> “. . . indem das Gemüth von dem Gegenstande nicht bloss angezogen, sondern wechselsweise auch immer wieder abgestossen wird, das Wohlgefallen am Erhabenen nicht sowohl positive Lust

Writers frequently described Beethoven's music as *bisarr* [bizarre], *merkwürdig* [strange], *kolossal* [colossal], or *seltsam* [peculiar].<sup>43</sup> Their descriptives home in on features that challenged and disturbed early audiences. Such peculiarities notwithstanding, Beethoven's music created a stir and commanded considerable attention. In a review of Beethoven's second symphony, one writer proclaimed: "No society of musicians and friends of art can be indifferent to the fact that finally a second symphony of Beethoven has just now appeared."<sup>44</sup> Whether or not audience members enjoyed Beethoven's music, the premiere of a new work by the composer counted as an event not to be missed.

Let's examine the reviewers' language more closely. Writers introduce the almost synonymous terms *bisarr*, *merkwürdig*, and *seltsam* to account for the otherness of Beethoven's music, the impression that his music constituted a radical departure from the symphonies of Haydn and Mozart. If the symphonies of Haydn and Mozart fit more comfortably with neoclassical ideals—especially the earlier works—then the *bisarr*, *merkwürdig*, and *seltsam* character of Beethoven's music allied it unequivocally with the sublime's predilection for darker, more contorted aspects of human beings and the world

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als vielmehr Bewunderung oder Achtung enthält, d.i. negative Lust genannt zu werden verdient." Kant, *Kritik der Urteilskraft*: 110.

<sup>43</sup> (1) *bisarr*: Johann Gottlieb Karl Spazier, review of the Piano Sonatas, Op. 31, Nos. 1 and 2, *Zeitung für die elegante Welt*, 1803 (Kunze, *Ludwig van Beethoven*: 30); (2) *merkwürdig*: author not indicated, review of Symphony No. 2, Op. 36, *AmZ*, 1804 (Kunze: 35); Anton Eberl, review of the *Eroica* symphony, *AmZ*, 1807 (Kunze: 57); (3) *kolossal*: authors not indicated, reviews of the second and third symphonies, *AmZ*, 1804, 1807 (Kunze: 35; 51, 57); (4) *seltsam*: author not indicated, review of Violin Sonata, Op. 47, *AmZ*, 1804 (Kunze: 43).

<sup>44</sup> "Keiner Gesellschaft von Musikern und Freunden der Kunst kann es gleichgültig sein, dass endlich auch eine zweyte Sinfonie von Beethoven so eben erschienen ist." Author not indicated. The review appeared in the *AmZ* in 1804. See Kunze, *Ludwig van Beethoven*: 35.

of nature. One recalls immediately Burke's interest in a sublime of terror, as well as Kant's belief that the sublime should be exhibited not

in products of art . . . where human purpose defines the form as well as the size, nor yet in things of nature the concepts of which bring with them a definite purpose . . . , *but in rude nature . . . merely as containing magnitude* [emphasis added] (*CJ*: 91).<sup>45</sup>

*Kolossal*, another of the frequent descriptives, and one applied to the lengthy *Eroica* symphony, neatly fits such a formulation.<sup>46</sup> Moreover, it immediately draws attention to one of the symphony's most obvious incongruities: its great size. The performing time of the *Eroica*—about sixty minutes—more than doubles the performance time of an average Mozart or Haydn symphony. The first movement of the *Eroica* alone has 691 measures. The first movement of Mozart's *Jupiter* symphony, by comparison, has only 313—less than half the length. Writing about the *Eroica* one reviewer reported:

The opinions of the listeners about the work were divided. Many marveled at it, everyone found it dreadfully long—the part of the first violin consists of seventeen closely printed folio pages!<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> “. . . an Kunstproducten . . . wo ein menschlicher Zweck die Form sowohl als die Grösse bestimmt, noch an Naturdingen, deren Begriff schon einen bestimmten Zweck bei sich führt . . . , sondern an der rohen Natur . . . bloss sofern sie Grösse enthält. . . .” Kant, *Kritik der Urteilskraft*: 120. This description fits Kant's category of the dynamical sublime.

<sup>46</sup> Goethe used this descriptive for Shakespeare's dramatic characters: “Shakespeare competes with Prometheus, imitating him by forming human beings feature by feature, *but on a colossal scale . . .*” [emphasis added]. Like Kant, he uses it as a term of approbation. Goethe, “Shakespeare: A Tribute,” in *Goethe's Collected Works*, Vol. 3: 165. Goethe published this essay in 1771. [Er wetteiferte mit dem Prometheus, bildete ihm Zug vor Zug seine Menschen nach, nur in kolossalischer Grösse; . . .” Goethe, *Goethes Werke*, Vol. 12: 227.]

<sup>47</sup> “Die Meynungen der Zuhörer über das Werk waren Getheilt. Viele bewunderten es, alle fanden es entsetzlich lang—die Partie der ersten Violin bestehet aus 17 eng gestochnen Folio-Seiten!” Anton Eberl, review of the *Eroica* Symphony, *AmZ*, 1807, in Kunze, *Ludwig van Beethoven*: 51.

The writer's synopsis reports the mixed response endemic to sublime experience—both marvel and, in this case, frustration at the great length of the work. Another exclaimed with exasperation that “sie dauert *eine ganze Stunde*” (it lasts *a whole hour*), and went so far as to recommend that Beethoven perform various cuts, by which the overall effect would be greatly improved.<sup>48</sup>

Magnitude, like strangeness and peculiarity, figured centrally in Kant's concept of the sublime. Earlier I cited this definition: “the sublime is that in comparison with which everything else is small” (*CJ*: 88). Colossal size is thus the central point upon which Kant's theory of the mathematical sublime turns, and a primary point of contention in the early reception of the *Eroica*. The reviewers of the *Eroica* symphony cited here grappled unsuccessfully with the colossal proportions of the symphony, ultimately counting its length (magnitude) a detriment. Their language suggests that the *Eroica* transgressed even the bounds of the sublime, a category characteristically invoked by aestheticians and philosophers precisely to accommodate experiences that challenged so bracingly previously established boundaries of artistic expression. In these reviewers' estimation the *Eroica* exceeded such capaciousness, spilling over into what, in Kant's formulation, could only be termed monstrous.

Readers familiar with Aristotle's *Poetics* may perceive an echo of ancient Greek thought resounding through the current discussion of magnitude and its relation to aesthetic perception. In the *Poetics*, Aristotle counted size as an integral aspect of his concept of organic unity. He claimed that

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<sup>48</sup> The entire passage in German: “. . . die Sinfonie würde unendlich gewinnen, (sie dauert *eine ganze Stunde*) wenn sich B. entschliessen wollte sie abzukürzen, und in das Ganze mehr Licht, Klarheit und Einheit zu bringen.” Author not indicated, review of the *Eroica* symphony, *AmZ*, 1805, in Kunze, *Ludwig van Beethoven*: 50.

. . . a beautiful object, whether it be a living organism or any whole composed of parts, must not only have an orderly arrangement of parts, but must also be of a certain magnitude; for beauty depends on magnitude and order. Hence a very small animal organism cannot be beautiful; for the view of it is confused, the object being seen in an almost imperceptible moment of time. Nor, again, can one of vast size be beautiful; for as the eye cannot take it all in at once, the unity and sense of the whole is lost for the spectator; as for instance if there were one a thousand miles long.<sup>49</sup>

For the reviewers cited above, the *Eroica* qualified as a sort of thousand-mile symphony, one in which “the unity and sense of the whole [was] lost for the [listener].” The *AmZ* reviewer surely echoes just such a complaint when he lobbies for cuts to the symphony, “in the whole to bring more light, clarity and unity.” Lacking the critical apparatus necessary to “have that infinity itself under a unity”—Kant’s claim for the power of reason—early audiences of the *Eroica* symphony responded with frustration to its great dimensions. As apprehension vastly exceeded comprehension, listeners were left only with bewilderment and frustration.

For E.T.A. Hoffmann the answer lay not in truncating Beethoven’s music, as recommended by some reviewers, but in implementing a Kantian-based critical framework. Moving beyond preoccupations with sensual perception, Hoffmann advocated a very penetrating going-in (*ein sehr tiefes Eingehen*) to uncover the unity and inner coherence of the music and to apprehend the *hohe Besonnenheit* with which Beethoven produced it. It is to Hoffmann’s notion of unity that I turn now.

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<sup>49</sup> Aristotle, *Poetics*: 65, 66.

### III. Unity

Assumptions about organic unity—the often-unquestioned conviction that musical works can and should be unified, and that this unity resembles that of living things—pervade our beliefs about music. How have these assumptions entered our collective unconscious? When in history did the idea of organic unity in music express itself? I begin with the early nineteenth century, when Beethoven’s music was gaining attention in concert life and in prominent music journals of the day. It is with his music that the concept of organic unity has become inextricably linked, a link whose force has yet to be seriously undermined.

Even before writers attributed to music a quality they called “organic unity” they expressed a more general concern for unity that spanned individual movements and entire multi-movement works. The reviewer cited earlier advocates cuts to the *Eroica* symphony, in order to bring more light, clarity and *unity to the whole*. Another complains of the music’s tendency to “slip into complete disorder,” arguing that, because of the “shrillness” and “bizarre features” (*Grellen* and *Bizarren*), the unity was all but completely lost.<sup>50</sup> A more specific example of the concern for unity arises in the much-discussed E-minor theme from the development of the *Eroica* symphony, given here as Example 2-1.

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<sup>50</sup> “. . . sehr oft aber scheint sie sich ganz ins Regellose zu verlieren.”; “. . . aber bey dieser Arbeit muss [der Ref.] doch gestehen, des Grellen und Bizarren allzuviel zu finden, wodurch die Uebersicht äusserst erschwert wird und die Einheit bey nahe ganz verloren geht.” Author not indicated, review of the *Eroica* symphony, *AmZ*, 1805, in Kunze, *Ludwig van Beethoven*: 50.

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Example 2-1  
 Beethoven, Symphony No. 3 in E-flat Major ("Eroica"), I, mm. 280-295

H. 41410

Example 2-1  
 Beethoven, Symphony No. 3 in E-flat Major ("Eroica"), I, mm. 280-295

Introducing a new theme in the development section was not without precedent.

Some earlier examples include Mozart's Piano Sonata in F, K. 332/I (1778), and

Beethoven's Piano Sonata in E major, Op. 14 No. 1 (1799).<sup>51</sup> Notably, the new themes in these movements differ radically in their effect from that of the *Eroica*. These themes appear either at the beginning of the development section, as in the Mozart, or very near the beginning (after four measures), as in the Beethoven. In the Mozart, the key of the new theme is C major, the key in which the exposition concluded. Its triadic motivic basis, moreover, bears a clear relation to the opening theme in F major. In the Beethoven, the new theme arises almost imperceptibly from the movement's first theme, and returns to that theme for the retransition. Between these two points, moreover, the music traverses a relatively straightforward harmonic motion to C major (m. 75), the borrowed submediant (<sup>b</sup>VI), and from there to the dominant (m. 81).

The new theme in the *Eroica*'s development section marks a signal departure from these earlier examples. It finds a more likely predecessor in Haydn's Symphony No. 45 in F<sup>#</sup>-Minor ("Farewell"), whose anti-climactic D-major interlude shocks with its thematic, tonal, and rhythmic discontinuities.<sup>52</sup> In the *Eroica*, a tumultuous tutti passage, some thirty-six measures in length, of unprecedented harmonic and rhythmic dissonance, precedes and dramatizes the new theme's entrance. The theme itself enters one hundred and thirty measures into the development, when listeners could well expect the section to be driving toward its final goal: the dominant chord that will usher in the recapitulation.

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<sup>51</sup> I am indebted to William Rothstein for bringing these examples to my attention.

<sup>52</sup> James Webster's discussion of this passage (mm. 108ff) is especially thought provoking. He notes motivic connections between the lyrical D-major theme and earlier thematic material but argues nevertheless that "motivic continuity can go only so far; aesthetically, the interlude remains divorced from its context." James Webster, *Haydn's "Farewell" Symphony and the Idea of Classical Style*, Cambridge Studies in Music Theory and Analysis (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991): 43.

At this crucial juncture, however, a *new theme* appears in the distantly related key of E minor.

The novelty of introducing a new theme at this point in the movement did not escape reviewers of Beethoven's time.<sup>53</sup> In his monograph *Beethoven Hero*, Scott Burnham shows how contemporary writers give differing accounts of the new theme, depending upon their philosophical commitments. Writers with organicist leanings, argues Burnham, "will perforce neglect the otherness of the new theme in an aesthetically motivated zeal to assimilate it into a larger organic whole." Writers committed to a programmatic approach, on the other hand, "interpret the new theme as an important turning point in a psychological or dramatic process. . . ."<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> In his introduction to *E.T.A. Hoffmann's Musical Writings*, David Charlton links Hoffmann's (and his contemporaries') terminology to the understanding of sonata form current in Hoffmann's time—that established by J.G. Portmann (1789) and H.C. Koch (1787, 1793). In his review of the Fifth Symphony Hoffmann refers only to two sections: everything up to the double bar (what we call the exposition); and everything following the double bar (what we call the development and recapitulation). David Charlton, ed., *E.T.A. Hoffman's Musical Writings*: 16. Johann Gottlieb Karl Spazier uses the term "sonatenform" in an 1803 review of the Piano Sonatas Op. 31, nos. 1, 2 that appeared in the *Zeitung für die elegante Welt*. He observes that these sonatas "diverge entirely from the usual sonata form" ["weichen ganzlich von der gewöhnlichen Sonatenform ab . . ."] (cited in Kunze, *Ludwig van Beethoven*: 30). Spazier's usage indicates that, not only was the term common, but also the procedures associated with it. Furthermore, this reviewer already noted Beethoven's tendency to depart from established norms.

<sup>54</sup> Scott Burnham, *Beethoven Hero* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995): 13. William Rothstein has brought to my attention reception issues associated with the sharp surface discontinuities of C.P.E. Bach's music. Charles Rosen—in both *The Classical Style* and in *Sonata Forms*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.—describes what he sees as C.P.E. Bach's inability to effectively integrate the harmonic and rhetorical shocks that characterize the "surface" of the music. Rosen writes in *The Classical Style* that "C.P.E. Bach's horizon is wider harmonically [than J.C. Bach's]", but his practice is incoherent: he is more interested in local effects—he delights in harmonic shock, as did Haydn; but Haydn knew how to weld his effects together, and his most disparate harmonies are not only reconciled but even explained by what follows as well as implied by what precedes." Charles Rosen, *The Classical Style* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1972): 79. Wayne Petty, adopting a Schenkerian method of analysis, concludes that in selected "Prussian" sonatas by C.P.E. Bach, there exist "deeper underlying tonal processes that can be discovered through analysis." See Wayne Petty, "Koch, Schenker, and the Development Section of Sonata Forms by C.P.E. Bach," *Music Theory Spectrum* 21 (1999): 158.

Numerous generations after Beethoven, music analysts would still vie for a satisfactory explanation for its inclusion. In his *Meisterwerk* essay on the *Eroica* symphony Schenker first accounts for the progression from E<sup>b</sup> major to E minor (bars 220-284) with his theory of linear progressions. When describing the climactic music immediately prior to the entrance of the new theme, however, Schenker adopts a style of explanation that departs markedly from his earlier focus on diminutions, arpeggiations, and unfoldings. He terms the passage an “unleashing,” qualifying it further as “a tragic partition, as it were, against which the last parts of the development section are supposed to be set off all the more effectively.”<sup>55</sup> Alfred Lorenz, in his article “Worauf beruht die bekannte Wirkung der Durchführung im I.Eroicasatze,” claims that bar-form governs the dimensions of the symphony, including the development. He demonstrates further how elements of the “new” theme have been carefully prepared by Beethoven at earlier points in the movement. This does not, he argues, eliminate entirely the newness of the theme. It does, however, exclude the interpretation that “something entirely foreign has come in the sonata form.”<sup>56</sup> In his article, “Plato—Beethoven,” Ian Bent identifies this passage as a musical *aporia*, a stage in the hermeneutic reading of a text at which the reader confronts an impasse.<sup>57</sup> The reader must then shift from one level of analysis to

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<sup>55</sup> Heinrich Schenker, trans. Derreck Puffett and Alfred Clayton, “Beethoven’s Third Symphony: Its True Content Described for the First Time,” in *The Masterwork in Music*, Vol. 3 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997): 31. [“So gesehen stellt diese Entfesselung gleichsam eine gleichsam Zwischenwand vor, von der sich die letzten Teile der Durchführung um so wirksamer abheben sollen.” Heinrich Schenker, “Beethoven’s Dritte Sinfonie zum Erstenmal in Ihrem Wahren Inhalt Dargestellt,” in *Das Meisterwerk in der Musik*, Vol. 3 (Vienna: Drei Masken, 1930; repr. Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1974): 50.]

<sup>56</sup> “Aber eine gewisse Verwandtschaft ist doch da, und der Ansicht, als käme etwas ganz Fremdes in die Sonatenform, wird damit gesteuert.” Alfred Lorenz, “Worauf beruht die bekannte Wirkung der Durchführung im I.Eroicasatze,” *Neues Beethoven-Jahrbuch* (1924): 160. I am indebted to Richard Kramer for this reference.

<sup>57</sup> Bent, “Plato-Beethoven”: 18, 19.

another—either higher or lower—to resolve the stalemate. A formal disjunction such as the E minor theme is precisely the kind of event that a hermeneuticist would seize upon as subject for investigation.

Whatever the motivation for these interpretations, whatever the narrative that each writer produces, what is striking in all cases is precisely the need *for* interpretation. This dramatic juncture in the symphony demands explanation. Noteworthy too is the urgency of some writers to incorporate into a larger unity a musical event that by most accounts vehemently defies that unity. In fact, it is precisely the E-minor theme's otherness that qualifies the *Eroica* as a candidate for nineteenth-century dialectical conceptions of unity. Johann Gottlieb Fichte's definition is apropos: “. . . true unity would be the ‘inner and organic unity,’ [consisting] of ‘apparent unity and apparent disjunction. . . .’”<sup>58</sup> In the case of the E-minor theme, the apparent disjunction is that heard in performance prior to analytic engagement with the piece; the apparent unity is that developed through application of a particular theoretical apparatus—bar-form and thematic analysis in the case of Lorenz, a theory of linear progressions in the case of Schenker—that explains away the apparent disjunction. By these means it is possible to achieve the “inner and organic unity.”

Let's return now to E.T.A. Hoffmann, and to his musical contemporaries. A writer reviewing the *Eroica* symphony in the *AmZ* in 1807 remarked:

Completely surprising, absolutely new and beautiful is it, for example, that in the course of the second section, where the development of the earlier ideas begins to be almost too much, suddenly a completely new, not yet heard melody, is conceived by

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<sup>58</sup> Johann Gottlieb Fichte, cited in E. Heintel, “Eine, (das) Einheit,” in *Historisches Wörterbuch*, Vol. 2, ed. Joachim Ritter (Basel: Schwabe and Co., 1972): Col. 379. Fichte's concept of unity receives a fuller discussion in the philosophical discussion of unity that follows.

the winds and handled episodically. By this means not only does the total charm and variety increase, but also the listener is refreshed so that he is happy again to follow the composer when he returns to the abandoned homeland, and with still richer art clothes and develops the principal ideas. . . . *This allegro, in spite of its length, was composed with a concern for unity which we can only admire* [emphasis added].<sup>59</sup>

Two aspects of the review merit attention: first, its singling out of the novelty of the new theme; and second, its attention to unity as a praiseworthy feature. In contrast to other reviewers, this writer finds in the first movement of the *Eroica* a perceptible and commendable unity, despite its great length.

This *AmZ* review appeared in 1807. It signals an attitude of unequivocal approbation, an unquestioning seal of approval that was conspicuously absent in the reviews from 1805 cited above. Differences in performance aside—not a dismissible aspect, since the symphony’s considerable technical difficulties produced tremendous variance in performance quality—all of these writers address the same piece of music. And yet where one finds unity, another believes that unity “was all but completely lost.” Where one hears “increased charm and variety,” another hears “bizarreness, shrillness.” Thus the question I address here is not, “Is this, or any other symphony by Beethoven, unified,” but rather, “Why does unity matter?” Investigating this question will involve a study of concepts of unity both in ancient Greek writings and in writings more nearly

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<sup>59</sup> “Ganz überraschend, durchaus neu u. schön ist es z. B., dass im Verfolg dieses 2ten Theils, wo des Ausführens der frühern Ideen fast zu viel zu werden anfängt, plötzlich ein ganz neuer, noch nicht gehörter Gesang von den Blasinstrumenten aufgefasst und episodisch behandelt wird—wodurch denn nicht nur die Summe des Angenehmen und seine Mannichfaltigkeit vermehrt, sondern der Zuhörer auch erfrischt wird, dem Verf. wieder gern zu folgen, wenn er zu der verlassenen Heimath zurückkehrt, und mit noch reicherer Kunst die Hauptgedanken einkleidet und durchführt. . . . dieses Allegro, ohngeachtet seiner Länge, mit einer Sorgsamkeit zur Einheit zusammengehalten ist, die Bewunderung abnöthigt. . . .” Author not indicated, review of the *Eroica*, *AmZ*, 1807 (Kunze, *Ludwig van Beethoven*: 58 and 60).

contemporaneous with Hoffmann's review. It will involve too an attempt to articulate the distinctiveness of Hoffmann's own concept of organic unity.

#### - Important Moments in the History of the Idea of Unity

In discussing salient features of the earliest Greek philosophers, W.K.C. Guthrie comments:

The search for a unity in the universe behind the multiplicity of phenomena is perennial and universal. It is a religious and aesthetic, a philosophic and a scientific need; and it appears at all periods of history.<sup>60</sup>

The particular character of the search, however—its goals, its assumptions, and its conclusions—can vary widely. The earliest Greek philosophers, so-called Milesians of the sixth century B.C.E., abandoned the mythical apparatus of Greek gods, setting in its place the notion of a single substance, a primal unity out of which the world arose. Pythagoras and his followers started with the assumption that the universe is one, eternal, and divine. They sought neither the basic material stuff of the universe nor the physical processes by which it came into being. Instead, they hoped to explain the universe's order (*kosmiotes*) in terms of number and harmony (*harmonia*), a joining or fitting of things together or a unity stemming from reconciliation of opposites. In Chapter 1, I cited formulations by Plato and Aristotle of unity applied to poetics.<sup>61</sup> Both writers were concerned with the relationship of parts to each other and to the whole; both attributed to unity an organic quality.

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<sup>60</sup> W.K.C. Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy*, Vol. 1, *The Earlier Presocratics and the Pythagoreans* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1962): 70. The following discussion is indebted to Guthrie's time-honored history, and to articles on Thales, Anaximander, Anaximenes, Pythagoras, and Pythagoreanism in the *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward Craig (London & New York, 1998).

<sup>61</sup> Definitions appear in Chapter 1, pp. 4, 5.

Concern for unity was one of many Greek ideas revived and adapted by late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century writers.<sup>62</sup> These later writers were particularly concerned with unities of reality and of consciousness. Philosophers from the medieval period through the time of Descartes had posited two separate and opposing spheres of reality: the phenomenal and the noumenal, or supersensuous.<sup>63</sup> In the eighteenth century, Newtonian science, then at its zenith, explained the workings of the phenomenal world in terms of necessary, causal laws, sometimes termed mechanical. Writers frequently invoked the analogy of the machine to depict such workings more concretely. The supersensuous or noumenal sphere was believed to operate according to different principles and to maintain a sphere of existence separate from the world of phenomena. God, the principal occupant of the noumenal sphere, was thought to have set in motion the objects of the phenomenal world. Because the phenomenal world operated according to necessary, causal laws, God's presence was required only intermittently to tune up the mechanism he had created. Thus, for these seventeenth- and eighteenth-century thinkers, the two spheres continued largely discrete but parallel existences.

A number of philosophers took up this issue in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. In his third *Critique* (1790), for instance, Kant attempts a philosophical rapprochement between these opposing realms through the intermediary faculty of judgment. He characterizes the two realms as sensible (*sinnlich*) and

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<sup>62</sup> J. Ch. Adelung, summarizing the philosophical thrust of Leibniz, Kant, and Hegel, claims that, for these writers, "all of philosophy is nothing other than the study of definitions of unity" ["... für den die ganze Philosophie nichts Anderes ist als das Studium der Bestimmungen der Einheit. . ."] Cited in E. Heintel, "Eine (das), Einheit," in *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*, Vol. 2: Col. 377.

<sup>63</sup> For this discussion I am indebted to Frederick Copleston's introduction to *A History of Philosophy*, Vol. 7 (New York: Image Books, 1994): 6,7.

supersensible (*übersinnlich*). In his introduction to the *Critique* he describes their interaction like this:

Now even if an immeasurable gulf is fixed between the sensible realm of the concept of nature and the supersensible realm of the concept of freedom, so that no transition is possible from the first to the second, . . . just as if they were two different worlds of which the first could have no influence upon the other, yet the second is *meant* to have an influence upon the first. . . . There must, therefore, be a ground of the *unity* of the supersensible, which lies at the basis of nature, with that which the concept of freedom practically contains; and the concept of this ground, although it does not attain either theoretically or practically to a knowledge of the same, and hence has no particular realm, nevertheless makes possible the transition from the mode of thought according to the principles of the one to that according to the principles of the other.<sup>64</sup>

According to this formulation, the unity achieved through the mediating function of judgment does not subsume the opposing spheres under a single rubric. Instead, judgment effects a palpable but uneasy transition between them; the spheres remain intact and separate.

Kant's *Ding-an-sich* (thing-in-itself) is a necessary epistemological fallout from this framework. In a manner analogous to the separate spheres of sensible and supersensible, he presupposes a sharp distinction between subject and object. This latter

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<sup>64</sup> Kant, *Critique of Judgment*: 12. ["Ob nun zwar eine unübersehbare Kluft zwischen dem Gebiete des Naturbegriffs, als dem Sinnlichen, und dem Gebiete des Freiheitsbegriffs, als dem Übersinnlichen, befestigt ist, so dass von dem ersteren zum anderen . . . kein Übergang möglich ist, gleich als ob es so viel verschiedene Welten wären, deren erste auf die zweite keinen Einfluss haben kann: so soll doch diese auf jene einen Einfluss haben. . . . Also muss es doch einen Grund der Einheit des Übersinnlichen, welches der Natur zum Grunde liegt, mit dem, was der Freiheitsbegriff praktisch enthält, geben, wovon der Begriff, wenn er gleich weder theoretisch noch praktisch zu einem Erkenntnis desselben gelangt, mithin kein eigenthümliches Gebiet hat, dennoch den Übergang von der Denkungsart nach den Principien der einen zu der nach Principien der anderen möglich macht." Kant, *Kritik der Urteilskraft*: 24.] Kant's subject heading for the next section in the introduction makes clear the thrust of his philosophical enterprise: "Of the Critique of Judgment as a Means of Combining the Two Parts of Philosophy Into a Whole" [*Von der Kritik der Urtheilskraft, als einem Verbindungsmittel der zwei Theile der Philosophie zu einem Ganzen*].

distinction makes it impossible for a person to know the object they perceive. What the person *can* know is his own experience of that object.<sup>65</sup>

It is on this point that Fichte makes his own important contribution to the idea of unity as applied to issues of knowledge and consciousness. His commitment to idealist tenets led him to believe that “what is real is in some way confined to or at least related to the contents of our own mind.”<sup>66</sup> The *Ding-an-sich* does not survive in the idealist paradigm. If reality is confined to what is in our minds, there is no reality outside our minds. There *is* no unknowable thing out there. Already in his earliest philosophical writings Fichte discarded the *Ding-an-sich*, tendering in its place the “self-in-itself” [*Ich-an-sich*]<sup>67</sup> that, “through its cognitive faculties . . . creates and determines the objects which constitute the external world.” The unity of reality thus exists “only in and for the conscious mind.”<sup>68</sup> In this way Fichte obviates the need for a unity of sensible and supersensible. For him, reality consists only of the supersensible.

Fichte’s analogies facilitate a more concrete entrance into his thought and a clearer understanding of the self-in-itself. The starting point of one analogy involves a contemporary definition of harmony as “that which arises out of the concord of several instruments.” Fichte offers in its place a new idealist definition:

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<sup>65</sup> This is precisely what happens in an experience of the sublime, as formulated by Kant. The observer gains no knowledge of the object but only of their own subjective experience of that object.

<sup>66</sup> D. W. Hamlyn, “Idealism, philosophical,” *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy*: 386.

<sup>67</sup> Johann Gottlieb Fichte, *Science of Knowledge, with First and Second Introductions*, ed. and trans. Peter Heath and John Lachs (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1970): 10.

<sup>68</sup> Peter Heath and John Lachs, Introduction to *Science of Knowledge, with First and Second Introductions*, by Johann Gottlieb Fichte, ed. and trans. Peter Heath and John Lachs (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1970): viii.

The concord and the harmony are not in the instruments; they are only in the mind of the listener *who unifies the manifold in himself*, and unless such a listener is supplied, they are nothing at all [emphasis added].<sup>69</sup>

A companion analogy amplifies and clarifies Fichte's view. Concerning a chemist who synthesizes a metal from its elements, Fichte comments: "the ordinary man sees the metal familiar to him; the chemist, the union of these specific elements. They see the same thing, though in different ways."<sup>70</sup> The reality of the metal and, especially, its "unity," depends upon the individual's experience with it.

What can we glean about Fichte's concept of unity as applied to reality from these analogies? I believe that the following is central, as explicated by Fichte in his analysis:

We know well enough that the thing comes into being surely through an action in accord with these laws, that it is nothing else but the *totality of these relations unified by the imagination*, and that all these relations together constitute the thing; the object is surely the synthesis of all these concepts [emphasis original].<sup>71</sup>

Fichte's analogies point up his commitment to a metaphysical theory of reality. They also draw attention to a concept central to Fichte's entire philosophy: synthesis. For Fichte, synthesis constitutes a special kind of unity accomplished through the dialectic

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<sup>69</sup> Fichte, *Science of Knowledge*: 18. ["Der Zusammenklang und die Harmonie ist nicht in den Instrumenten; sie ist nur in dem Geiste des Zuhörers, der in sich das mannigfaltige in Eins vereinigt; und wenn nicht ein solcher hinzugedacht wird, ist sie überhaupt nicht." Johann Gottlieb Fichte, *Sämtliche Werke*, ed. I.H. Fichte (Berlin: Veit und Comp., 1845): Vol. 1: 437.]

<sup>70</sup> Fichte, *Science of Knowledge*: 28. ["Der Chemiker setzt einen Körper, etwa ein bestimmtes Metall, aus seinen Elementen zusammen. Der gemeine Mann sieht das ihm wohl bekannte Metall; der Chemiker die Verknüpfung des Körpers und der bestimmten Elemente. Sehen denn nun beide etwas anderes? Ich dünke nicht; sie sehen dasselbe, nur auf eine andere Art." Fichte, *Sämtliche Werke*, Vol. 1: 449.]

<sup>71</sup> Fichte, *Science of Knowledge*: 23. ["Wir wissen es wohl, das Ding entsteht allerdings durch ein Handeln nach diesen Gesetzen, das Ding ist gar nichts anderes, als—*alle diese Verhältnisse durch die Einbildungskraft zusammengefasst*, und alle diese Verhältnisse mit einander sind das Ding; das Object ist allerdings die ursprüngliche Synthesis aller jener Begriffe." Fichte, *Sämtliche Werke*, Vol. 1: 443.]

process of thesis—antithesis—synthesis. Synthesis brings about the unity of opposites so central to early nineteenth-century thought and permits Fichte to reconcile opposing ideas and concepts. In the case of the musical listener, the principle permits him to hear the concord of different instruments. In the case of the metal, this principle permits the chemist to see the union or synthesis of different materials. More abstractly, the principle permits the individual to operate in life with the assumption of the unity of his or her own consciousness. This belief in the power of the mind to create a synthesis proved central for all subsequent idealist philosophers. In Fichte's words: ". . . the unity of consciousness . . . cannot annul itself, and the opposites it contains must be capable of reconciliation."<sup>72</sup>

While Fichte devoted much of his energy to demonstrating the power of the conscious mind to bring together opposing elements, his early disciple Friedrich von Schelling transferred the issue to art. Following Fichte, Schelling carried forward the notion of reconciling opposites. But while Fichte invoked the concept of synthesis, Schelling conceptualized the world of phenomena and noumena not so much as opposing but as interpenetrating. The artist, through the power of artistic imagination (*Einbildungskraft*), gives material form to the spiritual or ideal. In fact, Schelling defines artistic imagination precisely as that power to "in-form" [*einbilden*]<sup>73</sup>—literally, to "give form to."<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Fichte, *Science of Knowledge*: 128. [" . . . die Einheit des Bewusstseyns . . . kann sich demnach nicht aufheben, sondern die Gegensätze, die in ihm liegen, müssen sich vereinigen lassen." Fichte, *Sämmtliche Werke*, Vol. 1: 132.]

<sup>73</sup> Douglas Stott supplies this translation in his introduction to Friedrich von Schelling, *The Philosophy of Art*, ed. and trans. Douglas W. Stott (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989): xliii. Schelling's notion of *einbilden* recalls the discussion in Chapter 1. There Schelling's philosophical model was shown to be concerned with real and ideal potences and, especially, with the movement of one into the other. See discussion above, pp. 27, 28.

One final writer deserves mention here: Goethe. A belief in the fundamental unity of nature (including humankind) underlies Goethe's entire philosophical and scientific enterprise. The following, from an 1807 conversation with Riemer, neatly encapsulates the fundamentals of his approach:

Nature, however diverse it appears, is surely always one thing, a unity, and so, if it manifests itself partially, all that remains must serve as a foundation to the part, and the part must be related to all the rest.<sup>74</sup>

Goethe's concern, like that of his musical contemporary E.T.A. Hoffmann, lies not with surface appearances but with underlying unity and cohesion. Like Hoffmann, Goethe seeks unifying principles of organization beneath or behind the surface, principles discovered from study and reflection.

Given the centrality of concepts of unity to early nineteenth-century idealist philosophy, combined with its sweeping influence in German-speaking Europe, it is hardly surprising and, perhaps, inevitable, that writers on music would adduce it for their own purposes. Hoffmann, for one, was well acquainted with these philosophical concerns. While a student of law in Königsberg, he encountered Kant's philosophy, both by sampling Kant's lectures and through conversation with fellow students. In a diary entry from 1807 Hoffmann comments that "Fichte and Schleiermacher are here [in Berlin] again. . . ." Goethe's literary writings served as a point of inspiration for some of Hoffmann's first musical compositions. Harvey Hewett-Thayer, Hoffmann's biographer in English, remarks that, "Goethe's supreme greatness, one may say, Hoffmann took for

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<sup>74</sup> "Die Natur, so mannigfaltig sie erscheint, ist doch immer ein Eins, eine Einheit, und so muss, wenn sie sich teilweise manifestiert, alles übrige diesem zur Grundlage dienen, dieses in dem übrigen Zusammenhang haben." J. W. von Goethe, *Goethes Gespräche*, ed. Flodoard Freiherr von Biedermann (Leipzig, 1909-11), Vol. 1: 479. Cited in H.B. Nisbet, *Goethe and the Scientific Tradition* (Leeds: W.S. Maney and Son, 1972): 6. Translation from Nisbet, with small alterations.

granted.” Finally, Hoffmann familiarized himself with the philosophy of Schelling, especially through his reading of Schelling’s *Von der Weltseele* and *System of Transcendental Idealism*.<sup>75</sup>

But how exactly did Hoffmann employ concepts of unity in his efforts to develop analytic language for Beethoven’s music and in his campaign to elevate Beethoven to the status enjoyed at this time by Mozart and Haydn? The specifics of the analytic approach appear in the ensuing chapter sections on pantheism, Shakespeare, and *hohe Besonnenheit*. Hoffmann’s efforts to raise Beethoven’s status center on a strategy that places Beethoven’s music within the purview of a long-established and revered aesthetic ideal of unity first set forth in ancient Greece and freshly resuscitated by August Schlegel for the writings of Shakespeare. Such an argument pointed to a continuum in which Beethoven’s music constituted another stage rather than a radical departure.<sup>76</sup> Another tactic to improve Beethoven’s standing involved upping the ante from issues of music reception to items of profound philosophical and aesthetic import. By engaging significant philosophical issues that dominated the thinking of his time, Hoffmann drew Beethoven’s music into the center of contemporary intellectual discussions, making the music a topic not only for musicians but also for the intelligentsia at large. Finally, Hoffmann makes reference to demands for unity articulated within pantheistic frames of

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<sup>75</sup> Reference to Harvey Hewett-Thayer, *E.T.A. Hoffmann: Author of the Tales* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1948). Re: Kant: 113, 114. Re: Fichte: In a letter to Hippel, December 12, 1807, Hoffmann wrote: “Fichte und Schleiermacher sind wieder hier [in Berlin]. . .” 42, n. 31. Re: Goethe: 347. Re: Schelling: 115. Another reference to Schelling comes in Ian Bent’s valuable introduction to Volume 1 of his *Music Analysis in the Nineteenth Century*: 12.

<sup>76</sup> Such thinking shows Hoffmann’s equivocal stance with respect to his placement of Beethoven in relation to Haydn and Mozart. In my discussion of the sublime I noted his efforts to demonstrate the otherness of Beethoven’s music. Here he argues for ways in which Beethoven’s music fits a time-honored evaluative criterion.

reference that dominated early nineteenth-century thinking in philosophy, religion, and the arts. The tree invoked by Hoffmann was the image of choice for this movement. When Hoffmann compared Beethoven's Fifth Symphony to the tree, the terms of his comparison lay not so much with the Fifth Symphony and a living tree but rather with the ways in which the Fifth Symphony resembled the harmony and connectedness of a living, organic universe. It is to this concept of unity that I turn now.

#### IV. Pantheism and the Organic Metaphor

Hoffmann's review of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony appeared in the *AmZ* just three years after the review that praised the composer of the *Eroica* for his "concern for unity." The cardinal importance of unity as an evaluative criterion was by this time firmly entrenched in the critical and semantic traditions of the journal.<sup>77</sup> The discussion immediately preceding, moreover, has demonstrated the central place of unity within the cultural and philosophical dialogues of the time. Hoffmann, meanwhile, ups the analytic and aesthetic ante by invoking a more specific kind of unity: namely, an organic unity. In describing the unity and inner coherence that he believes lies at the heart of the Fifth Symphony, Hoffmann borrows a metaphor from early nineteenth-century Shakespeare criticism that compares the unity of Shakespeare's plays with that of a tree. Two questions arise immediately: Why Shakespeare? And why trees?

To answer the second of these questions, let's first examine the metaphor in more detail. (Shakespeare is the subject of the next section.) Hoffmann writes that "only a

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<sup>77</sup> Robin Wallace details important moments in the history of the concept of unity as played out in the early years of the *AmZ* in *Beethoven's Critics: Aesthetic Dilemmas and Resolutions During the Composer's Lifetime* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986): 14, and *passim*.

more profound look shows the beautiful tree, bud and leaves, the blossom and fruit as shooting forth from one seed. . . .” The metaphor of musical works beginning from seeds and growing eventually into beautiful trees, complete with bud, leaves, blossom and fruit, was becoming commonplace in Hoffmann’s time. The fact that he devotes little effort to explaining the idea suggests that the reference would have been self-evident to readers of the time. To a reader in the twenty-first century, however, these relationships are scarcely axiomatic and therefore require decoding.

We can begin by asking what features of trees most interest Hoffmann. First, Hoffmann, borrowing from Shakespeare criticism, chooses a living thing. From the time of Plato’s *Phaedrus* writers have advocated that speeches, tragedies, and various forms of art, exhibit a living quality. Johann Fichte’s second introduction to the *Wissenschaftslehre* supplies evidence for the powerful resurgence of the belief in the early nineteenth century:

The *Wissenschaftslehre*’s chosen topic of conversation is not a lifeless concept, passively exposed to its inquiry merely, . . . but a living and active thing which engenders insights from and through itself, and which the philosopher merely contemplates.<sup>78</sup>

Second, a tree begins its life as a seed. The belief that works of art, organisms in nature, and fields of scholarly inquiry begin life as a seed became especially prominent in the second half of the eighteenth century. In his 1766-7 essay, *Fragmente über die neuere deutsche Literatur*, Herder defines three successive stages in the development of a language which, like societies and the universe, evolve as an organism. For Herder,

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<sup>78</sup> Fichte, *Science of Knowledge*: 30. [“Ganz anders verhält es sich mit der Wissenschaftslehre. Dasjenige, was sie zum Gegenstande ihres Denkens macht, ist nicht ein todter Begriff, der sich gegen ihre Untersuchung nur leidend verhalte, . . . sondern es ist ein Lebendiges und Thätiges, das aus sich selbst und durch sich selbst Erkenntnisse erzeugt, und welchem der Philosoph bloss zusieht.” Fichte, *Sämmtliche Werke*, Vol. 1: 454.]

poetry, prose and philosophy exhibit the organic growth cycle of germination, buds, blossoming, and withering.<sup>79</sup> The metaphor of a seed fits admirably with a work like the Fifth Symphony, in which the four-note “germ” with which the first movement begins pervades the entire musical fabric.<sup>80</sup> Hoffmann was acutely aware of the motive’s centrality. His prose description of the Symphony’s musical events draws immediate attention to the “main idea [that] consists of just two measures, [and that] subsequently always shows itself variously shaped.”<sup>81</sup> To further emphasize its significance Hoffmann provides the first twenty-one measures of the first movement in full score—the only musical excerpt so lengthy, and in full score. Notably, the pervasiveness of this motive extends much beyond the first movement. It is truly the seed for the entire work.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> “. . . keimt, trägt Knospen, blüht und verblüht.” Johann Gottfried von Herder, *Fragmente über die neuere deutsche Literatur*, in Herder, *Sämtliche Werke*, Vol. 1, ed. Bernhard Suphan (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1967). Cited in Eric Blackall, *The Origins of German as a Literary Language 1700-1775*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1978): 452.

<sup>80</sup> Schenker had much to say about the “germ” or motive from which the work is developed. Unlike Hoffmann, however, he believed that the main motive consists of the first four measures. Heinrich Schenker, [*Analysis of the First Movement*], in *Der Tonwille*, Issue 1 (1921): 27-37. English translation in Ludwig van Beethoven, *Symphony No. 5 in C Minor, Op. 67*, Norton Critical Scores, ed. Elliot Forbes (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1971): 164-182.

<sup>81</sup> “. . . nur aus zwei Takten bestehenden Hauptgedanken, der in der Folge, mannigfach gestaltet, immer wieder durchblickt.” Kunze, *Ludwig van Beethoven*: 102. When describing Beethoven’s method of thematic development in his review of the Trios, Op. 70, Hoffmann adduces an explicit organic image: “It evinces the master’s boundless wealth of invention and his penetration of the harmonic depths, that from a single idea a few bars long so many motives are generated, springing from it like the luxuriant blossom and fruit of a fertile tree.” In David Charlton, ed., *E.T.A. Hoffmann’s Musical Writings*: 315. Cited in Burnham, *Review of E.T.A. Hoffmann’s Musical Writings*: 295.

<sup>82</sup> The longevity of this idea—explicated first by Hoffmann in his review—is documented in the recent article on Beethoven in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.: “More than any other piece of music, the Fifth Symphony has come to typify the thematic unification, or ‘organicism’, as the 19<sup>th</sup> century viewed it, that Beethoven developed to such a high degree in these years. The famous opening motif is to be heard in almost every bar of the first movement—and, allowing for modifications, in the other movements.” Joseph Kerman, et. al., “Beethoven,” in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. L. Mace (Accessed 18 October 2002), <<http://www.grovemusic.com>>

Finally, Hoffmann is interested in the growth process of trees, whose parts spring forth from a single seed [*aus einem Keim treibend*]. With his emphasis on processes rather than on static objects, Hoffmann's conception resonates forcefully with contemporaneous philosophical tenets. Fichte described an object as the "totality of relations unified by the imagination." The object is thus not an object, *per se*, but a system of relations. Fichte believed further that "all reality is active, and that everything active is reality."<sup>83</sup> Schelling's philosophy similarly emphasized processes rather than objects or individuals. Schelling's "God" is the "ultimate or basic organizational principle of the universe," and "implies the idea of generative *activity*."<sup>84</sup> In other words, organic criticism is centrally concerned with process. In a footnote to Hoffmann's review, Ian Bent comments: "the organic imagery quoted here is actually attributed to the works of Shakespeare, not Beethoven, and is thus at best an oblique reference to musical process."<sup>85</sup> Bent's footnote dismisses out-of-hand the tremendous power the metaphor held in Hoffmann's time and the great impetus for Hoffmann to associate Beethoven's music with Shakespeare's plays. Far from supplying merely "an oblique reference," the metaphor demonstrates ways in which Beethoven's music and compositional method intersect with and exemplify aesthetic doctrines central to Hoffmann's time.

An additional quality of trees, highlighted not by Hoffmann but by Ulibishev (in his discussion of Mozart's "Haydn" quartets), concerns the relations that exist among the parts (see discussion and quotation from Ulibishev above, p. 42). The different

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<sup>83</sup> Both references are to Fichte, *Science of Knowledge*: 23, 129, respectively.

<sup>84</sup> Douglas W. Stott, Introduction to *The Philosophy of Art*, by Friedrich Schelling: xxxiv.

<sup>85</sup> Bent, ed., *Music Analysis in the Nineteenth Century*, Vol. 2: 142, n. 5.

components of which the tree consists—leaves, branches, and trunk—exhibit important features that interested musical and literary analysts. In his discussion, Ulibishev draws attention to these aspects: first, the association among musical ideas is like that among the parts of the tree; second, the development of musical ideas is like that of the branches and leaves that are created by the trunk; and finally, both musical ideas and trees exhibit “necessity.” In the case of musical ideas, this necessity is aesthetic.

One final item deserves mention here: the importance of the tree as a well-established symbol for organic life. In the *Critique of Judgment* Kant points up the difference between organic and mechanical functioning by comparing the workings of a tree with those of a watch. A watch possesses moving power but it lacks the formative power of a self-propagating kind that characterizes the tree, and any other organic entity. The tree, moreover, is an organized and self-organizing being (*CJ*: 218-222). Kant’s choice of a tree, while hardly haphazard, nevertheless reflects a generic function for the tree. The tree exemplifies organic workings but it does not symbolize these in any fixed way. The analogy need not serve the more demanding function of metaphor. We observe a quite different situation with the pantheists, to whom I turn now.

The *Oxford Companion to Philosophy* defines a pantheist as

one who holds both that everything there is constitutes a unity and that this unity is divine. Pantheists . . . deny the radical distinction between God and creatures drawn in monotheistic religions. A familiar philosophical example of pantheism is Spinoza’s doctrine that there is only one substance and it is divine; he describes this substance as *Deus sive natura* (God or nature).<sup>86</sup>

The following key ideas are important to this discussion. First, pantheism is concerned with unity. Like the ancient Milesians and Pythagoreans, pantheists seek a unity that

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<sup>86</sup> O.L Reiser, “Pantheism,” in *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy*: 641.

encompasses the entire universe. Second, pantheists believe that the unity of the universe is divine. Their system thus carries with it religious and theological import. Third, the pantheistic belief system dissolves boundaries between God and creatures. If “all is God,” then the distinction between creator and creature disappears.<sup>87</sup> Finally, the Dutch Jewish philosopher Baruch Spinoza (1632-1677) is central to pantheistic thought for the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. His doctrine of one substance recalls the philosophy of the ancient Milesians; his belief that this substance is divine set the foundation for a radical religious reorientation in the late eighteenth- and early nineteenth centuries.

Spinoza’s heterodox beliefs embroiled him in religious disputes early in his life.<sup>88</sup> His doctrine of a single divine substance of which the entire world consists proved especially contentious, and branded him as a heretic with both Christians and Jews. While Spinoza’s philosophy proved remarkable for its internal adherence to strictly logical principles, it nevertheless deprived seventeenth-century Europe of some of its most cherished religious beliefs: personal immortality, the uniqueness and indestructibility of the human soul, and a transcendent God who had set the universe in motion.

Though denigrated in his own lifetime, Spinoza’s philosophy waited only until the next century for its renaissance. As early as 1780, Lessing concluded a letter to Jacobi as

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<sup>87</sup> Toland, in his *Pantheisticon*, formulated it this way: “The force and energy of the whole, the creator and ruler of all, and always tending to the best end, is God, whom you may call the mind, if you please, and soul of the universe; . . . this force, according to the [Pantheists is] not separated from the *Universe* itself, except by a distinction of reason alone.” John Toland, *Pantheisticon, sive formula celebrandae sodalitatis Socraticae* (Cosmopoli [London?], 1720): 6. Cited in Thomas McFarland, *Coleridge and the Pantheist Tradition* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969): 267. Friedrich Schelling followed Spinoza in his adoption of a single substance. What Spinoza called “God-or-nature,” Schelling called God, the divine Absolute.

<sup>88</sup> For this discussion I am indebted to Thomas McFarland, whose monograph *Coleridge and the Pantheist Tradition* provides an informative introduction to European pantheism. My reading focused on Chapter II, “The Spinozistic Crescendo”: 53-106.

follows: “There is no other philosophy than the philosophy of Spinoza.” Novalis, meanwhile, claimed that Spinoza was a “God-intoxicated man,” and that Spinoza’s doctrines, far from being atheistic, constituted instead “a supersaturation with divinity.” Schleiermacher, commenting on Spinoza in 1799, argued that “[Spinoza] was filled with the lofty world-spirit.” Hegel proclaimed simply that “Spinoza is the highpoint of modern philosophy; either Spinozism, or no philosophy.”<sup>89</sup>

The writers cited here comprise a who’s who of literature, philosophy, and theology in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. What prompted their devotion to Spinoza’s doctrines? What in Spinoza’s philosophy proved so compelling to these writers and to the society as a whole that,

for the mainstream of the intellectual current in Germany, the serious, the almost worshipful, study of Spinoza became increasingly an indispensable groundwork for cultural sophistication in general.<sup>90</sup>

I have already drawn attention to the growing discontent with Enlightenment thought in the latter half of the eighteenth century. The powerful *Sturm und Drang* literary movement, centered in Germany in the second half of the eighteenth century, proved a potent indicator of enlightenment society’s growing dissatisfaction with rationalism. Furthermore, previously powerful forms of organized religion foundered, especially after the cataclysm of the French Revolution and the subsequent redistribution of land and political might. In short, Western Europe was ripe for a new religion and a new philosophical orientation. For some writers, the philosophy of Spinoza supplied both. It satisfied logicians with its internally coherent system of argumentation. At the

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<sup>89</sup> Cited in McFarland, *Coleridge and the Pantheist Tradition*: 78, 84, 86, and 102, respectively.

<sup>90</sup> McFarland, *Coleridge and the Pantheist Tradition*: 87.

same time, it provided a philosophical locus with which artists and writers identified emotionally. Finally, it suggested a more personal religious practice compatible with early nineteenth-century proclivities.

Two writers for whom the philosophy of Spinoza proved especially vital were Herder and Goethe. A student of Kant, and a life-long friend of the philosopher and theologian Johann Georg Hamann (1730-1788), Herder turned to the philosophy of Spinoza in search of a religious outlook that was more closely aligned with his pietistic upbringing. In his 1787 publication, *Gott: Einige Gespräche*, Herder explored the spiritual ramifications of Spinoza's philosophy. Reacting against the Enlightenment's "watchmaker" God "who exists outside the world he created [and] spruces up the machinery occasionally to ensure that it continues its regular and mechanical course," Herder's pietism steered him toward a more mystical interpretation of God and the universe.<sup>91</sup> A primary undertaking for Herder in the *Conversations* was to defend the philosophy of Spinoza against accusations of atheism. Another was to formulate a conception of the Deity whose reality is absolute, and whose evidence is readily apparent "in the very life of the universe . . ." (Herder, *God*: 30). This latter concern effects an important shift in Herder's religious formulations. From Spinoza's pantheism, which claims that all *is* God, Herder migrates to the closely related panentheism, which claims that God *is in* everything. Herder thus proclaims the doctrine of God immanent in the world rather than transcendent of it. The doctrine brings God closer to the lives of ordinary humans and makes possible direct contact with Him. It proffers, too, an

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<sup>91</sup> Frederick H. Burkhardt, Introduction to *God, Some Conversations* by Johann Gottfried von Herder (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1940): 5.

alternative to the Enlightenment God who maintained an existence remote from the lives of his creation.

A further contribution of Herder's made prominent in the *Conversations* is his belief in the dynamism of nature, a notion with which Herder's immanent God is intimately bound up.<sup>92</sup> It is through the dynamic activities of nature that Herder's immanent God demonstrates his presence. God serves then as a "life-force which courses through the veins of the great organism of the universe" (Herder, *God*: 41). Herder also contributed to the momentous shift in metaphor from the universe as mechanism to the universe as organism. The repercussions of the latter would be felt throughout the nineteenth and into the twentieth centuries.

In the fifth dialogue, Theano is made to introduce the tree image:<sup>93</sup>

You have, indeed, warned us against images, Theophron, but is it really intolerable to think of the root as supporting the tree? It would die and be no root if it did not have to support that beautiful creation, the trunk, with its branches, twigs, blossoms and fruit. So God, the eternal root of the immeasurable tree of life which is entwined throughout the universe, He, the infinite source of existence, that greatest gift which only He could give . . . (Herder, *God*: 168).<sup>94</sup>

Theophron, speaking for Herder, accepts the image, and clarifies its meaning. Invoking a characteristic Spinozistic doctrine, Theophron describes the immutability of living creatures and the impossibility of their annihilation. Since the creatures and plants we

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<sup>92</sup> See the discussion in Chapter 1, pp. 22-23.

<sup>93</sup> I introduced the characters of Herder's dialogue in Chapter 1. See p. 22, n. 4084.

<sup>94</sup> Theano's statement concludes as I have presented it here, with an incomplete sentence and ellipsis dots. ["Sie haben uns zwar vor Bildern gewarnt, Theophron; aber ists wohl unerträglich zu denken, dass die Wurzel den Baum trage? Sie stürbe ab und wäre keine Wurzel, wenn sie die schöne Schöpfung des Stammes mit seinen Aesten, Zweigen, Blüthen und Früchten nicht zu tragen hätte. So Gott, die ewige Wurzel vom unermesslichen Baum des Lebens, der durch das Weltall verschlungen ist: Er die unendliche Quelle des Daseyns, das grössesten Geschenks, das nur Er mittheilen konnte. —" Herder, *Gott: Einige Gespräche*: 539, 540.]

observe in the world are but a mode of the World-Spirit who gives them their life, they never really die but are only reabsorbed into its generating force. To conclude the discussion, Theophron takes up Theano's image and completes it, commenting that

God has bestowed the basis of His own blessedness on beings, of which the smallest and the largest like Him enjoy existence, and . . . like branches draw from His eternal root the eternal sap of life (Herder, *God*: 169).<sup>95</sup>

Herder's *Gott* enjoyed an immediate and receptive response in the person of Goethe, with whom Herder maintained a regular correspondence. Goethe read the dialogues while pursuing botanical studies in Italy (1786-88), during the period recalled in his *Italienische Reise*, and he felt himself spurred on in his search for the *Urpflanze*. Even before reading Herder's text, however, Goethe invoked the image of a tree to represent the glories of Gothic architecture and to trumpet the greatness of God. In a prescription to the builder of the Strasbourg Cathedral, Goethe recommends that he

Variegated the imposing wall that you are leading to the heavens so that it climbs like a lofty, far-spreading tree of God, a tree which heralds the glory of the Lord its Master throughout the region with a thousand limbs, millions of branches, and leaves as innumerable as the grains of the ocean's sands.<sup>96</sup>

Goethe does not describe God as a tree, as did Herder, but he clearly associates the tree *with* God. God is its master and it heralds God's glory.

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<sup>95</sup> "Gott hat den Grund seiner Seligkeit Wesen mitgeteilt, die auch wie er, das Kleinste wie das Grösste, Daseyn genießen und . . . als Zweige von seiner Wurzel ewigen Lebenssaft schöpfen." Herder, *Gott: Einige Gespräche*: 541.]

<sup>96</sup> ". . . vermännigfaltige die ungeheure Mauer, die du den Himmel führen sollst, dass sie aufsteige gleich einem hocherhabenen, weitverbreiteten Baume Gottes, der mit tausend Ästen, Millionen Zweigen, und Blättern wie der Sand am Meer, ringsum der Gegend verkündet die Herrlichkeit des Herrn, seines Meisters." Goethe, *Goethes Werke*, Vol. 12: 10. Translation, with small alternations, from Burnham, Review of *E.T.A. Hoffmann's Musical Writings*: 290. The quotation is from Goethe's "Von Deutscher Baukunst," published in 1772.

As discussed in Chapter 1, figurative language held a place of central importance to many late-eighteenth and early nineteenth-century writers. Furthermore, as noted above, Herder adduces an organic metaphor to describe the life cycle of every language, art or science.<sup>97</sup> In his study of language Herder posits three distinct stages of development: the first or natural stage, exemplified by the cries and monosyllabic utterances of an infant; the second or poetic stage, marked by mythology, imagery, and metaphor; and the final or prose stage, in which language becomes reasoned and logical, more perfect, but less poetic. In keeping with Herder's organic metaphor for the life of a language, the poetic stage marks the greatest fulfillment, the stage in which language flowers. The logical stage, coming after the poetic, constitutes not the final stage of perfection but the beginning of decay.<sup>98</sup>

Goethe, a close friend and colleague of Herder, likewise invested much in the power of symbol, metaphor, and analogy. As one of the greatest poets of his age, Goethe was intimately aware both of the limitations of language and of the mysterious power of poetic devices such as metaphor, allegory, and symbol. As a scientist, Goethe railed against the eighteenth-century rationalist mode of explanation which sought to reduce everything to the laws of mechanics. He believed that

just as the mechanical theory of sound tells us nothing of the quality of music, so also do mechanistic, materialistic, or atomistic explanations fail utterly to convey the unfathomable inner life of nature as a whole. They transform the living into something dead.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> See pp. 87, 88, n. 79.

<sup>98</sup> Eric Blackall discusses these categories in *The Emergence of German as a Literary Language*: 452.

<sup>99</sup> "Sie verwandeln das Lebendige in ein Totes." This statement by Goethe is from his *Die Schriften zur Naturwissenschaft I*, 4 (Weimar, 1947): 221. The first part of the quotation is a paraphrase of Goethe by Nisbet. Nisbet, *Goethe and the Scientific Tradition*: 54, 55.

Finally, Goethe maintained throughout his life a fascination with mystery. Commenting on chemical and electrical theories of his time, Goethe values the lack of explanatory power they exhibit. For Goethe the very inconclusiveness that constituted a fault in the view of rationalists left behind that valuable trace of mystery which mechanistic explanations presumed rashly to dissipate.<sup>100</sup>

Pantheist endeavors dovetail with late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century interest in the expressive force of metaphor and with strong beliefs in the living, organic qualities of the universe. Pantheists characteristically employed the tree to symbolize the indwelling spirit they believed permeated the universe. Herder's theological writings, as noted above, attribute explicit religious and spiritual significance to the tree. Goethe adduces the tree to depict the glory of God, as exemplified in the Strasbourg cathedral. Thus, for Hoffmann and the Romantic philosophers, the tree is not only a tree but also an emanation from a universal life force. This spiritual understanding of trees jibes with experiences of music, which does not exist in a concrete physical form. It also coalesces with music's new status in the early nineteenth-century as a "spiritual" art, the experience of which many adopted as an effective and much-needed substitute for practices previously under the purview of organized religion. Furthermore, such a spiritual understanding of trees reflects the early nineteenth-century preoccupation with metaphysics. The power of a symbol such as the tree for the entire universe and its workings no doubt held great appeal for minds turned already toward spiritual and metaphysical realities. It was precisely to these kinds of realities that Hoffmann wished to direct his audience.

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<sup>100</sup> Nisbet, *Goethe and the Scientific Tradition*: 56.

## V. Shakespeare

I return now to the question posed above, “Why Shakespeare?” Hoffmann, together with many of his German contemporaries, participated in a widespread veneration of Shakespeare. Hoffmann’s first encounter with Shakespeare on the stage came one year after the Fifth Symphony review, but he had long been acquainted with Shakespeare’s work. As youths, he and his friend Hippel studied Shakespeare’s plays through the translations of Wieland. By age nineteen, Hoffmann included in his letters to Hippel numerous references to Shakespearean plays and characters, among them Hamlet and Trinculo. At age nineteen, he signed some satirical sketches “Ewald Trinkulo,” and he spoke of Trinculo, the jester in *The Tempest*, as his “ancestor.” The translations of August Schlegel eventually became Hoffmann’s favorite.<sup>101</sup>

Given Shakespeare’s widespread popularity in early nineteenth-century Germany, Hoffmann’s borrowing from Shakespeare criticism is hardly surprising.<sup>102</sup> Shakespeare figured prominently in the cultural dialogues of Hoffman’s day, and contemporary Shakespeare criticism supplied Hoffmann with the cherished organic metaphor. Nevertheless, a comparison with Shakespeare did not always count as an act of approbation. In her essay “Haydn, Shakespeare, and the Rules of Originality,” Elaine Sisman cites contemptuous criticisms of Shakespeare’s plays by the poet Gottsched and by Frederick the Great. Gottsched, reporting on Shakespeare’s *Julius Caesar* in 1741, claimed that “the vilest improvised burlesque of our common comedians is scarcely so

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<sup>101</sup> Summarized from Hewett-Thayer, *E.T.A. Hoffmann: Author of the Tales: passim*.

<sup>102</sup> Lawrence Kramer presents an interesting discussion of Shakespearean currents in Beethoven reception in the writings of Hoffmann, Wagner, Paul Bekker and Donald Frances Tovey in, “The Strange Case of Beethoven’s *Coriolan*: Romantic Aesthetics, Modern Subjectivity, and the Cult of Shakespeare,” *The Musical Quarterly* 79 (1995): 256-280.

full of blunders and errors against the rules of drama and sound reason as this play by Shakespeare.” Frederick the Great, speaking of the works of Shakespeare in general, complained in his book on German literature (1780) that “[In] the public spectacles . . . you will see presented the abominable works of Shakespeare. . . , the whole audience goes into raptures when it listens to these ridiculous farces worthy of the savages of Canada.”<sup>103</sup> Amadeus Wendt, more nearly contemporaneous with Hoffmann, in articles published in the *AmZ* around 1815, called Beethoven the “musical Shakespeare.” Wendt’s comment was no accolade; instead, he adduced the comparison to highlight Beethoven’s tendency to “mix contrasting feelings with no apparent rhyme or reason beyond the sweep of his own fantasy.”<sup>104</sup>

In light of such critical ambiguities lurking in the reception of Shakespeare’s works, one wonders what exactly Hoffmann hoped to gain from the comparison, especially since early reviewers accused Beethoven of precisely the faults decried in Shakespeare. I believe that Hoffmann sought to achieve for Beethoven what a writer like August Schlegel eventually gained for Shakespeare: a belief not only in the genius of the artist but also in the perfection and organic unity of his output. Schlegel was a central figure in German romanticism as both poet and critic. His public lectures, delivered both in Vienna and Berlin, were instrumental in formulating and publicizing the ideas of his

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<sup>103</sup> Gottsched, *Beiträge zur critischen Historie der Deutschen Sprache* (1741), vol. 7: 516; Frederick the Great, *De le littérature allemande* (1780). Cited in Sisman, “Haydn, Shakespeare, and the Rules of Originality”: 12.

<sup>104</sup> Summarized in Wallace, *Beethoven’s Critics*: 27.

fellow romantics. A note in Hoffmann's diary indicates both his familiarity with and his approbation of the content of Schlegel's lectures.<sup>105</sup>

One central issue addressed by both Schlegel and Hoffmann is the perception of genius and, more particularly, the way in which the artist was believed to produce his artworks. Schlegel and Hoffmann defend Shakespeare and Beethoven by confronting the firmly entrenched idea that these artists created according to dictates of wild genius rather than with the calm mastery of conscious, rational control.<sup>106</sup> In his *Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature*, published in 1807-08, Schlegel describes what he believes to be a fallacious view of Shakespeare's genius:

An idea, however, soon became prevalent that Shakspeare [sic] was a rude and wild genius, who poured forth at random, and without aim or object, his unconnected compositions.<sup>107</sup>

Shakespeare suffered such a characterization through much of the eighteenth century, being vindicated by Schlegel and others only at the beginning of the nineteenth.<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> I have been unable to ascertain the precise date of Hoffmann's first acquaintance with Schlegel's lectures. In a diary entry from January 12, 1811 Hoffmann comments: "Read much in Schlegel's *Lectures on Dramatic Art*: I will copy out the most important definitions from this work *ad usum*." This diary entry post-dates the Fifth Symphony review but does not rule out the possibility of Hoffmann having been acquainted with Schlegel's lectures before or during his writing of the Fifth Symphony review. Reference cited in Hewett-Thayer, *E.T.A. Hoffmann: Author of the Tales*: 352.

<sup>106</sup> The characterization of the genius would undergo substantive changes over the course of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth. Hoffmann mentions two genius personas: one wild and unruly, given to outbursts of passion, the other optimally balanced between forces of reason and passion. Audiences of Beethoven's time placed him in the first category—one they regarded with suspicion. Hoffmann thus felt it his duty to demonstrate Beethoven's qualifications for the second. The discussion of *hohe Besonnenheit* later in the chapter details this aspect of Hoffmann's agenda.

<sup>107</sup> Augustus William Schlegel, *Course of Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature*, trans. John Black (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1846): 346. ["Indessen kam schon frühzeitig die Vorstellung in Gang, Shakspeare sei ein rohes Genie gewesen, und habe blindlings unzusammenhängende Dichtungen auf gut Glück hingeschüttet." Roy Pascal, *Shakespeare in Germany, 1740-1815* (Cambridge: The University Press, 1937): 142.]

Popular belief imposed the characterization upon Beethoven well into the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Hoffmann, an early reporter of the image, writes in his 1810 review of the Fifth Symphony:

it is usual to regard [Beethoven's] works merely as products of a genius who is unconcerned about form and choice or selection of [musical] thoughts, who gives himself up to his fire and the momentary inspirations of his imagination.<sup>109</sup>

Implicit in both descriptions are these beliefs: first, that these artists produced their works without conscious reflection; and second, that the artistic product resulting from such processes lacks unity and inner coherence, lacks an over-arching idea that would bind the parts into a unified whole.

Schlegel cites a long line of predominantly English critics who decried Shakespeare both for his lack of learning and his failure to refine through revision his spontaneous poetic outbursts. Ben Jonson (1573-1637), the younger contemporary of Shakespeare, for instance, "gave it as his opinion that Shakespeare did not blot enough, and that as he did not possess much school-learning, he owed more to nature than to art" (Schlegel: 347). Alexander Pope (1688-1744), in the introduction to his 1725 edition of Shakespeare, granted the author "great excellencies," but concluded that "he has almost as great defects and that as he has certainly written better, so he has perhaps written worse, than any other."<sup>110</sup> In his closing statement Pope faults Shakespeare with failing

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<sup>108</sup> Roy Pascal documents important stages in this process in his Introduction to *Shakespeare in Germany*: 1-37.

<sup>109</sup> "... dagegen sieht man gewöhnlich in seinen Werken nur Producte eines Genie's, das, um Form und Auswahl der Gedanken unbesorgt, sich seinem Feuer und den augenblicklichen Eingebungen seiner Einbildungskraft überliess." Kunze, *Ludwig van Beethoven*: 101, 102.

<sup>110</sup> Alexander Pope, "Preface to the *Works of Shakespeare* (1725)," in *Literary Criticism of Alexander Pope*, ed. Bertrand A. Goldgar (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1965): 163. Additional page number references appear in parentheses in the main body of the text.

to achieve the balance between whole and parts demanded by Plato's and Aristotle's poetics. He writes: "Nor does the whole fail to strike us with greater reverence, though many of the parts are childish, ill-placed and unequal to its grandeur" (Pope: 175). In this criticism Pope draws upon the ancient Greek definition of organicism that emphasizes the relationship of parts to whole. Significant for my purposes is Pope's familiarity with the formulation—it clearly held wide currency in the scholarly dialogue of his day—as well as his belief that Shakespeare does not measure up when judged according to this criterion.

Amidst accusations that Shakespeare was uneducated, ungrammatical, and dependent more on nature than on art, for Schlegel one criticism superseded the rest. This was the criticism leveled by both Alexander Pope and Samuel Johnson that Shakespeare's plays were flawed creations, lacking the cohesiveness and unity required by an organic theory of art. G.F. Parker has noted in a recent monograph that both Johnson and Schlegel share an unequivocally positive view of Shakespeare as poet and playwright. Johnson's criticisms of Shakespeare, deformities "that in another writer would be intolerable," in no way threaten Shakespeare's classic status for Johnson. The fundamental principle underlying Johnson's critique is his unflagging commitment to Shakespeare's works as great works of literature.<sup>111</sup> Schlegel, however, is stymied at this critical juncture. His organicist theory cannot tolerate the flaws accommodated by Johnson's more forgiving critical apparatus. As a result, Schlegel applies his organic critical method to prove the unity of Shakespeare's plays. *Romeo and Juliet* serves as test case:

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<sup>111</sup> G.F. Parker, *Johnson's Shakespeare* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989): 126ff.

In an essay on *Romeo and Juliet*, written a number of years ago, I went through the whole of the scenes in their order, and demonstrated the inward necessity of each with reference to the whole. . . . [N]othing could be taken away, nothing added, nothing otherwise arranged, without mutilating and disfiguring the perfect work.<sup>112</sup>

Schlegel's terminology leans heavily upon organicist doctrine, both ancient and modern. Inward necessity served as a buzzword for much late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century philosophizing. And the belief that each part is essential *in its particular place* clearly recalls Aristotle's *Poetics* (see p. 5, above). Finally, his assumption that the play is perfect recalls Kerman's notion that the organic critical framework is bound up with the notion of perfection (see p. 4, above).

Organic unity is the linchpin of Schlegel's system. The concept of unity to which he is committed, moreover, encompasses not only the finished work of art, but also the mind that produces it. The criticisms of Shakespeare cited by Schlegel decry wildness in Shakespeare's method. Accusations like Voltaire's, that Hamlet was the work of a drunken savage, or a denigrating remark from Hume that "a reasonable propriety of thought [Shakespeare] cannot for any time uphold,"<sup>113</sup> transgress the organicist belief that organic unity "implies an organizing power of the mind."<sup>114</sup>

Hoffmann defends Beethoven by challenging the view that he relied for his compositional method primarily on the dramatic impulses of his imagination and, further,

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<sup>112</sup> Schlegel, trans. John Black: 361. ["In einem schon vor einer Anzahl Jahre abgefassten Versuch über *Romeo und Julia* . . . haben ich die sämtlichen Auftritte nach der Reihe durchgegangen und die innere Notwendigkeit eines jeden in Bezug auf das Ganze geprüft. . . . nichts hinwegnehmen, nichts hinzufügen, nichts anders ordnen könne, ohne das vollendete Werk zu verstümmeln und zu entstellen." Schlegel, *Vorlesungen über dramatische Kunst und Literatur*, Vol. 2 (Berlin: W. Kohlhammer, 1967): 128, 129.]

<sup>113</sup> Schlegel: 246, 348. Schlegel cites the remark from Hume in a footnote to his text.

<sup>114</sup> Parker, *Johnson's Shakespeare*: 129.

that he lacked the *Besonnenheit* that produces a well-balanced, unified musical work.<sup>115</sup>

In the Fifth Symphony review Hoffmann writes:

. . . it is usual to regard [Beethoven's] works merely as products of a genius who is unconcerned about form and choice or selection of [musical] thoughts, who gives himself up to his fire and the instantaneous inspirations of his imagination [*Einbildungskraft*]. Nevertheless, with respect to *hohe Besonnenheit* he is to be compared with Haydn and Mozart. He severs his "Ich" from the inner empire of sounds and rules it as absolute sovereign.<sup>116</sup>

Before Hoffmann's reviews appeared in the *AmZ*, reviewers argued both for and against the quality of *Besonnenheit* as a shaping presence in Beethoven's compositional process. One criticized him for "an abundance of ideas" that "still leads Beethoven too often to pile one thought wildly upon another,"<sup>117</sup> while another noted that Beethoven's music "is now becoming ever clearer, begins to be ever more disdainful of all excesses, and without losing its character, emerges ever more pleasing."<sup>118</sup>

The reviews cited above involve a time-span of only three years, from 1799 to 1802. Can Beethoven's compositional style have evolved so dramatically that the second reviewer's statement counts as more representative both of Beethoven's music and of its reception? The first reviewer describes the Piano Sonatas, Op. 10, the second the Violin

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<sup>115</sup> I leave the term untranslated because its rich history in late eighteenth-century philosophical does not permit a simple, straightforward translation into English. The term receives a full discussion in the last section of the chapter (pp. 108-125).

<sup>116</sup> The first part of this was cited on p. 101. The German original for this quotation appears in n. 109.

<sup>117</sup> "Seine Fülle von Ideen . . . veranlasst ihn aber noch zu oft, Gedanken wild aufeinander zu häufen. . . ." *AmZ* II, no. 21 (Oct. 19, 1799), col. 25. This review was cited earlier on p. 54, n. 16. See also the discussion in Wallace, *Beethoven's Critics*: 8.

<sup>118</sup> "Der originelle, feurige und kühne Geist dieses Komponisten . . . wird jetzt immer mehr klar, fängt immer mehr an, alles Uebermaas zu verschmähen, und tritt, ohne von seinem Charakter zu verlieren, immer wohlgefälliger hervor." *AmZ* IV, no. 35 (May 26, 1802), col. 659. This review discusses the Sonata in A minor for violin and piano, Op. 23. Cited in Wallace, *Beethoven's Critics*: 10.

Sonata, Op. 23. Indeed, these works exhibit radically contrasting characters. The terse, concentrated violin sonata marks an extreme difference from the quirkiness and brash humor of the piano sonatas.<sup>119</sup> By the time of the Fifth Symphony review in 1810, however, Hoffmann still found it essential to counter the effects of the reviews such as that for Op. 10 published in 1799. Beethoven's status as a composer still hung in the balance and Hoffmann felt compelled to draw on factors external to the compositions themselves to clinch his argument.

One of these factors was a changing aesthetic orientation. The first section of this chapter demonstrates the importance of the sublime to Kant's philosophy and to late eighteenth-century aesthetics. The predilection of the sublime for experience that exceeds human perceptual and imaginative grasp accommodated certain qualities of Beethoven's music that an aesthetic rooted in rationalism could not. Aspects of Beethoven's music initially denigrated as *seltsam*, *merkwürdig*, or *bisarr* became, under the umbrella of a new aesthetic, items worthy of praise. One need think only of the gigantic proportions of a symphony like the *Eroica*, with its far-ranging emotional, harmonic and expressive palette, to understand how urgent was the need for a new aesthetic to accommodate what can only have seemed at first like a monstrosity. In fact, such an evaluation was precisely the one engendered by early performances of the symphony.

A second factor in this changing reception of Beethoven's music involves a shift in audience orientation or, rather, a shift in target audience. Beethoven's music proved difficult to understand, frequently leaving its audiences bewildered and frustrated. Such

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<sup>119</sup> I have borrowed William Kinderman's apt description for the Violin Sonata. See Kinderman, *Beethoven* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995): 72.

abstruseness could be a liability, if the goal is broad popular appeal. Hoffmann, however, transforms the difficulty into an asset by targeting a more specialized audience willing to devote itself to serious study of the music. His educated listener will, by means of penetrating study, “unfold the *hohe Besonnenheit* of the master” (cited above, p. 49).

In his insistence upon a penetrating study of the work as a prerequisite to informed criticism, Hoffmann allies himself with an aspect of Kant’s theory of the sublime that likewise requires an educated audience. Kant’s theory, moreover, anticipates a lack of concurrence that results from different levels of education. In the *Critique of Judgment* Kant writes:

. . . in respect of our judgment upon the sublime in nature, we cannot promise ourselves so easily the accordance of others. For a far greater culture, as well of the aesthetical judgment as of the cognitive faculties which lie at its basis, seems requisite in order to be able to pass judgment on this peculiarity of natural objects. . . . In fact, without development of moral ideas, that which we, prepared by culture, call sublime presents itself to the uneducated man merely as terrible (*CJ*: 104, 105).<sup>120</sup>

Here Kant clearly distinguishes the cultured (read: educated) from the uncultured. The marked difference between the two manifests itself in responses to an overpowering stimulus. The cultured person, relying on finely honed aesthetic judgment and cognitive faculties, responds calmly. The uncultured person cannot; he experiences it only as terrible. Kant’s interest lies not in culture for its own sake, but culture for the development of a faculty that allows individuals not only to tolerate but also to benefit

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<sup>120</sup> “. . . mit unserm Urtheile über das Erhabene in der Natur können wir uns nicht so leicht Eingang bei andern versprechen. Denn es scheint eine bei weitem grössere Cultur nicht bloss der ästhetischen Urtheilskraft, sondern auch der Erkenntnißvermögen, die ihr zum Grunde liegen, erforderlich zu sein, um über diese Vorzüglichkeit der Naturgegenstände ein Urtheil fällen zu können. . . . In der That wird ohne Entwicklung sittlicher Ideen das, was wir, durch Cultur vorbereitet, erhaben nennen, dem rohen Menschen bloss abschreckend vorkommen.” Kant, *Kritik der Urteilskraft*: 135.

from potentially bewildering and frustrating experiences. Hoffmann demonstrates such a belief in his recommendations to early nineteenth-century listeners. He advocates *ein sehr tiefes Eingehen* (translated above as “the most penetrating study”) with an express purpose in mind: listeners will discover the most valuable qualities of Beethoven’s music, and they will experience pleasure rather than frustration.

A final point concerning Hoffmann’s target audience deserves mention here. Hoffmann’s *ein sehr tiefes Eingehen* is the means by which the listener discovers that which is most valuable in the music: the *hohe Besonnenheit* that informs Beethoven’s composition. Hoffmann sought an experience of Beethoven’s music that was difficult to attain. As is abundantly evident from early reviews of a work like the *Eroica*, its first audiences and reviewers found Beethoven’s music demanding.<sup>121</sup> Hoffmann advocates a similarly difficult and demanding approach to the music to comprehend its most important qualities. Stated more colloquially: “Yes, the music is difficult; and yes, you need a difficult method to understand it.” Only *the most penetrating* study of the *inner structure* will lead to his intended result. Hoffmann presents the difficulty of grasping Beethoven’s music not as a liability but as a virtue.

Hoffmann’s belief that difficulty is an integral and virtuous aspect of sublime experience has several important eighteenth-century forebears. As early as 1739, David

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<sup>121</sup> As I discussed earlier in the section on the sublime, Beethoven’s music was not the only music to be criticized for the complexities it engendered for its audiences. Critics leveled complaints against both Haydn’s and Mozart’s music for its failure to please quickly—a central tenet of *galant* aesthetics. Furthermore, it was not only Beethoven’s music for which a more intensive study was recommended. A reviewer of Mozart’s Symphony in G minor (K. 550) remarked in 1804-5, that “One must hear . . . Mozart’s deep, artful and emotion-filled symphony in G minor . . . several times to be able completely to understand and enjoy it.” Cited in Neal Zaslaw, *Mozart’s Symphonies: Context, Performance Practice, Reception* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989): 530.

Hume, in his *Treatise on Human Nature*, reported with enthusiasm and approbation the difficulty involved in an experience of the sublime:

This aspiring progress of the imagination suits the present disposition of the mind; and the difficulty, instead of extinguishing its vigor and alacrity, has the contrary effect of sustaining and encreasing [sic] it.<sup>122</sup>

The value of the challenge lay in its potential to sustain and increase the vitality and alertness of the mind. Kant carried this idea forward, with variation, in his own formulation of the sublime. In contrasting the sublime and the beautiful, Kant highlighted their effects on the human mind. An experience of the beautiful produces a charming effect on the mind, while an experience of the sublime engenders pronounced mental conflict. Reason comes to the rescue, but not before some serious mental agitation. The end result is this: a mind strengthened by conflict, and by its rational awareness of its superiority over the forces of nature.

## VI. “Hohe Besonnenheit”

We come now to the reward for the profound study advocated by Hoffmann: knowledge of the *hohe Besonnenheit* with which Beethoven produced his compositions. The concept of *Besonnenheit* proved central to Hoffmann’s beliefs about how Beethoven composed and important enough for him to revisit it on several occasions, both in his review of Beethoven’s Piano Trios, Op. 70, and in his essay on Beethoven’s instrumental music.<sup>123</sup> Hoffmann’s continued experience with Beethoven’s music increasingly

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<sup>122</sup> David Hume, *Treatise on Human Nature*, cited in Monk, *The Sublime*: 65.

<sup>123</sup> E.T.A. Hoffmann, Review of Beethoven’s Piano Trios Op. 70 Nos. 1 and 2, in Charlton, ed. *E.T.A. Hoffmann’s Musical Writings*: 302 (originally published in the *AmZ*, xv, 3 March 1813, cols. 141-54); and *idem*, “Beethoven’s Instrumental Music,” in Solie, ed., *Strunk’s Source*

corroborated his belief that the music demonstrated this invaluable quality. In his review of the Trios, Hoffmann claims: “the reviewer finds all these judgments increasingly substantiated with every new work by this composer that reaches his eyes and ears.”<sup>124</sup>

The concept of *Besonnenheit* has a rich and compelling history in German philosophical and aesthetic writings. Its etymological origins in German lie with the verb *besinnen*, whose fundamental meaning is “to think it or things over.”<sup>125</sup> The adjectival form *besinnlich* denotes someone contemplative or thoughtful; with reference to literature, it suggests a work with a reflective character. The noun *Besinnung* can be translated “consciousness.” The antonym *besinnungslos* then denotes unconscious (*bewusstlos*). In a figurative sense *besinnungslos* connotes “mindless or blind” (with rage or hatred), or “out of one’s mind with fear” (*besinnungslos vor Angst*). The figurative meanings of the antonym point up an important distinction for this discussion: in the absence of *Besinnung*, powerful emotions rage unabated. Such charges of domination by unruly and explosive emotions were precisely those leveled at Beethoven, and refuted by Hoffmann.

The origins of *Besonnenheit* as a concept lie much farther back in history with a term coined by ancient Greek philosophers: *sophrosyne*.<sup>126</sup> In the time of Homer, *sophrosyne* carried with it the notion of a human being powerful and self-governing of

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*Readings*, Vol. 6: 153. Originally published in the *Zeitung für die elegante Welt*, 9-11 December 1813; later published as one of the essays in *Kreisleriana*, a part of Hoffmann’s first book, the *Fantasiestücke in Callot’s Manier* (4 vols., Bamberg, 1814-15). In both cases Hoffmann paraphrases his own review of the Fifth Symphony.

<sup>124</sup> Charlton, ed., *E.T.A. Hoffmann’s Musical Writings*: 302.

<sup>125</sup> This information taken from the *Oxford-Duden German Dictionary*, rev. ed., ed. W. Scholze-Stubenrecht, J.B. Sykes (Oxford: Oxford Clarendon Press, 1997): 147.

<sup>126</sup> The following is based on E. Heintel, “Besonnenheit,” in *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*, Vol. 1, ed. Joachim Ritter (Basel: Schwabe and Co., 1972): Cols. 848-850.

his mind. For the Sophists, the term denoted the faculty of self-governing for the passions. Plato placed *sophrosyne* among the cardinal virtues. He drew an analogy between *sophrosyne*, which constitutes harmony of the soul, and *Kosmos*, which signifies the order found in the cosmos. A reciprocal relationship thus obtains between microcosm and macrocosm. In another formulation, Plato defined *sophrosyne* as the dominion of what is better in the soul over what is evil. Because *sophrosyne* encompasses both good and evil, it constitutes the harmony of the whole.

Plato's interest in creating a harmony of opposites would surely have been attractive to early nineteenth-century philosophers such as Fichte and Schelling, and to a writer like Hoffmann, who worked so conscientiously to balance the real and the fantastic, the phenomenal and the ideal.<sup>127</sup> Fichte codified an early form of dialectical reasoning, whose fundamental principle concerned the synthesis of opposing ideas, the thesis and the antithesis. Schelling applied this principle of opposition to his *Naturphilosophie*, which he founded upon a notion of opposites relating in such a way as to produce a quality of indifference (see discussion above, pp. 27, 28).

The Greek concept of *sophrosyne* retained its scholarly importance for millennia. In the European scholastic tradition, the concept survived as *temperantia*. The German scholarly tradition termed it either *Mässigkeit* (moderation) or *Besonnenheit*, and located it in the category of ethical reflection, where its function more often than not was for regulation of consciousness (*Bestimmung des Bewusstseins*). In Herder's philosophy of

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<sup>127</sup> In his review of Hoffmann's writings Scott Burnham makes much of the early nineteenth-century interest in reconciling opposites, and especially in the opposites that Hoffmann himself attempted to balance. See Burnham, Review of *E.T.A. Hoffmann's Musical Writings*: 291-293. Chapter 1 of the dissertation discusses organicist efforts to reconcile opposing realms of real and ideal.

language, *Besonnenheit* constitutes the original and specifically human prerequisite for language. *Besonnenheit* is the defining mental power that differentiates humans from animals. It directs a human being's powers as instinct does those of animals. Herder uses the terms *Besonnenheit* and *Reflexion* interchangeably and describes their function like this:

The human being shows *Reflexion* when the power of his soul functions so freely that it—in the whole ocean of sensations that rush through all the senses—isolates a wave, if I may be permitted to say so, stops it, directs attention to it, and can be conscious that it directs its attention [in this way].<sup>128</sup>

Schleiermacher places *Besonnenheit*, as Plato did *sophrosyne*, among the cardinal virtues, together with persistence, wisdom, and love [*Beharrlichkeit*, *Weisheit*, and *Liebe*, respectively].<sup>129</sup>

It is with Jean Paul's *Vorschule*, published in 1804, that *Besonnenheit* acquires specifically artistic significance. Like Herder, Jean Paul views *Besonnenheit* as that faculty which distinguishes humans from animals. Proceeding one step farther, Jean Paul draws a distinction between the *Besonnenheit* that separates humans from animals, and a "höhere" or "göttliche *Besonnenheit*" that separates the genius from the common person.

The following appears in Jean Paul's chapter from the *Vorschule* on genius:

[*Besonnenheit*] implies at every level a balance and a tension between activity and passivity, between subject and object. At its lowest level, which distinguishes man from animal, and waking from sleeping, it demands equilibrium between inner and outer

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<sup>128</sup>“Der Mensch beweiset Reflexion, wenn die Kraft seiner Seele so frei würket, dass sie in dem ganzen Ocean von Empfindungen, der sie durch alle Sinnen durchrauschet, Eine Welle, wenn ich so sagen darf, absondern, sie anhalten, die Aufmerksamkeit auf sie richten, und sich bewusst seyn kann, dass sie aufmerke.” Johann Gottfried von Herder, “Abhandlung Über die Ursprung der Sprache (1772),” in *Sämtliche Werke*, V: 34-35. Cited in Blackall, *The Origins of German as a Literary Language*: 467.

<sup>129</sup> Cited in Heintel, “Besonnenheit,” in *Historisches Wörterbuch*: Col. 849.

worlds. In the animal the external world swallows up the inner; in the man moved by passion, often the inner swallows up the external world. *Then there is a higher Besonnenheit* which divides and separates the inner world *itself* into two parts, into a self and its realm, into a creator and his world. This divine [göttliche] Besonnenheit is as far from the common kind as reason is from understanding, for these are their respective parents [emphasis added].<sup>130</sup>

Jean Paul does more than simply define two types of *Besonnenheit*. He also reiterates themes important to the concept since the time of its earliest formulation and central to early nineteenth-century philosophy. Prominent is the characteristic series of oppositions, in this case between activity and passivity, subject and object, waking and sleeping, inner and outer worlds, a self and its realm, a creator and his world and, finally, between reason and understanding.<sup>131</sup> *Besonnenheit* manifests itself in the balance and tension maintained between these opposing forces. The regulative function of the faculty Plato called *sophrosyne* is particularly resonant with this aspect of *Besonnenheit*. *Sophrosyne*, as Plato describes it, dispels neither good nor evil but maintains an effective balance between them.

The final sentence cited above yields an important clue as to the specific nature and origin of Jean Paul's lower and higher *Besonnenheiten*. He compares the lower and

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<sup>130</sup> Jean Paul Richter [=Jean Paul], *Horn of Oberon: Jean Paul Richter's School for Aesthetics*, trans. Margaret R. Hale (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1973): 36. "[*Besonnenheit*] setzt in jedem Grade ein Gleichgewicht und einen Wechselstreit zwischen Tun und Leiden, zwischen Sub- und Objekt voraus. In ihrem gemeinsten Grade, der den Menschen vom Tier, und den Wachen vom Schläfer absondert, fodert sie das Äquilibrium zwischen äusserer und innerer Welt; im Tiere verschlingt die äussere die innere, im bewegten Menschen diese oft jene. Nun gibt es eine höhere Besonnenheit, die, welche die innere Welt selber entzweit und entzweiteilt in ein Ich und in dessen Reich, in einen Schöpfer and dessen Welt. Diese göttliche Besonnenheit ist so weit von der gemeinen unterschieden wie Vernunft von Verstand, eben die Eltern von beiden." Jean Paul Richter, *Vorschule der Aesthetik*, in *Jean Paul Werke*, Vol. 5 (München: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1980): 57.]

<sup>131</sup> The first two pairs of oppositions—activity/passivity and subject/object—were especially important to Fichte.

the higher to understanding and reason, respectively. Understanding governs the lower, which monitors the balance between inner and outer worlds; reason is the purview of the higher, which governs an individual's divided inner world. The faculties of understanding and reason form the cornerstones of Kant's philosophy. In fact, Kant planned his third *Critique*, that of judgment, specifically as a means to effect a rapprochement between the two. These faculties are especially relevant to a discussion of aesthetics because they recall the dichotomies Kant established in his explication of the beautiful and the sublime. In Kant's formulation, understanding governs an experience of the beautiful, while reason governs an experience of the sublime. The beautiful provides sensual stimulus, but nevertheless is compatible "with charms and with the play of the imagination" (*CJ*: 83), a comparatively benign encounter when placed alongside an experience of the sublime.<sup>132</sup> Kant elaborates further: ". . . natural beauty brings with it a purposiveness in its form by which the object seems to be, as it were, preadapted to our judgment . . ." (*CJ*: 83).<sup>133</sup> Because the form of the object matches the judgment of the human observer, the effect produced is satisfaction. The outer world does not challenge or disturb the inner. Instead, equilibrium obtains between them. Jean Paul's lower *Besonnenheit* operates in a comparable manner. It effects a balance between inner and outer worlds such that neither the inner nor the outer swallows up the other.

An experience of the sublime, by contrast, occasions an *internal imbalance* (upheaval may be a more appropriate term) in which comprehension can no longer keep

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<sup>132</sup> ". . . indem dieses (das Schöne) directe ein Gefühl der Beförderung des Lebens bei sich führt und daher mit Reizen und einer spielenden Einbildungskraft vereinbar ist. . . ." Kant, *Kritik der Urteilskraft*: 110.

<sup>133</sup> ". . . die Naturschönheit . . . eine Zweckmässigkeit in ihrer Form, wodurch der Gegenstand für unsere Urtheilskraft gleichsam vorherbestimmt zu sein scheint, bei sich führt und so an sich einen Gegenstand des Wohlgefallens ausmacht. . . ." Kant, *Kritik der Urteilskraft*: 110.

pace with apprehension. Reason (*Vernunft*), the parent of the *höher Besonnenheit*, grapples with and brings under control the overwhelming stimuli involved in an experience of the sublime. It restores balance to a mind divided within itself.

It is noteworthy that Jean Paul's model serves not only for listeners or observers, as is frequently the focus in theory of the sublime, but also for creators. Each creative artist must balance his own opposing forces to complete his artistic project. In Jean Paul's words: "Only the whole will be engendered by inspiration, but the parts will be educated by calmness."<sup>134</sup> This is precisely the kind of balance required for the tempestuous *Phantasie* possessed by Beethoven. And it is precisely on this point that Hoffmann argues most vehemently.

With this historical framework in mind, let's look again at the context in which Hoffmann uses the term *Besonnenheit* to develop a better sense of the meaning it held for him. This will involve revisiting previously cited passages that I give here at greater length so that their context is clear.

But even the multitude unaware of Beethoven's depths do not deny him a high degree of imagination [*Phantasie*]; on the contrary it is usual to regard [Beethoven's] works merely as products of a genius who is unconcerned about form and choice or selection of [musical] thoughts, who gives himself up to his fire and the instantaneous inspirations of his imagination [*Einbildungskraft*]. Nevertheless, with respect to *hohe Besonnenheit* he is to be compared with Haydn and Mozart. He severs his "Ich" from the inner empire of sounds and rules it as absolute sovereign. Just as our aesthetic overseers have often complained about the complete lack of *true unity* and

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<sup>134</sup> "Nur das Ganze wird von der Begeisterung erzeugt, aber die Teile werden von der Ruhe erzogen." *Jean Paul Werke*, Vol. 5: 59. The contrast between the verbs *erzeugen* and *erziehen* is especially germane. *Erzeugen* has the following range of definition: beget (children); produce; agr. a.: grow; manufacture; make; chem., phys, generate; form; breed. These terms resonate with organicist theories of creation, the type of creation for which "inspiration" is especially appropriate. *Erziehen*, on the other hand, concerns education: to bring up, raise, rear; educate. These terms parallel much more clearly an approach that involves conscious planning and intervention. *New College German Dictionary*: 181.

*inner coherence* in *Shakespeare*, and only a more profound look shows *the beautiful tree*, buds and leaves, the blossoms and fruits as shooting forth from one seed, so only the most penetrating study of the inner structure of Beethoven's music unfolds the *hohe Besonnenheit* of the master, which is inseparable from true genius and nourished by the continuing study of the art [emphasis added].<sup>135</sup>

Hoffmann has several agendas here. First, he distinguishes *hohe Besonnenheit* from the workings of *Phantasie* or *Einbildungskraft*. Both *Phantasie* and *Einbildungskraft* denote imagination, a mental faculty separate and distinct from reason.<sup>136</sup> The distinction revisits oppositions established in eighteenth-century theory of the sublime, as explicated by Schulz in his article on the symphony in Sulzer's *Allgemeine Theorie der schönen Künste*. There Schulz opposes *Leidenschaft* [passion/powerful emotion] and *Besonnenheit*, *Enthusiasmus* [enthusiasm] and *Reflexion* [reflection].<sup>137</sup> All four figure in

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<sup>135</sup> "Eben diese in Beethovens Tiefe nicht eingehende Menge spricht ihm einen hohen Grad von Phantasie nicht ab; dagegen sieht man gewöhnlich in seinen Werken nur Producte eines Genie's, das, um Form und Auswahl der Gedanken unbesorgt, sich seinem Feuer und den augenblicklichen Eingebungen seiner Einbildungskraft überliess. Nichts desto weniger ist er, Rücksichts der Besonnenheit, Haydn und Mozart ganz an die Seite zu stellen. Er trennt sein Ich von dem innern Reich der Töne und gebietet darüber als unumschränkter Herr. Wie ästhetische Messkünstler im Shakespeare oft über gänzlichen Mangel wahrer Einheit und inneren Zusammenhanges geklagt haben, und nur dem tiefern Blick ein schöner Baum, Knospen und Blätter, Blüten und Früchte aus einem Keim treibend, erwächst: so entfaltet auch nur ein sehr tiefes Eingehen in die innere Structur Beethovenscher Musik die hohe Besonnenheit des Meisters, welche von dem wahren Genie unzertrennlich ist und von dem anhaltenden Studium der Kunst genährt wird." Kunze, *Ludwig van Beethoven*: 101, 102.

<sup>136</sup> The following, from Hegel on "memory, recollection and imagination" is apropos: "If a distinction is drawn between *Phantasie* and *Einbildungskraft*, then *Phantasie* is usually the higher, more creative faculty. Jean Paul saw *Einbildungskraft* as simply reproductive and associative . . . while *Phantasie* 'makes all parts into a whole . . . it totalizes everything, brings the absolute and the infinite of reason closer and more vividly before mortal men.' Hegel too distinguishes between the passive (i.e. reproductive and mechanically associative) *Einbildungskraft* and the creative, artistic *Phantasie*, but he often uses the words interchangeably." Michael Inwood, *A Hegel Dictionary*: 187. In the passage from Hoffmann's Fifth Symphony review quoted above, Hoffmann uses the two interchangeably.

<sup>137</sup> Dahlhaus discusses these terms in "E.T.A. Hoffmanns Beethoven-Kritik": 80.

an experience of the sublime, the second of each pair acting always as a balancing force to the explosive tendencies of the first.

In the minds of the journal readership of Hoffmann's day, Beethoven's creative imagination or, more vividly, his fire, accounted for the dramatic and overwhelming effects of his music. Early reviews of Beethoven's music frequently attributed the startlingly original and sometimes incomprehensible qualities of his music to the fertile workings of his *Phantasie*.<sup>138</sup> Equally common were complaints that his personality lacked the organizational power necessary to effectively channel the explosive force of this *Phantasie*.

Hoffmann thus sets out to accomplish his second agenda: demonstrating in Beethoven's music a productive balance between imagination and intellect. This agenda reiterates issues central to the reception of Mozart's music, as well as statements reported by Haydn's biographers Georg August Griesinger and Albert Christoph Dies.<sup>139</sup> Some six months after Mozart's death, a notice in Johann Friedrich Schink's "Hamburgische Theaterzeitung" concluded like this:

The death of this excellent composer is a real loss to music. How much was he already, and what more might he yet have become, because he was beginning to compose not merely at the dictate of his *genius*, but also at that of his *mind*;—that is, he was beginning to subject his imagination to his intellect.<sup>140</sup>

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<sup>138</sup> The following is representative: "Phantasie, wie sie *Beethoven* in nicht gemeinem Grade hat. . . ." Author not indicated, review of Op. 10 piano sonatas, *AmZ*, 1798, in Kunze, *Ludwig van Beethoven*: 16.

<sup>139</sup> Both Griesinger and Dies lived in Vienna during the last decade of Haydn's life; both were acquainted with him and made notes of their conversations with him in order to publish some account of his life. Finally, both published their respective volumes of their conversations with Haydn in 1810. Vernon Gotwals, the translator of both their publications, terms them writers of "as-told-to" autobiography. See Gotwals, trans., *Joseph Haydn*: xiii.

<sup>140</sup> The date of the notice is July 7, 1792. Cited in Otto Erich Deutsch, *Mozart: A Documentary Biography*, trans. Eric Blom, et. al. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1965): 464. ["Der Tod

The notice contributes important details to this discussion. First, the author of the notice accepts unequivocally the excellence of Mozart's music. Second, the writer demonstrates his familiarity with current aesthetic tenets when he invokes the opposing terms genius/mind and imagination/intellect. Finally, he believes that the music Mozart wrote near the end of his life exemplifies the necessary balance between these separate and opposing mental activities.

Haydn expressed precisely this latter concern for his own work: that he achieve a balance between "outpouring" and "technique." Dies, relating details from Haydn's period of self-study to become a composer, reported in 1810:

What lay closest to his heart, though, was to do something with the important discovery I mentioned above, and enable himself through a serious study of theory to bring order . . . into the outpouring of his soul.<sup>141</sup>

To realize his goal, Haydn studied C.P.E. Bach's *Versuch über die wahre Art das Klavier zu spielen*, as well as Mattheson's *Vollkommene Kapellmeister*. Griesinger, in words resonant with Hoffmann's, defines the distinguishing qualities of Haydn's works like this: "Original and abundant ideas, deep feeling, fantasy wisely controlled by penetrating

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dieses vortreflichen Tonkünstlers ist ein wahrer Verlust für die Musik. Wie viel war er schon, und was hätt' er noch werden können, da er nicht blos mehr mit *Genie*, sondern auch mit *Kopf* zu komponiren anfang, —das heisst: seine Phantasie seinem Verstande zu unterwerfen begann." Otto Erich Deutsch, *Mozart: Die Dokumente Seines Lebens* (Basel: Bärenreiter Kassel, 1961): 406.]

<sup>141</sup> Gotwals, trans., *Joseph Haydn*: 95. ["Was ihm aber vorzüglich am Herzen lag, war, die wichtige Entdeckung zu benützen, deren ich oben erwähnte, und sich durch ein ernsthaftes Studium der Theorie in den Stand zu setzen, in seine Geistesprodukte Ordnung . . . bringen zu lernen." Albert Christoph Dies, *Biographische Nachrichten von Joseph Haydn* (Kassel: Bärenreiter-Verlag, 1964): 40.]

study of the art . . . these are the qualities that distinguish Haydn's earlier and latest works alike."<sup>142</sup>

The notice for Mozart cited above proved to be a harbinger of future acclaim in the reception of his music. An incontestable act of canonization—efforts to assemble and publish a complete works edition—followed quickly. Breitkopf and Härtel's *Oeuvres complètes* [sic], lacking the symphonies and quartets, proved to be the most highly esteemed.<sup>143</sup> Haydn, meanwhile, in the decades of the 1790s enjoyed immense popular success. His symphonies written for London audiences garnered unequivocally favorable critical acclaim.<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>142</sup> Gotwals, trans., *Joseph Haydn: 7*. ["Originalität und Reichtum der Ideen, inniges Gefühl, eine durch tiefes Studium der Kunst weislich geregelte Phantasie . . . das sind die Eigenschaften, welche Haydns frühere, wie seine spätesten Werke auszeichnen." Griesinger, *Biographische Notizen: 7*.]

<sup>143</sup> Gruber, *Mozart and Posterity: 62*. Cliff Eisen cites a plethora of "complete" editions begun in the last five years of the eighteenth century. The scope and diversity of Breitkopf & Härtel's edition (1798-1806) far exceeded that of any other. A truly complete critical edition waited until much later in the nineteenth century, when Breitkopf & Härtel produced the *Wolfgang Amadeus Mozarts Werke: kritisch durchgesehene Gesamtausgabe*, edited by such musicians and scholars as Brahms, Spitta, Köchel, Nottebohm, and Joachim. See Cliff Eisen, "The Old and New Mozart Editions," *Early Music* 19 (1991): 513. That the compilation of a Complete Works Edition was crucial for the critical estimation of an artist is made abundantly clear in the reception history of Shakespeare. August Schlegel, in his *Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature*, responds with ardor to charges that "Shakspeare [sic], [b]orn in an inferior rank, ignorant and uneducated, . . . passed his life in low society, and laboured to please a vulgar audience for his bread, *without ever dreaming of fame or posterity*" [emphasis added]. A few pages later, Schlegel addresses head-on the last of these criticisms, defending Shakespeare for his grievous oversight in failing to publish a complete edition of his works. Schlegel tenders several explanations for this failing: Shakespeare sold the rights to the theater; Shakespeare's failure is not so great since Cervantes also neglected to publish his earlier dramas; and it is not so unusual, in the early years of a national theater, for there to be indifference about such matters. Whatever the arguments Schlegel offers on Shakespeare's behalf, the point remains that he felt compelled to come to Shakespeare's defense. Producing a complete works edition was clearly a matter of signal importance to Shakespeare's critics. Schlegel, *Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature: 351, 353*.

<sup>144</sup> I cited earlier the negative responses generated by some of his later music and reported in the *AmZ*, which showed the tide turning late in Haydn's life. In this setting I emphasize that these responses characterize *only* the very last years of his career.

What does this excursion into the reception history of Haydn's and Mozart's music offer to the current discussion? By the time Hoffmann was writing his review of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, Mozart's and Haydn's music constituted an aesthetic standard against which other music had to demonstrate its worth. Haydn achieved his revered status during his lifetime; Mozart gained it mainly posthumously. In either case, it was necessary for Hoffmann to demonstrate Beethoven's position with respect to the critical standard of these forebears. An essential component of that argument involved demonstrating Beethoven's equal status with respect to the valued quality of *Besonnenheit*.

It is against this late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century backdrop that we must understand the early reception of Beethoven's music, a collection of works which pressed so violently against firmly entrenched, predominantly neo-classical beliefs about music and musical value. Hoffmann's review addresses an audience well schooled in and strongly predisposed to Haydn's and Mozart's music. By arguing for equality in terms of *hohe Besonnenheit*, Hoffmann hopes to rally broad-based support for Beethoven's music. If Haydn and Mozart represent the valued standard in *hohe Besonnenheit*, then, Hoffmann argues, Beethoven is equal to the standard.

A quotation from slightly later in the Fifth Symphony review gives us some idea of the creative process Hoffmann has in mind when he describes Beethoven's working methods. Near the end of his discussion of the first movement Hoffmann remarks that

Quite apart from the fact that contrapuntal treatment shows profound study of the art, the episodes (parentheses) and constant allusions to the main theme demonstrate how the master conceived the whole with all its distinctive features not merely in the imagination, but also reasoned it out.<sup>145</sup>

It is clear from this quotation that Hoffmann does not negate the central importance of imagination. It is equally clear that he regards it as a step to something else, a starting point from which the composer must proceed by careful “thinking through.”

Earlier in this chapter, I cited critics who complained of Beethoven’s tendency to produce music dominated by the fiery outbursts of his imagination. These reviewers explained their distaste for Beethoven’s music in terms of this excess: an abundance of imagination largely untempered with rational thought. Hoffmann directs his critique precisely at those who attribute only *Phantasie* to Beethoven, but deny him the essential balancing force of *Besonnenheit*. For Hoffmann, these reviewers have missed the point of Beethoven’s music: just as they fault him with excesses of imagination, they too have responded only with their imaginations. Had they approached his music with the reflective (*besinnlich!*) mental powers Hoffmann advocates, they too might apprehend this vital force active in Beethoven’s music.

A number of writers have tried to account for Hoffmann’s insistence on the term *Besonnenheit*. Peter Schnaus, in a monograph devoted to Hoffmann’s reviews of Beethoven’s music, links Hoffmann’s formulation with the aesthetics of Jean Paul. Hoffmann’s documented fascination with Jean Paul’s writings strongly supports an

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<sup>145</sup> “Ganz davon abgesehen, dass die contrapunctische Behandlung von tiefem Studium der Kunst zeigt, so sind es auch die Zwischensätze und die beständigen Anspielungen auf das Hauptthema, welche darthun, wie der Meister das Ganze mit allen den charaktervollen Zügen nicht allein im Geist auffasste, sondern auch durchdachte.” Kunze, *Ludwig van Beethoven*: 106. The excerpt is from the concluding paragraph of Hoffmann’s analysis of the first movement.

argument for his indebtedness to his contemporary.<sup>146</sup> Schnaus compares these passages in Jean Paul and Hoffmann, respectively:

(1) Then there is a higher *Besonnenheit* which divides and separates the inner world itself into two parts, into a self and its realm, into a creator and his world. This divine *Besonnenheit* is as far from the common kind as reason is from understanding, for these are their respective parents.<sup>147</sup>

(2) Nevertheless, with respect to *hohe Besonnenheit* he is to be compared with Haydn and Mozart. He severs his "Ich" from the inner empire of sounds and rules it as absolute sovereign.<sup>148</sup>

According to Schnaus, Hoffmann translates Jean Paul's "self [*Ich*] and its realm [*Reich*]" or "creator [*Schöpfer*] and his world [*Welt*]" into Beethoven's "Ich" and "the inner realm of tones [*inner Reich der Töne*]." Further parallels can also be drawn between Jean Paul's and Hoffmann's ideas. Both claim *hohe Besonnenheit* as a force superior either to the *Besonnenheit* of the common person, in the case of Jean Paul, or as superior to the irrational and tempestuous world of the emotions, in the case of Hoffmann. For Jean Paul, *höhere Besonnenheit* is divine and sharply distinguished from the common kind that separates humans from animals. For Hoffmann, the concept of *Besonnenheit* supplies leverage for him to raise Beethoven to the level of Haydn and Mozart, to counter criticisms that Beethoven lacks self-control in his compositional activity. While Jean

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<sup>146</sup> Harvey Hewett-Thayer reports that Jean Paul and Laurence Sterne were among the novelists Hoffmann most admired in his youth. In the spring of 1811, Hoffmann traveled to Bayreuth to see Jean Paul. Sadly, for Hoffmann, the fascination did not move in both directions. Jean Paul considered Hoffmann a crass imitator, particularly of Tieck and himself. Hewett-Thayer, *E.T.A. Hoffmann: Author of the Tales*: 57, 142, 154.

<sup>147</sup> Translation from Jean Paul, *The Horn of Oberon*, trans. Margaret R. Hale: 36. For German original see above, pp. 111, 112, n. 130. Discussion is from Peter Schnaus, *E.T.A. Hoffmann als Beethoven-Rezensent der Allgemeinen Musikalischen Zeitung* (München: Musikverlag Emil Katzschichler, 1977): 81.

<sup>148</sup> The translation is my own. For German original see above, pp. 114, 115, n. 135.

Paul's focus lies with the composer and his world, Hoffmann's concern is for Beethoven's self and the "inner realm of tones."

Several writers have advanced alternative interpretations. Carl Dahlhaus contests Schnaus's argument, claiming that Schnaus mistakenly equates Jean Paul's and Hoffmann's understanding of *Besonnenheit*, a term that, in Dahlhaus's formulation, means two quite different things to the two writers. Jean Paul, he argues, uses the term to describe a special kind of consciousness that allows a person to be partially absorbed in a subject matter but at the same time involved in self-reflection. Hoffmann, on the other hand, uses the term only to indicate that Beethoven did not work without reflection, did not rely only on the dictates of his imagination.<sup>149</sup> Dahlhaus's argument rightly focuses on the crucial aspect of definition. At the same time, however, I believe that he overlooks the fascination Jean Paul's works held for Hoffmann, as well as the distinct possibility of Hoffmann's having taken over the idea from Jean Paul without having observed in detail the precise terms of Jean Paul's argument. Hoffmann's formulation may well have leaned on Jean Paul's for the purposes of association rather than for precise and accurate philosophical parentage.

Ian Bent tenders another interpretation in his "Plato—Beethoven." Bent relates the Greek term *sophrosyne*, meaning in certain cases "soundness of mind" to the German "*hohe Besonnenheit*," which he translates as "rational awareness." Bent's comparison of the two terms arises from his study of Schleiermacher's translation of Plato's *Dialogues*. There Schleiermacher consistently translates the Greek *sophrosyne* into the German *hohe*

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<sup>149</sup> Dahlhaus, "E.T.A. Hoffmanns Beethoven-Kritik": 85.

*Besonnenheit*. Bent wonders if Hoffmann knew Schleiermacher's translation and if that provided a source for Hoffmann's borrowing.<sup>150</sup>

Finally, in his review of *E.T.A. Hoffmann's Musical Writings*, Scott Burnham discusses not the precise parentage of the term *Besonnenheit*, but rather the ways in which the term reflects the dichotomous realms of Hoffmann's own world—the real and the magical—and the ways in which he may have wished to resolve them in the person of Beethoven. In so doing, argues Burnham, Hoffmann created a hero-composer persona paradoxically at odds with ultra-Romantic sensibilities, whose investment lay not with the conscious but with the unconscious artist.<sup>151</sup>

I have already noted how language and concepts employed by early reviewers of Beethoven's music intersected with the eighteenth century's concept of the sublime. In characterizing Beethoven's music as *bisarr*, *merkwürdig*, *seltsam* or *colossal* these reviewers allied Beethoven's music with central aspects of the sublime and marked its radical departure from neoclassical ideals as articulated in much of the music of Haydn and Mozart. By the time that Hoffmann was reviewing the Fifth Symphony, some five to ten years after the earliest of the reviews cited here, he reacted strongly against those writers and listeners who failed to hear beyond these isolated and sensationalist aspects of Beethoven's compositional style. While Hoffmann recognized the importance of *Phantasie*, the initial conception of the music in the faculty of the imagination, he found the explanation one-sided and lacking a crucial dimension. He found listeners' responses similarly one-sided. If their belief about Beethoven's music focused almost exclusively on aspects produced by the *Phantasie*, then their response focused first and foremost on

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<sup>150</sup> Bent, "Plato-Beethoven": 27.

<sup>151</sup> Burnham, Review of *E.T.A. Hoffmann's Musical Writings*: 293.

visceral emotional reactions. In advocating a *sehr tiefes Eingehen*, Hoffmann attempts to redress an imbalance, not to overcome the inherent flaws of one-sidedness, but to prepare audiences for an experience of the music that rises above the visceral to the rational.

Like Kant's cultured observer, audiences of Beethoven's music could benefit rationally from overwhelming experiences, instead of being frightened or repelled by them.

Elevating a musical experience from the visceral to the rational accomplished a significant gain for Hoffmann. In addition to allying himself with the philosophy of Burke and Kant, extraordinarily prominent and influential philosophers of the eighteenth century, Hoffmann took a crucial step forward in defining an aesthetic for music. At the time of the Fifth Symphony review, aesthetics as a separately defined discipline was a relative newcomer to philosophical discussion. Alexander Baumgartner's *Aesthetica*, written between 1750-58, counted as a watershed work for German aesthetic theory. Kant's *Critique of Judgment*, published in 1790, placed aesthetic discourse at the center of his philosophical system. In the early nineteenth century, moreover, musical aesthetics was itself undergoing profound and far-reaching reformulations. In the eighteenth century, instrumental repertoires occupied a lowly position because of perceived deficiencies *vis a vis* contemporary aesthetic categories. With the impetus of a writer like Hoffmann and his immediate forebears, however, instrumental music, and especially the symphony, began to establish an aesthetic foothold much higher up the ladder.<sup>152</sup>

"Beethoven's instrumental music opens to us the realm of the mighty and the

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<sup>152</sup> The aesthetic elevation of instrumental music began earlier than Hoffmann, although he helped it along significantly. Significant predecessors include Jean Paul, Wilhelm Heinrich Wackenroder, Ludwig Tieck and August Wilhelm Schlegel. For a detailed history of instrumental music's changing fortunes from the eighteenth to the early nineteenth centuries see Bellamy Hosler, *Changing Aesthetic Views of Instrumental Music in Eighteenth-Century Germany* (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press, 1981).

immeasurable,” proclaimed Hoffmann. To early nineteenth-century readers, no greater stamp of approval was required.

## VII. Conclusions

E.T.A. Hoffmann’s review of Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony drives us back to eighteenth-century theory of the sublime, to concepts of unity, to the role of pantheistic thinking, and to shared issues in Beethoven and Shakespeare reception. What common threads can we discern among these different issues, so far-reaching in their scope and concern? And how do they relate to organicism?

Unity provides a convenient point of departure. It is a concern that figures in each of the topics addressed here and one central to organicist theory from the time of Plato to the present day. To begin, Kant’s theory of the sublime gives to reason and unity places of central importance. The specific role of reason in an experience of the sublime is to have “that infinity [characteristic of the sublime] itself under it as a unity. . . .” According to this formulation, reason gives to the emotionally or physically overwhelming experience a nonsensuous unity. When represented in this manner, the experience loses its devastating force.

Reviews of Beethoven’s *Eroica* symphony cited in this chapter predate Hoffmann’s attribution of organic unity to Beethoven’s music. The negative reviews demonstrate a concern, expressed by writers overwhelmed by the oddities and immense size of the symphony, for a more generic unity that would aid their comprehension. The positive review of the *Eroica* from 1807 finds precisely this generic unity: “This allegro, in spite of its length, was composed with a concern for unity which we can only admire”

(see above, p. 77). Though clearly cognizant of the movement's great length, this writer demonstrates sensitivity to the parts of a sonata-form movement and the kinds of things a listener can expect from each. Rather than treating the new theme in the second section as an isolated event, he accommodates it within the context of the whole movement. His description echoes definitions of organic unity set forth by both Plato and Aristotle (see above, pp. 4, 5), which focus on the relationship of the parts to the whole. The E-minor theme, taken as an isolated musical event, can create problems for the listener. Heard within the context of an extremely lengthy first movement, however, it "increases the total charm and variety," and "refreshes the listener" before returning to the principal ideas. In other words, it makes sense within the whole. Through the application of a rational analytic process, the writer accommodates what other listeners found bewildering.

Hoffmann's invocation of Shakespeare demonstrates his alliance with a more clearly defined *organic* unity disseminated with considerable force by Schlegel in his popular lectures on art and literature. Hoffmann, through his borrowing from Schlegel, refined the concept of unity in several crucial respects: first, he imbued it with an organic image: the tree as a metaphor for the musical work. In so doing he conferred on music a spiritual quality and significance rooted in then-popular pantheistic belief. Second, he argued that *hohe Besonnenheit* is an essential component of the organic creative process. Inspired flights of genius may contribute to artistic production but *hohe Besonnenheit* guarantees the unity demanded by organicist principles. Finally, Hoffmann claims that, just as in Shakespeare's plays, the analyst deduces the valued organic unity in Beethoven's works only after profound study of the music. Thus Hoffmann not only

allies himself with a new aesthetic but he also defines a new target audience willing to devote itself to serious study of Beethoven's music. Hoffmann's dedication to study of the inner structure of music introduced a potent mandate for musical analysis which remains central to the analytic enterprise even today.<sup>153</sup>

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<sup>153</sup> William Rothstein has rightly warned me against anachronistic use of the term "structural," which a number of writers have noted as a specifically American accretion to Schenkerian thought. It is a term used by Hoffmann, however, and so is appropriate in this context.

### Chapter 3:           **Organicism and Sketch Studies: Nottebohm and Beethoven's Sketches**

This chapter is concerned exclusively with a small sample of Beethoven's sketches. Beethoven's sketches were central for the inception of sketch studies and they continue to serve as documents central to present-day scholarly discourse. Most important for this study, Nottebohm's writings about the sketches show his deep struggles both with definitions of the organic and with documenting the role of the organic in Beethoven's compositional process.

Despite Nottebohm's acknowledged centrality in establishing sketch studies as a subject of scholarly inquiry, many writers have complained about his reticence concerning the analytic potential of the sketches, sometimes attributing this omission to a lack of technical vocabulary. Douglas Johnson, for instance, in his article "Beethoven Scholars and Beethoven's Sketches," comments that,

. . . although nineteenth-century scholars, including Nottebohm, spoke a great deal about the artwork as an organism, their analytical vocabulary now seems scarcely adequate to the task of articulating organic relationships. If Nottebohm was unable to describe organic relationships in the first place, small wonder that he found no help in the sketches.<sup>1</sup>

In fact, nineteenth-century writers' reluctance to "articulat[e] organic relationships" might be accounted for in a number of ways. For one, writers from this period frequently adduced the organic as a metaphor. Employing the term in this way freed them from the necessity of describing musical relationships in great technical depth. For them the power of the metaphor lay precisely in *not* spelling out its terms.

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<sup>1</sup> Douglas Johnson, "Beethoven Scholars and Beethoven's Sketches," *19<sup>th</sup>-Century Music* 2 (1978): 13.

An issue closely related to this one is the transparency of the metaphor's terms for contemporaneous readers. I noted in Chapter 2, for instance, that for Hoffmann's audience the meanings of the metaphor of the tree were quite clear (see above, pp. 86-91). It is only for later audiences unfamiliar with its terms that the metaphor's import must be spelled out.

Ruth Solie offers a second explanation for writers' reluctance to spell out organic relationships in her article "The Living Work." There she points to the fact that analysis involving a division of the whole into its parts contradicts a central precept of organic thought: the whole is primary. Solie supplies an argument from Benedetto Croce:

The fact that we divide a work of art into parts, a poem into scenes, episodes, similes, sentences, or a picture into single figures and objects, background, foreground, etc. . . . annihilates the work, as dividing the organism into heart, brain, nerves, muscles and so on turns the living being into a corpse.<sup>2</sup>

In the first chapter I cited a remark from Hanslick, who declares that his *Zergliederung* of Beethoven's "Prometheus Overture" "turns a flourishing body into a skeleton. . . ."<sup>3</sup> For these writers, analysis amounts to nothing less than a death sentence for the organic work of art.

A final explanation for writers' reticence on analytic issues, and one that serves as focus here, is the philosophical commitments that influence a writer's methods, language, and conclusions. This explanation relates closely to the previous one in which writers' aesthetic/philosophical notions of the work of art constrain their approach to it. It differs in its emphasis on a broader philosophical framework in which a writer operates and the

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<sup>2</sup> Benedetto Croce, *Aesthetic as Science of Expression and General Linguistic*, trans. Douglas Ainslie, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (London, 1929): 20. Cited in Solie, "The Living Work": 150.

<sup>3</sup> Eduard Hanslick, *On the Musically Beautiful*: 14. Cited in Chapter 1, p. 15 and n. 25.

different kinds of work in which they engage. Nottebohm's work was essentially scholarly in its focus, removed from the official office of critic as practiced by writers like Hanslick or Croce. (That Nottebohm engaged in criticism nonetheless is an argument I take up later in the chapter.) A significant portion of that scholarly work involved sorting through and transcribing Beethoven's sketches and making selections from them available to the public, first in a series of short journal articles and then in larger collections. In that process, Nottebohm confronted evidence that thoroughly challenged his notions of the organic, the nature of his scholarly enterprise, and the relevance of Beethoven's sketches to analytic study of completed musical works. My argument with respect to Nottebohm's work is this: Nottebohm's reticence concerning the analytic promise of the sketches is explained more convincingly by his engagement with transcendentalist and positivist streams of nineteenth-century philosophy than by deficiencies in his critical or analytic apparatus. In a manner analogous to writers described by Croce, Nottebohm avoids analysis not because he lacks technical vocabulary but because the very foundational notions of the scope of his own work frequently preclude such endeavors.

### **I. Definitions**

I use the term transcendentalism to include aspects of both nineteenth-century idealist and transcendentalist philosophy. The following discussion clarifies the relationship between the two, and emphasizes aspects that are continuous from one to the other.

Idealism is . . . a metaphysical theory about the nature of reality . . . [that] presupposes a distinction between appearance and reality. . . . It maintains in general that what is real is in some way confined to or at least related to the contents of our own mind.<sup>4</sup>

Coleridge embraced and molded for his own purposes a version of idealist philosophy after acquainting himself with the German philosophers Fichte, Schlegel, and Schelling. A primary thrust of Coleridge's endeavor concerned the nature of the artistic mind in its creative process—also a central concern for Nottebohm. Given idealism's negation of the phenomenal world, the philosophy of mind and artistic creation Coleridge developed therefrom lent itself to and included both mental and spiritual aspects. The noun *Geist*, a term central to nineteenth-century German idealist philosophy, allows the senses of our English words "mind" and/or "spirit," thereby facilitating both mental and spiritual interpretations. Coleridge's theory, moreover, in accord with the writings of Fichte and Schelling, gave to unity a momentous importance. The unity Coleridge sought led directly to God.<sup>5</sup>

Transcendentalism is . . . belief in the existence of things that transcend sense-experience or, more reflectively, belief in the possibility of transcendent metaphysics, that is to say, philosophical reasoning that aims to establish beliefs about transcendent entities. The Forms or Ideas of Plato, which are not in space and time and not encountered in the world of the senses, are . . . incontestably transcendent.<sup>6</sup>

Emphasis here belongs with the notion of things that transcend sense-experience. Kant's philosophy, as noted in Chapter 2, includes the concept of transcendent things-in-

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<sup>4</sup> D. W. Hamlyn, "Idealism, philosophical," in *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy*: 386.

<sup>5</sup> Gordon McKenzie, *Organic Unity in Coleridge*, University of California Publications in English Vol. 7, No. 1: 1-108 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1939): 4. McKenzie's discussion on p. 74 details the more overt spiritual aspects of Coleridge's theories: "Coleridge was thoroughly in accord with Fichte and Schelling . . . in his desire for unity. That unity was all-embracing, and, so far as he was concerned, led directly to God."

<sup>6</sup> A. Quinton, "Transcendentalism," in *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy*: 878.

themselves (*Dinge-an-sich*), things beyond experience and to which no properties can be intelligently ascribed. Schopenhauer believed his own philosophy to be “the natural continuation and completion of the Kantian.”<sup>7</sup> The transcendent world his philosophy sets forth also borrows heavily from Plato’s notion of Ideas, ideal forms that exist beyond the constraints of time and space. What human beings experience in the world is merely a copy of this transcendent reality.

For the present investigation it is important to note the emphasis common to both idealism and transcendentalism on mind-spirit values as opposed to material ones.<sup>8</sup> Commensurate with this emphasis is the belief that only what exists in the ideal or transcendental realm, rather than in the phenomenal world of objects, is real.

## II. Historical Background to Nottebohm’s Comments

Nottebohm published studies of Beethoven’s sketches first in journal articles and then in two major collections: *Beethoveniana* (1872) and *Zweite Beethoveniana* (published posthumously in 1887). To establish a context for his work I examine selected early studies<sup>9</sup>:

- Ignaz Ritter von Seyfried: *Ludwig van Beethoven’s Studien im Generalbasse, Contrapuncte und in der Compositions-Lehre* (1832)
- Anton Schindler: *Biographie von Ludwig van Beethoven* (1840)
- Hermann Hirschbach: *Musikalisches-kritisches Repertorium* (1844)

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<sup>7</sup> E.F.J. Payne, Translator’s Introduction to *The World as Will and Representation* by Arthur Schopenhauer (New York, Dover Publications, Inc.: 1969): vi.

<sup>8</sup> Ruth Solie highlights this aspect of idealist philosophy in “The Living Work”: 149.

<sup>9</sup> Thomas Whelan’s dissertation provides an informative and much more detailed pre-history of sketch studies in the first half of the nineteenth century. See Whelan, “Towards a History and Theory of Sketch Studies,” Ph.D. diss., Brandeis University, 1990: 1-73.

- Johann Christian Lobe: *Lehrbuch der musikalischen Composition* (1850)<sup>10</sup>

Ignaz Ritter von Seyfried (1776-1841), a Viennese composer, critic, and conductor, published a collection of Beethoven's exercises in 1832.<sup>11</sup> His emphasis in this publication lies with Beethoven's compositional studies and not with Beethoven's sketches for individual works. Nevertheless, he includes a sketch for the song *Adelaide*, Op. 48, together with the remark that "This outline is most probably the very first draft."<sup>12</sup> If indeed it is an early draft, the sketch for the song could provide valuable insights into Beethoven's early stages of composition, though Seyfried does not pursue its implications. Seyfried refers again to sketches in an anecdote detailing Beethoven's habit of carrying with him a small notebook to jot down musical ideas: "He was not to be found on the street without a small notebook in which he noted his momentary ideas."<sup>13</sup> Seyfried's remarks about sketches appeared in print just five years after Beethoven's death. They demonstrate how quickly the sketchbooks and anecdotes about Beethoven's reliance upon them had found their way into popular knowledge.

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<sup>10</sup> Ian Bent itemizes these sources in "The 'Compositional Process' in Music Theory 1718-1850," *Music Analysis* 3 (1984): 53, notes 16 and 17.

<sup>11</sup> Ignaz Ritter von Seyfried, *Ludwig van Beethoven's Studien im Generalbasse, Contrapunkte und in der Compositions-Lehre* (Vienna: Tobias Haslinger, 1832): 352. Nottebohm publicized a most disturbing aspect of Seyfried's work in 1863 and 1864, demonstrating that the *Studien* was a misrepresentation, indeed a falsification, of Beethoven's studies. Nottebohm was not the first to notice this, but he was the first to undertake an exhaustive account of Beethoven's study papers. In 1863 and 1864 he published a series of articles in the *AmZ* on the topic, and later condensed them for an article in *Beethoveniana*. I am indebted to Richard Kramer for drawing my attention to this aspect of Seyfried's work.

<sup>12</sup> "Dieser Brouillon ist höchst wahrscheinlich der allererste Entwurf." Seyfried, *Ludwig van Beethoven's Studien*: 352.

<sup>13</sup> "Ohne ein kleines Notenbuch, worin er seine momentanen Ideen bemerkte, war er nie auf der Strasse zu finden." Seyfried, *Ludwig van Beethoven's Studien*: 20.

Anton Schindler (1795-1864), Moravian violinist, conductor, and writer, published the first edition of a Beethoven biography in 1840. He included in it four pages of musical sketches for the finale of Op. 131. In discussing the finale of the quartet, Schindler points to a total of seven sketches for the first motive alone, and comments that “The experiments with this motive are not less than seven, perhaps the highest number ever to be found in the sketches of our master.”<sup>14</sup> From other surviving sketches Schindler adduced the evidence of Beethoven’s difficulties in composing the finale of the Ninth Symphony. In both cases Schindler dramatizes Beethoven’s struggle to formulate ideas for these works.

Hermann Hirschbach (1812-1888), a Berlin-born composer and editor, established himself in Leipzig in 1842.<sup>15</sup> He included sketches for the finale of Op. 131, along with sketches for a projected tenth symphony and an overture on the name B-A-C-H, in his periodical *Musikalisch-kritisches Repertorium*.<sup>16</sup> Hirschbach prefaces the sketches for the final movement of the Op. 131 quartet with a statement that clearly echoes Schindler’s in the biography:

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<sup>14</sup> “Der Versuche mit diesem Motiv sind nicht weniger denn sieben, vielleicht die höchste Zahl, welche je in den Skizzen unsers Meisters aufzufinden gewesen.” Anton Schindler, *Biographie von Ludwig van Beethoven*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Münster, 1860): 354.

<sup>15</sup> See F.-J. Fétis, *Biographie universelle des musiciens et biographie générale de la musique*, Vol. 4 (Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1878): 337.

<sup>16</sup> The full title of Hirschbach’s periodical is *Musikalisch-kritisches Repertorium aller neuen Erscheinungen im Gebiete der Tonkunst*. Whistling published it in Leipzig from 1844-45. Ian Bent reports that it was Schindler who allowed Hirschbach to publish the seven sketches allegedly from the finale of the C<sup>#</sup>-Minor Quartet, Op. 131, and transcriptions of the supposed sketches for a Tenth Symphony and an Overture on B.A.C.H. See Bent, “The ‘Compositional Process’”: 38.

The following seven different beginnings for the last movement of his C<sup>#</sup>-Minor Quartet give an idea of the struggle, of which the theme-invention cost Beethoven the most.<sup>17</sup>

The achievements of Hirschbach's short-lived publication include, first, carrying forward the enduringly popular image of Beethoven's struggle to master his musical materials, and second, making available to a wider audience a sampling of Beethoven's sketches. Other writers would seize upon this small collection with great curiosity and enthusiasm.

Johann Christian Lobe, for one, incorporated these sketch materials in his 1850 *Lehrbuch*.<sup>18</sup> His appropriation of sketch materials constitutes an early example of a writer attempting to work with the musical contents of the sketches and to derive a precise methodology from them. As noted above, earlier writers included a few sketches in select publications but provided little or no commentary on them, beyond the fact that they exemplified Beethoven's struggle to master his musical materials. And, unlike Nottebohm, whose first articles on the sketches would not appear for another ten years, Lobe was not interested in issues of chronology, an aspect of Beethoven studies for which Nottebohm believed the sketches were uniquely suited. In fact, the sketches that Lobe reproduces in his *Lehrbuch* concern very late works of Beethoven: a proposed tenth symphony, the Overture on B-A-C-H, and sketches belonging to the early stages of composition for the Quartet Op. 131. Lobe brushes all matters of chronology aside in his use of these sketches, employing them to elucidate Beethoven's working methods in such

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<sup>17</sup> "Von dem Kampfe, welchen die Thema-Erfindung Beethoven meist kostete, geben nachstehende sieben verschiedene Anfänge zum letzten Satze seines Cis-moll-Quartetts einen Begriff." Hirschbach, *Musikalisch-kritisches Repertorium*: 3.

<sup>18</sup> Lobe's ideas were disseminated widely. In 1846, Lobe took over the editorship of the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*, thereby gaining a valuable base for his writing projects. The first volume of the *Lehrbuch*, moreover, went through a total of six editions, the last two revised by Hermann Kretzschmar. See Bent, *Music Analysis in the Nineteenth Century*, Vol. 1: 200.

early pieces as the Quartets, Op. 18. In fact, Lobe defines a single working method for Beethoven's compositional activities that supersedes chronological bounds. Lobe's methodology thus depends upon a highly idealized notion of Beethoven's compositional process, one that he puts into direct service for instruction in both composition and analysis.

Of what value were the sketches to Lobe? Ian Bent has summarized the situation like this:

. . . what we have [in the case of Lobe] is a manual of composition which is modeled directly on Lobe's perception of Beethoven's compositional process.<sup>19</sup>

Emphasis is due the words "Lobe's perception." In fact, Lobe had few sketch materials with which to work. He based his conclusions entirely on the sketches available in Hirschbach's periodical. Example 3-1 reproduces the fragments from Hirschbach that Lobe selected and included in his own publication. The first three, for the finale of the String Quartet in C#-Minor, Op. 131, are abbreviated from the version published in Hirschbach. They appear on pages 23 and 24 of the *Lehrbuch*. The others appear near the end of the first volume, on p. 337.

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<sup>19</sup> Bent, "The 'Compositional Process'": 40.

(4) Meilleur.

63.

64.

Aus den Skizzen zur 10. Symphonie.  
In der Reihenfolge, wie sie notirt sind.)  
*Scherzo. Presto.*

900.

## Skizze zur Ouvertüre.

B. A. C. H.

901. Musical sketch for 'Skizze zur Ouvertüre' in G major, 2/4 time. It consists of a single staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The tempo marking is 'Molto.' The sketch shows a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, starting on G4 and moving through various intervals.

Diese Ouvertüre mit der neunten Symphonie, so haben wir eine Akademie im Kärntner Thor. \*)

Skizzen zur 10. Symphonie.  
Finale des ersten Stückes.

902. Musical sketch for 'Skizzen zur 10. Symphonie' in G major, 2/4 time. It consists of two staves with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The tempo marking is 'Andante. As.' The sketch shows a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, starting on G4 and moving through various intervals.

903. Musical sketch for 'Skizzen zur 10. Symphonie' in G major, 2/4 time. It consists of a single staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The tempo marking is 'Andante. As.' The sketch shows a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, starting on G4 and moving through various intervals. The word 'Ferma.' is written at the end of the sketch.

## Skizzen zur Ouvertüre Bach.

904. Musical sketch for 'Skizzen zur Ouvertüre Bach' in G major, 2/4 time. It consists of four staves with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The tempo marking is 'pp'. The sketch shows a complex melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, starting on G4 and moving through various intervals.

905. Musical sketch for 'Skizzen zur Ouvertüre Bach' in G major, 2/4 time. It consists of a single staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The tempo marking is 'pp'. The sketch shows a complex melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, starting on G4 and moving through various intervals.

\*) Von Beethoven dabei geschrieben.

## Example 3-1

Johann Christian Lobe, Reproduction of Selected Sketches from Hirschbach,  
*Musikalisch-kritisches Repertorium*

The following, from near the end of the first volume of the *Lehrbuch*, gives us some idea of the meaning Lobe attributed to these materials. He writes:

. . . I have already given a few examples from Beethoven's sketchbooks, at the beginning of this work [the three sketches from the finale of Op. 131], of Beethoven's seeking for isolated ideas, modifying them, and improving them. Here are some further examples of first drafts and sketches from him [the remainder of the sketches reproduced in Example 3-1], which show that for the most part he threw up very disjointed, incomplete ideas, for entirely different works at the same time—works which he carried out only much later.<sup>20</sup>

Several important matters surface here. First, Lobe believed that Beethoven began his compositions with ideas. Judging from the sketch materials Lobe had available to him, these ideas were melodic. In his analysis of Beethoven's Op. 18 No. 2 Lobe terms them *Motiv*, or germ-cell (“. . . vom ersten, kleinsten Keim an . . .”).<sup>21</sup> Second, the ideas with which Beethoven began a composition required modification and improvement. They did not arrive in finished form. Finally, Lobe views Beethoven's ideas as isolated. There are two senses in which the ideas are isolated: they appear independently of each other in the initial stage of composition, isolated in space;<sup>22</sup> and, because there may be a considerable time lag between the initial “throwing up” of “disjointed, incomplete ideas”

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<sup>20</sup> “Aus Beethoven's Skizzenbüchern habe ich schon am Anfange dieses Werkes einige Beispiele von Beethoven's Suchen, Aendern, Verbessern seiner einzelnen Gedanken gezeigt. Hier sind noch einige Beispiele erster Entwürfe und Skizzen von ihm, die beweisen, dass er sehr abgerissene, unvollständige Gedanken meist hingeworfen, zu mehreren ganz verschiedenen Werken zugleich, die er oft erst viel später weiter ausgeführt hat.” Lobe, *Lehrbuch*: 337. Otto Jahn expressed amazement that such disjointed ideas could produce an organic whole: “Man staunt über dieses unaufhörliche Versuchen und begreift nicht, wie aus solchem musikalischen Bröckelwerk ein organisches Ganze werden könne.” Otto Jahn, “Leonore oder Fidelio,” in *Gesammelte Aufsätze über Musik* (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1866): 244.

<sup>21</sup> Lobe, *Lehrbuch*: 333.

<sup>22</sup> Bent contrasts this with Koch's compositional method in which initial ideas are connected to each other. Bent, “The ‘Compositional Process,’” 40. Compare also the discussion in Chapter 1, pp. 31-35.

and their eventual “execution,” the initial ideas are also isolated from each other in time. Lobe views his analytic method as a means of uncovering Beethoven’s compositional process: the motif is the starting point both in analysis and in composition. The first analytic stage requires examination of the motivic content of the “principal melodic strand,” which Lobe extracts from the parts and presents on a single staff.<sup>23</sup> Excerpts from Beethoven’s Violin Sonata in A Major, Op. 12 No. 2, and the String Quartet in E<sup>b</sup> Major, Op. 74, demonstrate how Beethoven begins with the smallest of motives: two eighth notes in the case of the Violin Sonata and three staccato quarter notes in the case of the String Quartet. Through techniques of sequencing and repetition, argues Lobe, Beethoven builds “a charming theme for a Sonata Allegro or Scherzo.”<sup>24</sup>

As Lobe observes in the Beethoven sketches to which he had access, Beethoven began with isolated ideas, sometimes for entirely different works at the same time. In his own compositional method for students, Lobe instructs the pupil to begin by inventing initial ideas with no thought for their continuation or combination. What belongs to the initial melodic idea is the underlying harmony and a vague notion of the accompaniment style.<sup>25</sup> Lobe’s terminology reflects his allegiance to Beethoven’s working methods, or rather, what he perceives to be Beethoven’s working methods. He terms the various stages of composition “sketches” and he imputes to Beethoven the method he prescribes for his pupils. Throughout he emphasizes the economy of material with which

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<sup>23</sup> Lobe’s term is “Hauptmelodiefaden.” It is “principal” both temporally and structurally.

<sup>24</sup> “Aus diesen zwei an sich so unbedeutenden Achtelnoten hat Beethoven durch Sequenzen, durch Wiederholung, ein reizendes Thema zu einem Sonatenallegro gebildet.” Lobe, *Lehrbuch*: 334.

<sup>25</sup> “Es versteht sich, dass der Komponist in der Regel immer schon bei Bildung eines solchen Gedankens die harmonische Unterlage und wenigstens ein ungefähres Bild der Begleitung in sich habe.” Lobe, *Lehrbuch*: 335.

composers work. In his discussion of Haydn's Symphony No. 104, fourth movement, he comments that "many forms have still fewer basic materials."<sup>26</sup>

Lobe's response to contemporaneous views of the compositional process provides a particularly telling insight into his own beliefs. He contrasts his own method, based upon evidence gleaned from the sketches, with a viewpoint that argues for a compositional process involving a "single outpouring." Subscribers to this latter position, as reported by Lobe in his *Lehrbuch*, argue that the composer's thoughts must,

. . . in a gush, stream out of his excited mind in an immediate revelation, otherwise [the music] will be a patchwork, it will be a made [*gemachtes*] work, and not an artistically created work.<sup>27</sup>

Lobe's own belief is that composers sketch discontinuously and often not chronologically. For Lobe, such discontinuity impinges not at all upon the coherence of the final work. Lobe trusts the evidence of the small collection of sketches to which he had access and his own beliefs about Beethoven's working methods. His philosophical orientation resembles that of Goethe, who avoids the extremes of transcendentalist tenets and remained rooted, as it were, in a material reality or, rather, a reality that addresses both material and *geistig* aspects. As discussed in Chapter 1, Lobe describes an initial *geistig* process in which the piece seems to compose itself, but he quickly introduces mechanical procedures, the kinds of procedures he found in Beethoven's sketches, to

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<sup>26</sup> "Manche Formen haben noch weniger Grundmaterial." Lobe, *Lehrbuch*: 337. Janet Levy points out the tendency to associate "economy" both with organicism and with musical value. The writers she cites—Paul Henry Lang and David Hughes—both discuss the music of Haydn. See Janet Levy, "Covert and Casual Values in Recent Writings about Music," *Journal of Musicology* 5 (1987): 7.

<sup>27</sup> "Nein, wie die Gedanken folgen, müssen sie auch gleich in einem Gusse aus dem erregten Geiste des Künstlers hervorströmen in erster unmittelbarer Offenbarung, sonst wird es Stückwerk, es wird ein gemachtes, kein künstlerisch geschaffenes Werk." Lobe, *Lehrbuch*: 337. Descriptions employing such imagery are central to organicist beliefs about compositional process.

account for material aspects of the process. Nottebohm would be concerned with precisely these issues.

### III. Nottebohm's Disclaimer

In his introduction to the Kessler sketchbook Nottebohm writes concerning "the organic" in Beethoven's sketchbooks:

Now it is no doubt true that the sketchbooks, in which everything that is fixed and unalterable in the finished work appears hesitant and more or less labile, do reveal certain procedures with regard to origins, invention, organization, and the like. But in this regard we must accept that they also withhold a great deal, and that we learn least of all from them about everything that is called organic.<sup>28</sup>

Two matters are important for the current investigation. First, Nottebohm does not question the significance of the organic, regardless of what the sketches reveal. If the sketch evidence proves elusive, Nottebohm's belief remains firm nevertheless. Second, Nottebohm's statement stands out as a beacon for the possibilities of uncovering things organic in the sketches, despite his unequivocally negative forecast for such activity.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Translation from Johnson, "Beethoven Scholars": 5. ["Es ist nun wohl wahr, dass die Skizzenbücher, wo alles schwankend und gleichsam beweglich erscheint, was in dem Tonstück fest und unveränderlich dasteht, manchen Vorgang in Bezug auf Entstehung, Erfindung, Gestaltung u. dgl. enthüllen. Aber darüber muss man klar sein, dass sie auch manches verschweigen und dass wir von allem, was organisch heisst, aus ihnen am allerwenigsten erfahren." Gustav Nottebohm, Introduction to *Ein Skizzenbuch von Beethoven* [Kessler] (Leipzig: C.F. Peters, 1865): 7.] The so-called Kessler sketchbook, used by Beethoven probably from late 1801 to mid 1802, was first made available to the public in Nottebohm's monograph, published by Breitkopf and Härtel in 1865. The sketchbook was published for the first time, in facsimile and transcription, with commentary, by Sieghard Brandenburg in the Beethoven-Haus series, in 1974/76. Nottebohm valued the sketchbook because it was intact and thus permitted a full, page-by-page description of a complete sketchbook. Previously, Beethoven's sketches had found their way into publication only as isolated items with the briefest of commentaries.

<sup>29</sup> Nottebohm restates the argument in the introduction to the second collection of sketches published in 1887: "Was man organische Entwicklung eines Kunstwerkes nennt, liegt den Skizzen fern." Gustav Nottebohm, *Zweite Beethoveniana* (Leipzig: C.F. Peters, 1887): ix. Nottebohm's pupil, Eusebius Mandyczewski, brought the volume to press after Nottebohm's

Up to this point, scholars, Nottebohm included, had used the sketches primarily as documentation for biography, or as corroborative evidence for the compilation of thematic catalogues.<sup>30</sup> In fact, Nottebohm believed that the sketches were uniquely suited to a project of this character. His own thematic catalogue for Beethoven's music relies heavily on evidence gleaned from the sketches to establish details of chronology. In admitting that writers might be tempted to search for organic aspects of compositions in the sketches, Nottebohm seems to foreshadow, quite unwittingly, a field of research that has since generated much fruitful research.<sup>31</sup>

For, Nottebohm's warning notwithstanding, analysts both before and after him have been unable to resist analyzing the record of composition documented by the sketches and finding in it aspects they consider organic. Such study frequently goes hand in hand with an organicist aesthetic framework that encompasses aspects of both creative process and creative product, and a music-analytic practice that attempts to account for both. As noted above, Johann Christian Lobe used a small collection of Beethoven's sketches to develop both an analytic and a pedagogical method based on what he perceived to be Beethoven's organic method of composition. Heinrich Schenker, writing in the early twentieth century and relying heavily on Nottebohm's published work,

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death. Mandyczewski's scrupulous scholarly methods, together with his comment that "Die Einleitung musste nach vorhandenen Andeutungen zusammengestellt werden," argue powerfully for the formulation being Nottebohm's own.

<sup>30</sup> In a summary of his life in his own words, Alexander Thayer wrote to Hermann Deiters in 1878: "If you prepare anything about me, please note that I was the *first person ever to use* Beethoven's Sketch Books for chronology [emphasis original]. . . ." Cited in *Thayer's Life of Beethoven*, rev. and ed. Elliott Forbes (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967): viii.

<sup>31</sup> The *Studies in Musical Genesis and Structure* series published by Oxford University Press is an important example.

pursued this very agenda with great enthusiasm and dedication. In *Der freie Satz* he claimed:

Whoever has seen *sketches* by the great composers must have encountered voice-leading progressions which are far more than brief ideas or mere suggestions. [These voice-leading progressions] really present goals and the paths to them in a manner which could only stem from the far-flung inspiration which is given to a genius. Such a vision, which is based upon the relationship of background, middleground, and foreground, can create a purely musical coherence even, as it were, in flight.<sup>32</sup>

Features to which Schenker points—voice-leading progressions, goals, the far-flung inspiration given to a genius, the relationship of background, middleground and foreground—constitute central components of his organicist view of music. And Schenker believed that all these were to be found in the sketches.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Heinrich Schenker, *Free Composition*, trans. and ed. Ernst Oster (New York: Schirmer Books, 1979): 7. ["Wer je Skizzen der grossen Meister gesehen hat, musste auf Stimmführungszüge stossen, die über den Charakter von Augenblickseinfällen und Andeutungen hinaus schon Ziele und Wege vorstellen, die in solcher Weise nur einer fernfliegenden Inspiration entstammen können, wie sie einem Genie gegeben ist, das, im Zusammenhang von Hinter- Mittel- und Vordergrund wurzelnd, einen rein musikalischen Zusammenhang eben schon im Flug erschaffen kann." Heinrich Schenker, *Der freie Satz* (Vienna: Universal Edition, 1956): 33.]

<sup>33</sup> In his early essay "Der Geist der Musikalischen Technik" Schenker argues precisely the opposite point-of-view: "In reality, musical content is never organic," he claims, "for it lacks any principle of causation. . . . [The composer's] final decision obscures the other materials he had to choose from (the rejected portions can often be found in his studies and sketches), and reveals only that which appealed to him most." Translation from William Pastille, "Schenker's 'Spirit of Musical Technique,'" *Theoria* 3 (1988): 99. ["In der That ist kein musikalischer Inhalt organisch. Es fehlt ihm ein jeglicher Causalnexus. . . . Durch die Wahl, die er so getroffen, erfährt man zwar nicht, was er sonst noch zur Auswahl vorrätig hatte (das Unterdrückte kann man oft aus seinen Studien und Skizzen erfahren), wohl aber, was ihm persönlich am besten gefiel." Heinrich Schenker, "Der Geist der musikalischen Technik," *Musikalisches Wochenblatt* 26 (1895): 245-46, 257-59, 273-74, 279-80, 309-310, 325-326; Reprint, Leipzig: E.W. Fritsch, 1895; reprinted in *Heinrich Schenker als Essayist und Kritiker: Gesammelte Aufsätze, Rezensionen und kleinere Berichte aus den Jahren 1891-1901*, ed. Hellmut Federhofer (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 1990): 148, 149.] Schenker's shifting commitment to organicist tenets has been the subject of recent scholarly inquiry, most notably in William Pastille, "Heinrich Schenker: 'Anti-Organicist,'" *19<sup>th</sup>-Century Music* 8 (1984): 29-36; Allan Keiler, "The Origins of Schenker's Thought: How Man is Musical," *Journal of Music Theory* 33 (1989): 273-298; and Kevin Korsyn, "Schenker's Organicism Reexamined," *Intégral* 7 (1993):

A further consideration in evaluating Nottebohm's remarks is the character and purpose of musical analysis by the mid-nineteenth century. Organic imagery figured importantly in music analytic writings. In my earlier discussion of analyses by Lobe and Ulibishev (pp. 35-45) I drew attention to the different kinds of organic processes each writer imputed to his respective composer. Lobe begins with organic images of conception and birth, but quickly reverts to what he terms mechanical procedures. Ulibishev makes no such concession. In his formulation, the compositional process remains mysterious, indescribable in language. He frames his analytic procedure, which discounts technical accounts of music, within this model. Both Lobe and Ulibishev exemplify the tendency common at the time to include in their analytic descriptions of music an account of its compositional procedure. Their interests reflect the nineteenth century's fascination with issues of origin, genesis, and development, especially as articulated by evolutionary theory.<sup>34</sup> Their approach raises issues concerning the purpose of musical analysis, and asks whether one of the analyst's tasks is to provide an account of a work's genesis. Their affirmative response establishes an important link between

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82-118. Schenker's changing views on organicism receive a comprehensive discussion in Chapter 4.

<sup>34</sup> Evolutionary biology became mainstream with publications by Alfred Russell Wallace ["On the Law Which Has Regulated the Introduction of New Species," in *The Annals and Magazine of Natural History, Including Zoology, Botany, and Geology* 16 (1855): 184-196], by Wallace and Charles Darwin ["On the Tendency of Species to Form Varieties; and on the Perpetuation of Varieties and Species by Natural Means of Selection," in *Journal of the Proceedings the Linnean Society, Zoology* 3 (1859): 46-62], and by Darwin [*On the Origin of Species* (London: John Murray, 1859)]. Other writers advanced theories of evolution much earlier, however, among them J.B.P.A. Lamarck (as early as 1809), William Charles Wells (1818), Patrick Matthew (1831), Charles Lyell (1834), and Robert Chambers (1844). Furthermore, as one writer has remarked, "Despite the fact that the arguments of Lamarck and Chambers were unacceptable to many scientists, evolution could no longer be easily ignored after 1809 and especially after 1844." See H. Lewis McKinney, ed. and translator, *Lamarck to Darwin: Contributions to Evolutionary Biology 1809-1859* (Lawrence, KA: Coronado Press, 1971): 7. It is not difficult to imagine, then, that writers like Lobe and Ulibishev would have come in contact with evolutionary theory prior to Darwin's benchmark publication.

analysis and compositional procedure that would be explored in increasing detail and with burgeoning fervor in the early twentieth century by Schenker and others.

Nottebohm's standpoint concerning what the sketches can and cannot reveal becomes increasingly perplexing in light of such scholarly practices: analysis that includes an account of compositional procedure, a central concern of organicist theory, together with a vast body of sketch materials that records precisely that procedure.

#### IV. Nottebohm and "*was organisch heisst*"

Nottebohm's disclaimer brings to mind a recent article by Peter Kivy about Hanslick, titled "What was Hanslick Denying?"<sup>35</sup> Kivy provides crucial background to Hanslick's negative thesis, his rebuttal of the belief that "music is essentially an expression of the emotions."<sup>36</sup> Kivy sets two principal tasks for himself in the article: first, "spelling out more fully the negative thesis and its supporting arguments"; and second, "making his [Kivy's] own interpretations of them consistent, as much as is possible, with the rest of Hanslick's views."<sup>37</sup>

For the current study we might ask, what was Nottebohm denying? Like Hanslick in his attempt to define a discipline of musical aesthetics, Nottebohm, in defining the parameters of a discipline of sketch studies, introduces the topic of the organic with a negative thesis: the sketches *do not* reveal, they *conceal* more than they reveal.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Peter Kivy, "What was Hanslick Denying?" *Journal of Musicology* 8 (1990): 3-18.

<sup>36</sup> Kivy, "What was Hanslick Denying?": 3.

<sup>37</sup> Kivy, "What was Hanslick Denying?": 6.

<sup>38</sup> Nottebohm held a strong conviction that he must define the character of his undertaking. In establishing Beethoven's variable procedures for composition, Nottebohm points to the "numerous recent attempts at turning Beethoven's working method . . . into common property

Nottebohm's locution—*was organisch heisst*—nevertheless indicates that the organic figured importantly in the cultural conversation of his time. It seems to have been one of his scholarly obligations to introduce the topic, even though it conflicted with his philosophical commitments, as we shall soon see. Moreover, he seems to refer to a common understanding of the term “organic,” an understanding for which his readers apparently required little, if any, explanation.

Taking Kivy's lead, I begin by spelling out more clearly Nottebohm's negative thesis. This requires an investigation into Nottebohm's meaning of organic, based on a careful reading of his introductions. Casting the net wider, I establish an historical context, both philosophical and methodological, to better understand what Nottebohm was reacting to, and to speculate as to why he argued his negative position so staunchly.<sup>39</sup>

## V. Natural and *geistig* Laws

Nottebohm's argument rests upon a singular definition of organic that encompasses only what he terms *geistig* aspects of composition. By narrowing his definition in this way he departs from earlier nineteenth-century formulations of organic

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and a branch of study. Quite apart from this it seems desirable to be as clear as possible in our minds about the standpoint we should adopt in our study of a sketchbook.” Translation from Nottebohm, *Two Beethoven Sketchbooks: A Description with Musical Extracts*, trans. Jonathan Katz (London: Victor Gollancz, Ltd., 1979): 7. [“Wir müssen aber daran erinnern, wie bedenklich die in neuerer Zeit unternommenen Versuche sind, Beethoven's Arbeitsweise, seine Methode der Arbeit . . . zu einem Gemeingut und Lehrgegenstand zu machen. Ausserdem erschien es wünschenswerth, über den Standpunkt, den wir glauben bei einem Skizzenbuche einnehmen zu müssen, möglichst klar zu werden.” Nottebohm, *Ein Skizzenbuch*: 7.]

<sup>39</sup> Kivy points out that “Hanslick's little book, for all its vagaries and mistakes, shines out like a beacon of musical clarity and truth in a century that saw the writing of more nonsense about music than any other period in history that I can think of.” Kivy, “What Was Hanslick Denying?”: 18. Through the historical context provided by Kivy we gain a much-needed perspective on a position that seems at first egregiously one-sided.

theories of art which held as a fundamental tenet the modeling of artworks on nature. In the *Italienische Reise* Goethe claimed that “genuine art . . . is just as logical as Nature,”<sup>40</sup> and that

. . . these high works of art are also the highest works of nature, created by men following true and natural laws. Everything arbitrary, everything imaginary crumbles away, there we have necessity, there we have God.<sup>41</sup>

Goethe predicated his theory upon what he perceived as commonalities between artworks and nature. Nottebohm, conversely, stresses what he views to be irreconcilable differences between the two. In his introduction to the Kessler Sketchbook he writes:

We can observe the progressive development of a plant, become acquainted with the sequence of stages of its growth. Caught up in perpetual transformation, in which it follows fixed laws [*bestimmten Gesetzen*], it constantly manifests something new. But all that is new is also the old. So it is possible to explain its [growth] genetically. It is otherwise in the case of a musical artwork, that, in its general appearance, is bound to the expression of something particular and individual, and in such particularity, [it] follows/obeys not a law of nature, like the plant, but rather laws of the intellect [*den Gesetzen des Geistes*].<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> The context for the passage: “Except for objects in nature, which is true and consistent in all its parts, nothing really speaks so loudly as the trail left by a good, intelligent human being, or as genuine art, which is just as logical as Nature.” Goethe, *Goethe's Collected Works*, Vol. 6: 122. [“Ausser der Gegenständen der Natur, die in allen ihren Teilen wahr und konsequent ist, spricht doch nichts so laut als die Spur eines guten, verständigen Mannes, als die echte Kunst, die ebenso folgerecht ist als jene.” Goethe, *Goethes Werke*, Vol. 11: 149.]

<sup>41</sup> [“Diese hohen Kunstwerke sind zugleich als die höchsten Naturwerke von Menschen nach wahren und natürlichen Gesetzen hervorgebracht worden. Alles Willkürliche, Eingebildete fällt zusammen, da ist die Notwendigkeit, da ist Gott.” *Goethes Werke*, Vol. 11: 395.] The translation is my own.

<sup>42</sup> “Wir können die fortschreitende Entwicklung einer Pflanze beobachten, die Stufenfolge ihres Wachstums kennen lernen. In beständiger Wandlung begriffen und darin bestimmten Gesetzen folgend, bringt sie immer Neues zum Vorschein. Aber alles Neue ist immer das Alte. So mag es gelingen, sie genetisch zu erklären. Anders ist es beim musikalischen Kunstwerk, das, in seiner allgemeinen Erscheinung, an den Ausdruck eines Besonderen, Individuellen gebunden ist, und, in solcher Besonderheit, nicht, wie die Pflanze, einem Naturgesetz, sondern den Gesetzen des Geistes folgt.” Nottebohm: *Ein Skizzenbuch*: 7.

In this passage, Nottebohm contrasts the development of a plant with that of an artwork. Points of contrast include the accessibility of the growth process to an outside observer, the kinds of laws followed by each in its development, and the resultant product. A plant's growth, argues Nottebohm, can be observed and then explained in terms of fixed or natural laws ("*bestimmten Gesetzen; Naturgesetzen*"). Because a musical artwork follows *Gesetzen des Geistes*, we cannot gain access to its workings. Because each artwork is unique, moreover, we cannot define laws for its genesis.

A number of Nottebohm's terms require clarification. Nottebohm refers both to a *Naturgesetz* and to *Gesetzen des Geistes*. The *Naturgesetz* sounds much like a present-day definition of a scientific law:<sup>43</sup>

. . . a general statement describing an invariable order or regularity that exists among phenomena under specific conditions. Such a description is regarded as an explanation of how things in fact occur. . . . Some further characteristics, in most cases, of scientific laws follow: they have a wide range of applicability; . . . they contain data that can be observed; they are stated in as precise a definition and mathematical way as possible relative to the complexity of the situation they are attempting to describe; they have predictive power. . . .<sup>44</sup>

The development of a plant, as formulated by Nottebohm, follows many of these criteria.

Particularly salient for Nottebohm's distinction are the presence of observable data and

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<sup>43</sup> Compare Hanslick who, in his efforts to establish an aesthetics of music, argued that "If it is not to be wholly illusory, this investigation will have to approach the method of the natural sciences." Hanslick, *On the Musically Beautiful*: 1. ["Sie wird, will sie nicht ganz illusorisch werden, sich der naturwissenschaftlichen Methode wenigstens so weit nähern, dass sie versucht, den Dingen selbst an den Leib zu rücken, und zu forschen, was in diesen, losgelöst von den tausendfältig wechselnden Eindrücken, das Bleibende, Objective sei." Hanslick, *Vom Musikalisch-Schönen*, 10th ed.: 2.] Hanslick's treatise receives a fuller discussion later in the chapter.

<sup>44</sup> "Law, scientific," in Peter A. Angeles, *The Harper Collins Dictionary of Philosophy*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New York: Harper Collins, 1992): 164.

the predictive power of the law once formulated. Not only can the observer describe the plant's development, but she can also predict it.

In addition to its resonance with current definitions of scientific laws, Nottebohm's *Naturgesetz* exhibits the influence of powerful eighteenth- and nineteenth-century philosophical and methodological strains.<sup>45</sup> The authors of the eighteenth-century *Encyclopédie* identified natural law with laws of motion, laws discovered through experimentation and defined by mathematical equations. The centrality of experimentation as a means to explore the *Naturgesetz* left a certain ambiguity as to the precise nature of the law. Since experiments depend upon both observation and guidance by theoretical considerations, the question arises: is the *Naturgesetz* active in nature, or does it merely reside in our understanding?

Fascination with the natural world and its functioning counted as a central preoccupation of nineteenth-century thought. Biology's ascendance as a significant field of study is just one manifestation of this. The centrality of the *Naturgesetz* to philosophical and scientific discussions is another. Many scientists of the nineteenth century viewed the *Naturgesetz* in purely empirical ways, a radical departure from Kant, who argued that for laws of nature reason alone is the source. Empiricists argued for knowledge of natural laws through experience acquired inductively.

Another category of *Naturgesetz* is especially relevant here—that defined within positivism.<sup>46</sup> Positivism defines laws as instances of observable regularities, precisely the kinds of data Nottebohm observed in the plant. The positivists aimed to reduce

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<sup>45</sup> This discussion is based on G. Frey, "Naturgesetz," in *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*, Vol. 6 (Basel: Schwabe and Co., 1971): Cols. 528-531.

<sup>46</sup> I have gleaned the positivist understanding of law from Wallace I. Matson, *A New History of Philosophy*, Vol. 2, *Modern* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1987): 408-410.

observable phenomenon to an increasingly smaller number of underlying regularities. This is precisely the point at which Nottebohm's *Gesetzen des Geistes* mark their irreconcilable difference to the *Naturgesetz*. The *Gesetzen des Geistes* do not produce a group of like things that function in the same way; they produce an individual.

An additional feature of the *Gesetzen des Geistes* gives a clearer sense of their functioning. A passage from the introduction to *Zweite Beethoveniana* amplifies Nottebohm's meaning:

The spirit that dictated a work does not appear in the sketches. The sketches do not reveal the law by which Beethoven allowed himself to be led while creating.<sup>47</sup>

Law in this sense connotes an imperative, a force beyond the composer's conscious or rational control, that governs him at his work. Nottebohm's invocation of "the spirit that dictated the work" is a particularly forceful image that resonates with the nineteenth-century view of the composer as priest or oracle.

Since the sketches do not disclose the law of this *geistig* force, only one other source exists: Beethoven himself.<sup>48</sup> And he, too, lies beyond the sphere of empirical investigation: "But who can boast that he is able to administer the office of such keys?" questions Nottebohm.<sup>49</sup> Of the two processes necessary for composition—one material,

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<sup>47</sup> "Der Geist, der ein Werk dictirte, erscheint nicht in den Skizzen. Die Skizzen offenbaren nicht das Gesetz, von dem sich Beethoven beim Schaffen leiten liess." Nottebohm, *Zweite Beethoveniana*: ix. I am grateful to Leo Treitler for his suggestions concerning Nottebohm's meaning of "*Gesetz des Geistes*."

<sup>48</sup> Nottebohm, *Ein Skizzenbuch*: 8. Thomas Whelan links Nottebohm's interest in the composer as a source for scholarly investigation to the hermeneutics of Friedrich Schleiermacher. In his system of hermeneutics, Schleiermacher distinguished two types of interpretation: "grammatical" and "technical." The latter of these involves getting inside the mind of the author/composer. See Whelan, "Sketch Studies": 114.

<sup>49</sup> The passage in its entirety: "Es ist nun wohl wahr, dass die Skizzenbücher, wo alles schwankend und gleichsam beweglich erscheint, was in dem Tonstück fest und unveränderlich dasteht, manchen Vorgang in Bezug auf Entstehung, Erfindung, Gestaltung u. dgl. enthüllen.

as revealed in the sketches, the other *geistig*, of which there is no trace—the latter leaves the researcher only with conjecture, with speculation. Neither of these meshes comfortably with a positivist scholarly framework, as I demonstrate later on.<sup>50</sup>

A second item to be clarified is Nottebohm's distinction between the natural and the *geistig*. As I demonstrated above, his description of a *Naturgesetz* resonates with present-day definitions of scientific law. An additional clue to his meaning comes in his opposition of natural and *geistig* realms. The opposition results from the different kinds of laws that operate in each and the different kinds of products that belong to each. *Naturgesetzen* govern the world of nature, a world of phenomena, a world with observable objects like plants. *Naturgesetzen* have predictive as well as descriptive powers and they hold true for many similar objects. The *Gesetzen des Geistes*, on the other hand, govern an immaterial world. Such laws have neither predictive nor descriptive powers since they governs the creation of individual items, about which one cannot generalize.

Thomas Whelan relates Nottebohm's concept of the organic to formulations by Goethe, especially as set forth in the "Metamorphosis of Plants." In a related document,

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Aber darüber muss man klar sein, dass sie auch manches verschweigen und dass wir von allem, was organisch heisst, aus ihnen am allerwenigsten erfahren. Das ihnen fehlende Moment lässt sich nur durch Abstraction gewinnen. Wir suchen es in Beethoven, dem Künstler, selbst; in der Einheit seines ganzen Wesens und Geistes; in der Harmonie seiner Seelenkräfte. Der ganze Mensch mit seiner geistigen und seelischen Thätigkeit muss hinzugezogen werden, um die Einheit zwischen Erscheinung und Idee herzustellen. Hier liegt auch der Schlüssel zu seiner Werkstatt. Wer mag sich aber rühmen, solches Amt der Schlüssel zu verwalten zu können?" Nottebohm: *Ein Skizzenbuch*: 7, 8. Katz's translation loses the metaphor of the German civil service (the office of the keys): "But who can really boast that he has full knowledge of, or is in possession of, such keys?" *Two Beethoven Sketchbooks*: 7.

<sup>50</sup> Another interpretation of Nottebohm's "*Gesetz des Geistes*" merits consideration. Nottebohm's commitment to positivist ideals may have prompted him to attempt to situate spiritual aspects of composition within the positivist epistemological framework—this, by imbuing the spiritual with the title and character of law. His attempt to explicate such a law would nevertheless produce a nonsensical statement in positivist thought.

the fragmentary “Vorarbeiten zu einer Physiologie der Pflanzen,” Goethe claims that, through observing plant growth, the researcher becomes aware “of the following double law: 1. of the law of inner nature, through which plants are constituted; 2. of the law of external circumstances, through which plants are modified.”<sup>51</sup> Such a double law would seem to accommodate Nottebohm’s account of the genesis of Beethoven’s music: it postulates an “inner law,” which would account for unobservable features, as well as an “outer law,” which would account for the composer’s manipulation of those materials.

Whelan presents an attractive scenario for such a reading. Like any other German intellectual of his generation, Nottebohm knew Goethe’s work and would undoubtedly have been tempted to borrow ideas and definitions from a writer whose work he was so central to German nineteenth-century thought. I find it striking, however, that Nottebohm deems the laws of the natural and the *geistig* incompatible. If his notion of the organic *is* founded upon Goethe’s formulation, why does Nottebohm not argue that the sketches reveal something of this organic process? Why do Beethoven’s manipulations of his musical materials not count as instances of the operation of Goethe’s “outer law”? Why is there no trace of the *geistig* in the natural?

My earlier discussion of Goethe’s *Urpflanze* demonstrated Goethe’s belief that the primeval plant encompasses both the natural and *geistig* realms; he viewed it as belonging to both real and ideal realms. In his introduction to the first issue of the periodical *Propyläen*, moreover, published in 1798, Goethe posits what he terms “*etwas Geistig-Organisches*”:

All that we see around us is but raw material. If it is rare enough for

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<sup>51</sup> The quotation is from Goethe’s fragmentary “Vorarbeiten zu einer Physiologie der Pflanzen,” cited in Whelan, “Sketch Studies”: 169, 170.

an artist, through instinct and taste, by practice and experiment, to reach the point of achieving the beautiful exterior of things, selecting the best from the good in front of him and producing at least a pleasing appearance, it is rarer still, especially in modern times, for an artist to penetrate into the depths of things as well as into the depths of his own soul, so as to produce in his works not only something light and superficially effective, but, as the rival of nature, something spiritually organic, and to give it a content and a form by which it appears both natural and at the same time beyond nature.<sup>52</sup>

In this later formulation Goethe distinguishes nature from the artwork produced through an artist's penetration into "the depths of things as well as into the depths of his own soul." This type of artwork rivals nature, but at the same time appears to be both natural and beyond nature. Like the *Urpflanze*, the *Geistig-Organisch* exists in both natural and supernatural realms. It cannot be said that it belongs to one or the other.

These and other selections from Goethe's writings cited above present at least two essential aspects of his theories both of nature and of art. First, the worlds of nature and of art are intimately bound up, the former serving as model, and even rival, for the latter. Second, both nature and art mediate between the ideal and real, the natural and the *geistig*. Both artists, under special circumstances, and the *Urpflanze*, draw the two together. Nottebohm departs from Goethe in a most crucial sense: he maintains the two realms as separate and opposing. Unlike Goethe, he does *not* view the artwork as

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<sup>52</sup> *Goethe on Art*, ed. and trans. John Gage (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980): 6. ["Alles, was wir um uns her gewahr werden, ist nur roher Stoff; und wenn sich das schon selten genug ereignet, dass ein Künstler durch Instinkt und Geschmack, durch Übung und Versuche dahin gelangt, dass er den Dingen ihre äusere schöne Seite abzugewinnen, aus dem vorhandenen Guten das Beste auszuwählen und wenigstens einen gefälligen Schein hervorzubringen lernt, so ist es, besonders in der neuern Zeit, noch viel seltner, dass ein Künstler sowohl in die Tiefe der Gegenstände als in die Tiefe seines eignen Gemüts zu dringen vermag, um in seinen Werken nicht bloss etwas leicht und oberflächlich Wirkendes, sondern, wetteifernd mit der Natur, etwas Geistig-Organisches hervorzubringen und seinem Kunstwerk einen solchen Gehalt, eine solche Form zu geben, wodurch es natürlich zugleich und übernatürlich erscheint." Goethe, [Introduction] *Propyläen*, in *Goethes Werke*, Vol. 12: 42.]

sometimes being beyond nature. He believes rather that it is radically different from nature.

Nottebohm's restriction of the organic to the *geistig* realm sheds light on what appears to be a conflict between theory and method. I have in mind the features to which he consistently draws attention in the sketches: the frequent references to motivic and thematic development, and the use of terminology such as *Kern* (kernel) in his discussion of the second movement of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony.<sup>53</sup> Emphasis on motivic and thematic development, and descriptive terms such as *Kern*, had been linked by analysts with the organic since the early nineteenth century in the writings of E.T.A. Hoffmann.<sup>54</sup> Nottebohm's argument that the sketches cannot reveal what is organic remains perplexing in light of his frequent recourse to such terminology. If we factor in his relegation of the organic to a *geistig* realm, however, his position appears both more reasonable and more internally consistent. The terminology that was becoming standard in analytic discourse as a reference to the organic was linked inextricably to the physical domain of nature, a literal, corporeal interpretation from which Nottebohm distanced himself. Metaphors of gestation and birth had as their models organisms in the natural world. Nottebohm drew a sharp distinction between physical and *geistig* realms. Metaphors and imagery drawn from the physical world lay outside of Nottebohm's essentially *geistig* conception of the organic.

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<sup>53</sup> "In one of the sketchbooks belonging to the year 1815 there appears a beginning of a fugue, [short musical example] that belongs to the kernel of the theme for the second movement of the ninth symphony." The translation is my own. ["So erscheint in einem dem Jahre 1815 angehörenden Skizzenbuche . . . ein Ansatz zu einer Fuge, [short musical example] der den Kern des Themas des zweiten Satzes der neunten Symphonie enthält. . . ." Nottebohm, *Zweite Beethoveniana*: 157.]

<sup>54</sup> Hoffmann's term "*Keim*," discussed in Chapter 2, is closely related to Nottebohm's "*Kern*."

## VI. Practical Issues

We now have some sense of Nottebohm's meaning of organic, as well as certain hints of the philosophical streams with which he intersected. But we still lack an adequate explanation for his argument that the sketches cannot inform us of that which is called organic in the compositional process. For this we turn to a detailed investigation of both practical issues and philosophical engagements that inform Nottebohm's assessment.

Nottebohm knew the sketches intimately, both their physical makeup and their musical contents. He was acutely aware of pages missing from the sketchbooks, as well as entire books that had been dismembered either by Beethoven himself or in transport since Beethoven's death. He points out, moreover, the fact that the binding procedures varied from one book to another. Sometimes Beethoven purchased a book already bound; other times he began with loose sheets that he himself bound into a loose book format. In his introduction to the Kessler sketchbook (1802) Nottebohm is at pains to point out the difficulties entailed by the variable binding procedures. Here he remarks:

Unlike many others, this notebook is not made up of separate sheets strung together, but is properly bound by a bookbinder; it is trimmed and has a firm pasteboard cover. It was bound in this form before it was used for writing. This seemingly trivial detail becomes especially significant because the sketchbook is now preserved in entirety, not only as it left the bookbinder, but also as Beethoven laid it aside; it is complete with all its pages and there is nowhere any sign of a page having been partially or completely torn out. Such completeness is seldom found, . . .<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Nottebohm, *Two Beethoven Sketchbooks*: 3. ["Das Heft besteht nicht, wie manche andere, aus zusammengefädelten Bogen, sondern ist echt buchbindermässig gebunden, ist beschnitten und hat einen festen pappenen Umschlag. So war es gebunden, bevor es gebraucht und beschrieben wurde. Dieser an sich geringfügig scheinende Umstand erlangt einen besondern Werth dadurch,

Nottebohm was acutely aware of the practical difficulties in reconstructing even a basic chronology for the sketches, one of the primary foci of his own enterprise, let alone the compositional process for an entire piece.<sup>56</sup> An obvious difficulty concerns transcription. Beethoven's handwriting notoriously resisted deciphering. Douglas Johnson draws attention to the tendency of early writers to ignore the musical content of the sketches entirely because of difficulties in transcribing them. He also points out the ways in which the indecipherable writing "provided impressive testimony" to the image of Beethoven as eccentric genius—a Romantic artist persona dear to the nineteenth century.<sup>57</sup> Valorizing the illegible writing absolved these early writers from any practical engagement with the sketches.

Another aspect connected with transcription concerns the possibility of multiple plausible readings for a particular sketch. Most of Nottebohm's articles on Beethoven's sketches appeared first in journals—initially, in the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* (1869-1871), and then in the *Musikalisches Wochenblatt* (1875-1879). The former were collected and republished as *Beethoveniana* in 1872; Nottebohm's pupil Eusebius Mandyczewski collected the latter after Nottebohm's death and published them as *Zweite Beethoveniana*, in 1887. When editing the journal articles for publication in a collection Nottebohm sometimes transcribed the same sketch differently from one publication to the

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dass das Skizzenbuch so vollständig erhalten ist, nicht nur wie es aus des Buchbinders Händen hervorging, sondern auch wie es Beethoven zurücklegte. Alle Lagen sind vollzählig da; nirgends zeigt sich ein ab- oder ausgerissenes Blatt. Diese [ist eine] wohl seltene Erscheinung. . . ."  
Nottebohm, *Ein Skizzenbuch*: 3.]

<sup>56</sup> Thomas Whelan points to Nottebohm's obsession with continuity as a central aspect of "organic" composition, and observes that Nottebohm expressed confidence in the record of the *Eroica* sketchbook precisely because it was so detailed and seemed to leave so few gaps. Whelan, "Sketch Studies": 201-205. I return to Nottebohm's essay on the *Eroica* sketchbook later in the chapter.

<sup>57</sup> Johnson, "Beethoven Scholars": 6.

other. Lewis Lockwood discusses an example in his “Nottebohm Revisited” of discrepancies in transcription between different published versions of Nottebohm’s essay on the C<sup>#</sup>-Minor Quartet, Op. 131. Sketches for the first movement, for instance, omit the first pitch, G<sup>#</sup>. The following two pitches Nottebohm transcribed variably as A-B (in the *Zweite Beethoveniana*) or B<sup>#</sup>-C<sup>#</sup> (in the *Musikalisches Wochenblatt*)—hardly an inconsequential variant. Example 3-2 reproduces Nottebohm’s two versions. The later version (from *Zweite Beethoveniana*) appears on the left and the earlier (from the *Musikalisches Wochenblatt*) on the right.<sup>58</sup>



**Example 3-2**  
Nottebohm’s transcriptions, opening measures of Op. 131, published in the  
*Musikalisches Wochenblatt*, Vol. 6: 427

Other difficulties with the sketches involve the physical state of the sketch materials. Some pages were damaged; others were missing. In his article on the Ninth Symphony Nottebohm refers to torn [*abgerissene*] sketches.<sup>59</sup> In his discussion of the C<sup>#</sup>-Minor Quartet he draws attention to “revisions found here and there on scattered and for the most part isolated pages and sheets.”<sup>60</sup> With reference to the Piano Sonata in D Minor, Op. 31 No. 2, Nottebohm discusses the sketches for the first movement and then

<sup>58</sup> Lewis Lockwood, “Nottebohm Revisited,” in *Current Thought in Musicology*, ed. John W. Grubbs (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1976): 145. Transcription taken from Lockwood’s Example 5, p. 149.

<sup>59</sup> Nottebohm, *Zweite Beethoveniana*: 162.

<sup>60</sup> “Umarbeitungen” found “hier und da [auf] zerstreuten und meistens . . . einzelnen Blättern und Bogen.” Nottebohm, *Zweite Beethoveniana*: 55.

remarks that “there is no trace of the other movements of this sonata, except perhaps for a hint of the motive of the last movement. . . .”<sup>61</sup>

Nottebohm spells out a final practical difficulty in his introduction to the *Zweite Beethoveniana* collection. Here he remarks:

Not the entire process of creating, but rather only individual, unconnected or incoherent events lie before the eyes.<sup>62</sup>

The sketches record only moments in the compositional process—individual and unconnected moments, at that. Most importantly for Nottebohm, the sketches cannot record what he believes to be the *geistig* aspect of that process: “What is called the organic development of an artwork lies far from the sketches” [*Was man organische Entwicklung eines Kunstwerkes nennt, liegt den Skizzen fern.*]<sup>63</sup>

These kinds of practical difficulties impinge upon any analytic project involving the sketches. And it is tempting to explain Nottebohm’s reticence on these grounds. As I argue in this chapter, however, deeper philosophical commitments to both transcendentalist and positivist streams of thinking account more adequately for Nottebohm’s silence.

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<sup>61</sup> “Von den andern Sätzen der D-moll-Sonate zeigt sich keine Spur. . . .” Nottebohm, *Ein Skizzenbuch*: 28. Translation from *Two Beethoven Sketchbooks*: 28. Barry Cooper discusses other sketches for the sonata, some of which suggest Beethoven’s plan for the third movement. See Cooper, “The Origins of Beethoven’s D Minor Sonata Op. 31 No. 2,” *Music and Letters* 62 (1981): 261-280.

<sup>62</sup> “Nicht den ganzen Process des Schaffens, sondern nur einzelne, unzusammenhängende Vorgänge daraus können sie vor Augen legen.” Nottebohm, *Zweite Beethoveniana*: ix.

<sup>63</sup> From Nottebohm, *Zweite Beethoveniana*: ix. Cited earlier on p. 142, n. 29.

## VII. The *Geistig* and the Organic

Having clarified important terminological issues based on close readings of Nottebohm's introductions, I turn now to a historical context for his attribution of *geistig* aspects to the compositional process and his linking of the *geistig* with the organic. Selected passages from Nottebohm's introductions to the published versions of the sketches focus the discussion. Here I include both German and English in the main body of the text for ease of comparison.

(a) . . . die Skizzenbücher das innere Gesetz, von dem sich Beethoven beim Schaffen leiten liess, nicht offenbaren werden.

. . . the sketchbooks will not disclose/unveil the inner law by which Beethoven allowed himself to be led while creating.

(b) . . . [die Skizzenbücher] auch manches verschweigen und . . . wir von allem, was organisch heisst, aus ihnen am allerwenigsten erfahren.

. . . the sketchbooks also conceal a great deal and . . . we learn least of all from them about what is called organic.

(c) Ohne das Geheimniss des Genius zu verrathen, geben die Skizzen Beethoven's eine Vorstellung von seinem Produciren.

Without betraying the secret of genius, Beethoven's sketches give a conception of his producing.

(d) In diesen Skizzenbüchern hat der Dämon gehaust. Der Dämon aber ist entwichen. Der Geist, der ein Werk dictirte, erscheint nicht in den Skizzen. Die Skizzen offenbaren nicht das Gesetz, von dem sich Beethoven beim Schaffen leiten liess.

In these sketchbooks the demon has dwelt. But the demon has vanished. The spirit that dictated a work does not appear in the sketches. The sketches do not reveal the law by which Beethoven allowed himself to be led while creating.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Quotations (a) and (b) are from Nottebohm, *Ein Skizzenbuch*: 7. Quotations (c) and (d) are from Nottebohm, *Zweite Beethoveniana*: VIII. A common theme linking all the quotations is the

In these passages Nottebohm implicitly links the concepts “*innere Gesetz*,” “*Gesetz des Geistes*,” “*organisch*,” and “*der Geist, der ein Werk dictirte*.” In coupling these concepts Nottebohm identifies himself with a long and venerable tradition, newly revived in the early part of the nineteenth century, that attributed to artistic creation a *geistig* aspect and, especially, that linked the organic with the *geistig*. Expressions such as “the spirit that dictated a work” and “the law by which Beethoven allowed himself to be led” depict the composer as passive receptor to a force outside himself. Friedrich von Schelling, in his *System of Transcendental Idealism* written in the early years of the nineteenth century, compares contemporary theories of artistic creation to ancient formulations that attribute to artists “the idea of inspiration by another’s breath,” and that refer to artistic creation as occurring “*pati Deum*” [to submit oneself to God].<sup>65</sup> Walter Scott formulates it like this: “. . . writing good verse seems to depend upon something separate from the volition of the author.”<sup>66</sup> Schelling expands the image when he describes the artist as “seem[ing] to be under the influence of a power that sunders him from all other men and forces him to express or represent things that he himself does not entirely fathom.”<sup>67</sup> This model of artistic creation stretches back even further to Plato’s *Ion*, a rhapsodist who is driven to

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issue of what the sketches do not reveal (*das innere Gesetz*), what they conceal (*manches*), the secrets they do not betray (*das Geheimniss des Genius*), what does not appear in them (*der Geist, der ein Werk dictirte*), and what they cannot teach us (*was organisch heisst*). Interestingly, Nottebohm’s work constituted the most practical, demystified use of Beethoven’s sketches to that time. His frequent recourse to verbs evoking secrets and concealment reflects, perhaps, a need to carry forward the mystery associated with Beethoven’s working method.

<sup>65</sup> This is the medieval idea of inspiration.

<sup>66</sup> Walter Scott, To Lady Louisa Stuart, 31 Jan. 1817, *Letters* VI, 380-81. Cited in Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp*: 214.

<sup>67</sup> Friedrich von Schelling, *System des transcendentalen Idealismus*, in *Sämtliche Werke* (Stuttgart und Augsburg, 1858), Vol. 3: 349. Cited in Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp*: 209, 210.

his form of expression by an external power, who creates “beyond his consciousness of self,” who is “a medium and a blind instrument of the god that speaks through him.”<sup>68</sup>

Countless early nineteenth-century writers were much taken with this aspect of artistic creation, an aspect to which they attributed an organic quality. Formulated variously within idealist and transcendentalist philosophy, these writers placed considerable emphasis on so-called *geistig* aspects of composition, those aspects of the creative process that seemed motivated by a force operating beyond the constraints of the artist’s conscious intervention. Especially significant to the formulation was the exclusion of the artist’s reason from the process, at least in the early stages. The artist created as one who did not really know what he was doing. The artist who created in this mode was declared to operate “organically.”<sup>69</sup>

Schopenhauer, in *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, locates this model of artistic creation within his transcendentalist philosophy. He presents a particularly forceful version of the theory, denying almost entirely the intervention of the artist’s conscious mind and, especially, his faculty of reason. About the invention of melody Schopenhauer writes that “it is the work of genius, . . . is far removed from all reflection and conscious intention, and might be called an inspiration.” Schopenhauer’s comparison of a composer to a somnambulist is particularly vivid:

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<sup>68</sup> Carl Dahlhaus, *Aesthetics of Music*, trans. William W. Austin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982): 39.

<sup>69</sup> James Benziger discusses this aspect of Coleridge’s theory in “Organic Unity”: 24-48.

The composer reveals the innermost nature of the world, and expresses the profoundest wisdom in a language that his reasoning faculty does not understand, just as a magnetic somnambulist gives information about things of which she has no conception when she is awake.<sup>70</sup>

Schopenhauer, incidentally, does not term this compositional process organic, as did Coleridge and others. His claim that the composer engages in an unconscious activity when he writes music nevertheless resonates most powerfully with organicist writers.

As appealing as this *geistig* model proved to be for early nineteenth-century English poets and other theorists of creative processes, it rubbed up against an awkward reality: the ubiquity of revisions, as evidenced by the heavily corrected manuscripts of poets like Shelley and Keats. Beethoven's sketches constitute an obvious parallel, and one with which Nottebohm was at pains to deal. Beethoven's sketches show a composer who worked laboriously with his ideas, maintaining an active presence throughout the various processes of composition. Contrary to the transcendentalist ideal, articulated by Nottebohm in the excerpts cited above (p. 160), Beethoven was not just "led by" but, instead, exerted a tremendous force in shaping his musical materials. While most poets argued ultimately that "at least at its inception a poem is an involuntary and unanticipated

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<sup>70</sup> Both quotations are from Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*, Vol. 1, trans. E.F.J. Payne (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1969): 260.

[(1) "Die Erfindung der Melodie, die Aufdeckung aller tiefsten Geheimnisse des menschlichen Wollens und Empfindens in ihr, ist das Werk des Genius, dessen Wirken hier augenscheinlicher als irgendwo fern von aller Reflexion und bewusster Absichtlichkeit liegt und eine Inspiration heissen könnte."

(2) ". . . der Komponist offenbart das innerste Wesen der Welt und spricht die tiefste Weisheit aus, in einer Sprache, die seine Vernunft nicht versteht; wie eine magnetische Somnambule Aufschlüsse gibt über Dinger, von denen sie Sachen keinen Begriff hat." Schopenhauer, *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, Vol. 1 (Leipzig: Philipp Reclam, 1891): 343.] This unconscious aspect of composition is what Schenker understood to be organic. More on that in Chapter 4.

*donnée*,”<sup>71</sup> Nottebohm took another tack, claiming that the organic aspect of composition was purely *geistig*. One could hardly expect to find traces of such a process in the material world of sketches. Moreover, as both idealist and transcendentalist philosophies dictate, reality lies not in the material world of objects but in the transcendental or idealist world of the spirit or the mind. Nottebohm thus places the organic aspect of composition firmly in the *geistig* realm privileged by then-prominent philosophical strains.

Additional background to the issue of the composer’s consciousness involves the concept of genius in the early nineteenth century. Literary critics from the time drew a distinction between the writer who proceeds with prescience and the writer who is governed by a force outside himself. The term prescience requires clarification. Of possible definitions, “human anticipation of the course of events” seems to match most closely the meaning intended by organicist critics.<sup>72</sup> For them, problems inherent in this meaning are two-fold. First, the artist who creates organically must *not* work with foreknowledge of the direction his work will take. If he does, he offends against central doctrines of organic form: it is innate; it demands simultaneity of idea and expression.<sup>73</sup> Second, if there is to be any omniscience in the creative act, as indicated by the definition cited in note 72, it must exert its force apart from the artist’s consciousness.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp*: 214.

<sup>72</sup> The following is from the Merriam-Webster dictionary. Prescience: present participle of *praescire*—to know beforehand, from *prae* + *scire*, to know; foreknowledge of events: a: divine omniscience, b: human anticipation of the course of events. “prescience,” *Merriam-Webster Dictionary Online* (Accessed 19 October 2002) <<http://www.m-w.com/cgi-bin/dictionary>>

<sup>73</sup> See Chapter 1, p. 8 for August Schlegel’s definition of organic form. Nottebohm emphasizes this “unity of appearance and idea” in his introduction to the Kessler Sketchbook. I discuss this aspect of his theories in greater detail on p. 173.

<sup>74</sup> Schopenhauer’s depiction of the somnambulist artist states this most clearly, and most radically.

Nineteenth-century critics viewed this type of compositional process as the inspirational hallmark of genius. Samuel Taylor Coleridge, for one, distinguished Shakespeare from Milton on these grounds:

Shakespeare is the Spinozistic deity—an omnipresent creativeness. Milton is the deity of prescience; he stands *ab extra*, and drives the fiery chariot and four, making the horses feel the iron curb that holds them in.<sup>75</sup>

The discussion of Spinoza in Chapter 2 included the core pantheistic belief that “everything there is constitutes a unity and that this unity is divine.” A necessary fallout from this is the pantheistic denial of the “radical distinction between God and creatures drawn in monotheistic religions.”<sup>76</sup> When Coleridge describes Shakespeare as the “Spinozistic deity,” he claims an identity between artist and artistic expression. As Spinoza denies a deity standing outside his creation, so Coleridge denies a Shakespeare distinct from his creative work. In Coleridge’s estimation, Milton falls into another category of artist. He *does* stand outside, consciously driving his creative process and separating himself from his artistic creation.

Beethoven’s sketches present evidence that clouds rather than clarifies the issues of his working methods. Nottebohm himself points out in his introduction to the two sketchbooks that it is impossible to describe a single working method. He outlines two different methods—one that begins with the motive and the other that begins with the outline of an entire movement—and remarks that Beethoven’s working methods often

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<sup>75</sup> Cited in Benziger, “Organic Unity”: 28. The quotation is taken from Samuel Taylor Coleridge, “Table Talk,” in *The Complete Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. Professor Shedd (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1871), Vol. 6: 312. Coleridge’s statement dates from May 12, 1830.

<sup>76</sup> These quotations are from the definition of pantheist given in Chapter 2, p. 90, n. 86.

fall somewhere in between these two models.<sup>77</sup> In his study of Beethoven's sketches for Op. 131, moreover, Robert Winter notes a tendency in Beethoven's later years to greatly increase his use of what Winter calls "score sketches." Winter thereby draws attention to Beethoven's changing practices in sketching and in composing.<sup>78</sup>

Nottebohm's generalizations about Beethoven's working methods hint at a method of composing that corresponds to a category of sketches Robert Winter has termed "telescoped drafts" or "tonal overviews." Such sketches present musical summaries or projections for an entire movement or an entire multi-movement work. Winter reports that such drafts occur at various stages of composition but especially in the preliminary stages.<sup>79</sup> Nottebohm gives only passing attention to these sketches, an omission that Winter laments. I introduce them here to draw attention to the conflict they may have engendered for Nottebohm in light of his commitment to transcendentalist ideals.

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<sup>77</sup> "In the case of some sketches the thematic lay-out prevails; the first sketch breaks off with the principal theme and limits itself to the ensuing working-out of it, in order to vary and build up the first thematic germ that is thrown up, until it, through development, appears suitable. . . . Overall we see beginnings, never a whole. . . . In the case of other sketches the thematic and musical work is omitted; each sketch is directed towards a whole, and gives a self-contained image." The translation is my own. [Bei der einen Skizzengruppe waltet die thematische Gestaltung vor; die erste Skizze bricht gleich mit dem Hauptthema ab und beschränkt sich die folgende Arbeit darauf, den einmal hingeworfenen thematischen Kern so zu verändern und umzubilden, bis er zur Durchführung geeignet erscheint. . . . überall sehen wir Ansätze, nirgends ein Ganzes. . . . Bei der andern Skizzengruppe ist die thematische und musivische Arbeit ausgeschlossen; jede Skizze ist auf ein Ganzes gerichtet und giebt ein abgeschlossenes Bild. . . ." Nottebohm, *Ein Skizzenbuch*: 6.]

<sup>78</sup> Robert Winter, *Compositional Origins of Beethoven's Op. 131* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1982): 11.

<sup>79</sup> Winter, incidentally, does not share Nottebohm's reluctance to attribute organic qualities to the process recorded by the sketches. He contends that the telescoped drafts "capture—much like still photographs of bud to blossom—key developmental stages of the quartet." Winter, *Compositional Origins*: 113.

A telescoped draft, whose primary function is to provide a tonal overview of a movement or work, suggests a conception of the entire piece, or at least of its large outlines, at various stages of composition. The telescoped draft resembles the second of Beethoven's working methods described by Nottebohm in his introduction, the practice of sketching the framework of a section and then filling in the details. Nottebohm draws attention to just such a process in his discussion of the sketches for the Piano Sonata in D Minor, Op. 31 No. 2. "The sketch/draft for the first movement of the Sonata for Clavier in D minor, Op. 31 No. 2 is very interesting," he writes:

The image displays four systems of musical sketches for the first movement of Beethoven's Piano Sonata in D Minor, Op. 31 No. 2. Each system consists of a grand staff with two staves. The first system is labeled "Sonate 2." and includes markings for "Adagio. Senza Sord." and "Allegro.". The second system includes "etc." and "a-moll erster Theil". The third system is labeled "Adagio." and "Senza Sord. 2ter". The fourth system ends with a "4\*" time signature.

Adagio.

**Example 3-3**  
**An Early Sketch for Beethoven's Piano Sonata in D Minor, Op. 31 No. 2**

Beethoven does not engage here in a transformation or development of themes and motives, as in many other sketches, but instead places immediately in broad outline a whole [*ein Ganzes*], but gives only the beginning and end, the cornerstones as it were, and leaves out all joining and contrasting intermediate sections.<sup>80</sup>

Here Nottebohm draws attention to a compositional procedure in which Beethoven devotes his efforts not to working with individual motives and themes, but instead with establishing the broad tonal outlines of the movement. This early sketch presents the first part of the first theme, omits the transition, and indicates in words, rather than with musical notation, only the tonal goal of the second theme area. Next, Beethoven notes the beginning of what will be the development section. His focus here is on the harmonic outline of the section, from the opening series of dissonant and harmonically elusive chords in *adagio tempo* to the rising chromatic bass that draws together the development as a whole and that propels it to its climax. A double bar and *adagio* marking indicate the third section, what we call the recapitulation. Again, we note broad harmonic outlines but few motivic and melodic details. Particularly striking is Beethoven's early conception of the truncated recapitulation with its rising chromatic bass to direct the music from the improvisatory opening to the propulsive second theme.

Telescoped drafts correspond to ancient formulations of organicism that stipulate a whole that precedes the parts and that gives the parts meaning. Goethe was much taken with this ancient formulation both in his *Italienische Reise* and in *Faust*. In the

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<sup>80</sup> "Sehr anziehend ist der Entwurf zum 1. Satz der Sonate für Clavier in D-moll, Op. 31 No. 2: [sketch] Beethoven lässt sich hier nicht, wie bei manch andern Skizzen, auf eine Um- oder Ausbildung der Themen und Motive ein, sondern stellt gleich in wenig Zügen ein Ganzes hin, giebt aber, alle verbindenden und gegensätzlichen Mittelglieder überspringend, nur Anfang und Ende, gleichsam die Eckpfeiler davon." Nottebohm, *Ein Skizzenbuch*: 27, 28.

*Italienische Reise* he casually introduces the concept when describing Rome's tourist sites, complaining that

. . . even in Rome, too little provision is made for the person who seriously wants to study the city as a whole. He is compelled endlessly to piece it together from fragments, though these are certainly super-abundant.<sup>81</sup>

A telescoped draft is a kind of whole, *ein Ganzes*, in Nottebohm's formulation.

Depending on the level of detail such a sketch contains we may discern in it quite precise intimations as to the parts. In the case of the Piano Sonata Op. 31 No. 2, for instance, the early sketch contains striking details, among these the rising chromatic bass lines that propel the harmonic motion in both the development and the first part of the recapitulation. The discussion above (pp. 164-165) raises the issue of prescience versus working "under the influence of." Telescoped drafts, with their implications of plans for entire movements or even entire works, show a composer working with explicit foreknowledge of the direction his work will take, or at least the direction he intends it to take. Moreover, telescoped drafts record the composer's work with the large dimensions of a piece rather than with the melodic germ adduced by many organicist theorists. In the sketches for the Piano Sonata Op. 31 No. 2, melodic or motivic details are conspicuously absent.

Robert Winter's discussion of the genesis of the C<sup>#</sup>-Minor Quartet, Op. 131, exemplifies Beethoven's concern with the multi-movement design of the quartet in the earliest stages of composition (see example 3-4).

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<sup>81</sup> Translation from J. W. von Goethe, *Italian Journey*, trans. W.H. Auden and Elizabeth Mayer (San Francisco: North Point Press, 1982): 152. ["Doch auch in Rom ist zu wenig für den gesorgt, dem es Ernst ist, ins Ganze zu studieren. Er muss alles aus unendlichen, obgleich überreichen Trümmern zusammenstoppeln." Goethe, *Italienische Reise*, ed. von Einem: 164.] See also the discussion of Faust in Chapter 1, p. 6.

**Example 3-4**  
**“Telescoped Draft” for Op. 131, as transcribed by Robert Winter**

This early telescoped draft for the quartet displays several striking features: first, on Staves 11, 12, Beethoven’s plans for a fugal first movement—a startling departure from characteristic first-movement form for the time; second, on Staff 13, a theme in A major, the key of the submediant, that would become the theme for the variation movement; and finally, on Staves 1, 2, a movement in D major, the key of the Neapolitan.<sup>82</sup>

What does such a sketch contribute to the current investigation? It shows Beethoven’s very early attention to matters of large-scale tonal design in his work on this

<sup>82</sup> A detailed discussion of this sketch appears in Winter, *Compositional Origins*: 113-134. Winter points out that these sketches have received comparatively little attention in the sketch literature. It seems that they were a feature mainly of Beethoven’s last years, though even that conclusion, argues Winter, remains unclear for two reasons: first, Nottebohm had little interest in these sketches; and second, present-day scholars have not yet undertaken a “fresh stud[y] of the sketches from the point of view of large-scale plans for an entire work . . .” (p. 372, n. 3).

late quartet. Conspicuous among these tonal choices is the Neapolitan, a startling chromatic relationship that meshes well with the idiosyncratic seven-movement design.<sup>83</sup> Furthermore, as Winter points out, such telescoped drafts show the composer working not only with the motivic details of a work (the *Kern*) but also with plans for large sections of that work. They show the composer standing outside the work, seeing it from a bird's-eye view and molding its overall shape.<sup>84</sup> The work is being formed by him and not merely forming itself in him. Furthermore, if the telescoped draft is a reaction to an initial involuntary impulse, it nevertheless demonstrates the composer's active and rational participation in the work's genesis.

Returning to Nottebohm's difficulty in defining the character and purpose of sketch studies, we observe considerable tension between philosophical assumptions attendant upon the organic and the evidence supplied by Beethoven's sketch materials. One aspect of the organic concept requires that the writer/composer work without

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<sup>83</sup> Beethoven was not the first to choose the Neapolitan as the key for an entire movement. An earlier example appears in Haydn's Sonata in E<sup>b</sup> Major, Hob. XVI: 52, where the composer writes the second of three movements in the key of the Neapolitan. The existence of a precedent in no way neutralizes, however, the striking fact of Beethoven's key choice.

<sup>84</sup> Schenker's argument concerning organicism in his early essay "The Spirit of Musical Technique" raises precisely this point. Schenker also uses the bird's-eye view image: "Now it can happen that the composer's (or an exceptional listener's) imagination surveys the entire content—despite its natural succession—from a bird's-eye view, so to speak. He sorts and balances the characteristics and proportions of the individual moods. Although this process seems to be a logical operation, it is actually neither logical nor organic in origin. Rather, the moods and proportions of the individual parts, and of the content as a whole, plainly disclose the composer's personal disposition." Pastille, "Schenker's 'Spirit of Musical Technique,'" *Theoria* 3 (1988): 99. ["Nun kann es geschehen, dass die Phantasie des Componisten (ähnlich auch die eines vorzüglichen Hörers) den gesammten Inhalt, trotz dem natürlichen Nacheinander desselben, gleichsam aus der Vogelperspective überschaut und Charakter and Maass aller einzelnen darin enthaltenen Stimmungen gegen einander ordnet und abwägt, und doch hat dieses Verfahren, so sehr es eine logische Arbeit zu sein scheint, weder einen logischen, noch einen organischen Gesichtspunct zur Ursache, vielmehr enthüllen sich in den Stimmungen und Maassen der einzelnen Theile, sowie des ganzen Inhaltes, am deutlichsten der persönliche Charakter des Componisten. . . ." Schenker, "Geist": 149.]

prescience. A corollary requires that the creative impulse and its expression be one.<sup>85</sup> In his introduction to the Kessler sketchbook, for instance, Nottebohm argues that “The complete person with his spiritual [*geistig*] and mental [*seelisch*] activities must be considered, in order to establish *the unity between appearance and idea* [emphasis added].”<sup>86</sup> Winter’s telescoped drafts are at odds with both of these requirements. Sketches that indicate plans for an entire movement or an entire work show considerable forethought on the part of the composer. The sometimes remarkable alterations from early to later instantiations of ideas, moreover, demonstrate that a musical idea sometimes appears in a strikingly raw form that then requires much reworking by the composer before it achieves its final outward expression. (This is what Lobe observed in his study of the small collection of Beethoven’s sketches to which he had access. See discussion above, pp. 139, 140.) The subject-answer relationship for the first-movement fugue, for instance, required numerous revisions before Beethoven settled upon the subdominant answer that appears in the finished form of the quartet. In the sketch reproduced above, Beethoven’s early plans indicate a dominant answer, as indicated by his notation “*Quinte*” on the sketch.

In Chapter 1, I discussed Lobe’s analysis of Beethoven’s String Quartet in A Major, Op. 18 No. 2. There I noted two possible interpretations for Lobe’s references to birth processes—his explanation for the organic method of composition (see pp. 37, 38 above). One interpretation counts organic processes as a metaphor to explain

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<sup>85</sup> This is the formulation of Schlegel, taken over by Coleridge as he developed his own organicist philosophy. James Benziger discusses this aspect of organicist theory in “Organic Unity: Leibniz to Coleridge”: 44.

<sup>86</sup> “Der ganze Mensch mit seiner geistigen und seelischen Thätigkeit muss hinzugezogen werden, um die Einheit zwischen Erscheinung and Idee herzustellen.” Nottebohm, *Ein Skizzenbuch*: 8.

relationships in the finished work of art. Ulibishev's description of ideas in Mozart's music exemplifies this category (see p. 42, above). The second attempts to explain the process by which the artist creates. It is this latter interpretation of organic processes that holds the greatest potential for Nottebohm's work with the sketches. If evidence exists for the composer's processes, sketches would presumably be the primary source in which to discover these processes. For the most part, Nottebohm shows little interest in describing organic relationships in the completed work of art. He does assume, however, that an organic product must come about by organic processes. In the introduction to the Kessler sketchbook, he writes:

If we understand [a piece of music] as an organic formation, we must also assume that it came into being by organic means and that it developed from the inside outwards to a unified whole.<sup>87</sup>

Here he spells out two criteria which for him define the organic: first, the musical work develops from the inside outwards; and second, the end result is a unified whole.

Nottebohm offers another perspective on his understanding of the organic in a summary to his lengthy essay on Beethoven's sketches for the *Eroica* symphony. The essay was published in 1882, some ten years after the *Beethoveniana* collection. In his conclusion to the discussion, Nottebohm claims that "we are now in a position to attempt to bring together and set out in a few observations the most important deductions that can be drawn from our evidence."<sup>88</sup> These deductions take the form of three observations, excerpts from which I cite here:

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<sup>87</sup> "Fassen wir es als eine organische Bildung auf, so müssen wir auch voraussetzen, dass es auf organischem Wege entstanden sei und sich von innen heraus zu einem einheitsvollen Ganzen entwickelt habe." Nottebohm, *Ein Skizzenbuch*: 7.

<sup>88</sup> Nottebohm, *Two Beethoven Sketchbooks*: 96. "Wir sind nun . . . bei einem Punkte angelangt, wo es unternommen werden kann, die wichtigsten Ergebnisse, welche sich aus den verschiedenen

- (1) “. . . not only the movements of the symphony, but also their constituent parts and the individual sections of these parts, were formed and completed in the order in which they appear in print.” Although Beethoven worked “piecemeal” and “repeatedly altered drafted passages,” he “nevertheless constantly had a goal in view and his thoughts were directed toward a whole. What was in the process of formation was dependent on the formation of what surrounded it, and the latter evolved out of and along with the former; *this can indeed be called organic development* [emphasis added].”<sup>89</sup>
- (2) “. . . all those passages in the score “which bear the stamp of Beethoven’s own individual style and which have combined in them beauty and originality . . . were far from the creation of a moment; they were brought to light only after many repeated attempts and, for the most part, at the expense of considerable effort. . . . the first sketches . . . are often very ordinary and conventional. And yet they are, as it were, the soil in which the seemingly insignificant took root and bore fruit.”<sup>90</sup>
- (3) “Attention has been drawn . . . to the consistency and rationality which is dominant in Beethoven’s works. Observations made in this regard have led to an irrefutable conclusion. The sketchbook convinces us that Beethoven never forgot the ideal of the law which hung before him of an inner necessity in form. . . . it is abundantly clear that

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Erscheinungen ziehen lassen, zusammenzufassen und in einigen Bemerkungen niederzulegen.”  
Nottebohm, *Ein Skizzenbuch aus dem Jahre 1803*: 52.

<sup>89</sup> Nottebohm, *Two Beethoven Sketchbooks*: 96. I have made small alterations to Katz’s translation. [“. . . sind nicht nur die Sätze der Symphonie, sondern auch deren Theile und die Glieder dieser Theile in der Reihenfolge entstanden und fertig geworden, in der sie im Druck erscheinen. Ungeachtet des eigenthümlichen Verfahrens Beethoven’s, stückweise zu arbeiten und entworfen Stellen wiederholt zu ändern, hatte er doch continuirlich ein Ziel vor Augen und waren seine Gedanken auf ein Ganzes gerichtet. . . . Das in der Bildung Begriffene war von der Bildung seiner Umgebung abhängig. Das Spätere entwickelte sich aus und an dem Früheren. Das kann man doch organische Entwicklung nennen.” Gustav Nottebohm, *Ein Skizzenbuch vom Beethoven aus dem Jahre 1803* (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1880): 52.]

<sup>90</sup> Nottebohm, *Two Beethoven Sketchbooks*: 96, 97. I have made small alterations to Katz’s translation. [“Das Skizzenbuch bringt den Beweis, dass, mit sehr beschränkter Ausnahme, alle in der Partitur vorkommende Stellen, die das Gepräge des eigenthümlichen Styles Beethoven’s an sich tragen und in denen Schönheit mit Eigenart verbunden ist . . . nicht ein Werk des ersten Augenblickes waren, sondern erst nach wiederholten Ansätzen und Versuchen und zum grossen Theil mit Mühe zu Tage gefördert wurden. . . . die ersten Skizzen . . . aber auch ans Gewöhnliche streifen. Doch sind sie gleichsam der Boden, auf dem das Unscheinbare Wurzel fasste und triebfähig wurde.” Nottebohm, *Ein Skizzenbuch aus dem Jahre 1803*: 52, 53.]

Beethoven reflected, and the force he brought to bear was reflective understanding.”<sup>91</sup>

The most striking statement appears in the final clause of Nottebohm’s first observation:

“*this can indeed be called organic development.*” For a writer who maintains that

Beethoven’s sketches do not record what is organic, it is indeed surprising to encounter

his statement that *these* sketches record such a process. What features qualify the

sketches for the *Eroica* as organic? First, Nottebohm notes a correspondence between the

order of composition and the order of the final printed version. In fact, correspondences

between sketches for a particular theme or section and the printed version of that same

theme or section preoccupy Nottebohm in much of his discussion of the 1803

sketchbook. Thus, for Nottebohm, despite Beethoven’s general habit of working

discontinuously, these sketches supply evidence of a logical and unremitting path. If the

aim were sometimes obscured, it nevertheless continually exerted its directive influence.

Second, sketches for the *Eroica* trace a process in which forming material depends upon

the material surrounding it. In other words, the musical materials form not in a vacuum

but in response to previously existing materials. Finally, these sketches record a

reciprocal growth process in which the later material evolves out of and along with the

former. This parallels very closely Nottebohm’s description of the development of a

plant, where he highlights the fact that “. . . all that is new is also the old” (see above, p.

148).

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<sup>91</sup> Nottebohm, *Two Beethoven Sketchbooks*: 97, 98. I have made small alterations to Katz’s translation. [“Man hat . . . auf die Folgerichtigkeit und Vernünftigkeit hingewiesen, welche in den Werken Beethoven’s herrscht, und die Beobachtungen, welche in dieser Hinsicht gemacht wurden, haben zu einem unumstößliche Satze geführt. Das Skizzenbuch bringt das Ergebniss, dass Beethoven über dem ihm vorschwebenden Ideal *das Gesetz einer inneren Nothwendigkeit* in der Form nicht vergass. . . . Hieraus erhellt: Beethoven hat reflectirt, und die Kraft, welche ins Spiel gezogen wurde, war der reflectirende Verstand [emphasis added].” Nottebohm, *Ein Skizzenbuch aus dem Jahre 1803*: 53, 54.]

Nottebohm's second observation answers charges of revisions. For Nottebohm, these cause no difficulty at all. He accepts as routine the composer's conscious intervention in shaping materials. In fact, in the third observation, he praises Beethoven's consistency and rationality, drawing attention to the force of reflective understanding that figures so centrally to his processes. "The spirit that dictated a work" is conspicuously absent in this description.

How do these observations jibe with Nottebohm's definition from his introduction to the Kessler sketchbook?<sup>92</sup> In describing the growth of a plant, Nottebohm emphasizes a sequence of stages with which the observer can become familiar. Presumably, these show evidence of the fixed laws followed by the plant. Then, he points out that all new development stems from the old. In other words, the process is one of transformation, not creation *ex nihilo*. It seems clear, then, that the processes Nottebohm deduces from the *Eroica* sketchbook match closely those he defines for the development of a plant. But what about the *Gesetz des Geistes* that Nottebohm has claimed leads the composer in his work? Is the "*Gesetz einer inneren Nothwendigkeit*" a substitute for this?<sup>93</sup> Does it count as a fixed law such as those he attributes to plants? And what of the irreconcilable differences between the plant and the artwork that he posits in his introduction to the Kessler sketchbook? Has he simply forgotten the injunction he presented there? Is he choosing to ignore it?

Given Nottebohm's scrupulous attention to scholarly procedure, neither of these scenarios counts as a viable explanation. At worst, we can accuse him of inconsistencies.

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<sup>92</sup> The excerpt from the Kessler sketchbook appears on p. 148; the German original is in n. 42.

<sup>93</sup> This is Nottebohm's formulation in his Observation #3, the German for which appears on p. 175, n. 91.

At best, we can assume that his extreme caution in defining and describing the content of the sketches led him to an inconclusive stance. Notably, this stance was not static but conflicted. Because he confronted great quantities of sketches which resisted neat categorization, Nottebohm struggled to formulate a policy that could adequately project their potential for scholarly investigation. Given the positivist underpinnings of his scholarly projects, to be discussed presently, he was understandably reluctant to advance claims for which the evidence proved so intractably conflicting.

So far I have emphasized the ways in which Nottebohm's terminology and images of Beethoven the composer resonate with and carry forward certain prominent early nineteenth-century ideas of artistic creation. A significant departure from these earlier formulations also figures importantly, however. This departure concerns the ambiguity of the term *Geist*, which Nottebohm uses interchangeably with both genius (*Genius*) and demon (*Dämon*) [see quotations (c) and (d) on p. 160]. In using the terms *Geist* and *Genius* interchangeably Nottebohm adheres to a nineteenth-century practice that treats as synonymous the terms *Geist*, *spiritus*, *anima*, *mens*, and *genius*.<sup>94</sup> I have translated *Geist* as spirit. Nevertheless, the term held a great range of association in the nineteenth century, from overtly Christian meaning (*der heiliger Geist*), to a spirit, demon or ghost, to mind or intellect, to the mental attitude, spirit, genius, temper of an age (*Zeitgeist*), to

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<sup>94</sup> These terms appear in the *Deutsches Wörterbuch*, ed. Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, Vol. 5, Col. 2623 (Leipzig: Verlag Von S. Hirzel, 1897). Grimm's is the German equivalent of the *Oxford English Dictionary* in that it derives its definitions from usage in literary and other sources, and includes these references in the main body of the dictionary.

name only a few.<sup>95</sup> Grimm's *Deutsches Wörterbuch* devotes a total of 118 columns to this word.

A writer like Schelling included in his organic formulations of artistic creation a certain sense of struggle in that the external force acting on the artist is frequently at odds with the artist's inclinations. His comparison of the process with that of earlier Christian models, however, leaves one with a sense of a comparatively benign and even impersonal being acting from without. Plato's *Ion*, though operating as a vehicle for a remarkably intense form of artistic expression, seems nevertheless to be a mostly passive recipient to this external force. Nottebohm's descriptions of Beethoven differ markedly. It is here, I believe, that the synonym *Dämon* makes its presence felt. Nottebohm describes a Beethoven caught up in a fierce and intensely personal struggle with his own demon, his own genius. Nottebohm thus infuses the idea of *Geist* with stormy images of the composer that proliferated in early Beethoven biography.<sup>96</sup> Douglas Johnson, Alan Tyson, and Robert Winter have suggested an apt association with the *Erdgeist* of Goethe's *Faust*,<sup>97</sup> a spirit being who exists not in a Christian but in a pantheistic frame of

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<sup>95</sup> "Spirit," in Michael Inwood, *A Hegel Dictionary*: 274. I cited these translations of *Geist* in Chapter 1, p. 40.

<sup>96</sup> See, for instance, Schindler's 1819 description of Beethoven composing: "From behind the closed door of one of the parlours we could hear the master working on the fugue of the Credo, singing, yelling, stamping his feet. When we had heard enough of this almost frightening performance and were about to depart, the door opened and Beethoven stood before us, his features distorted to the point of inspiring terror. He looked as though he had just engaged in a life and death struggle with the whole army of contrapuntists, his everlasting enemies." Schindler, *Biographie*: 270-71. Translation cited in Douglas Johnson, Alan Tyson and Robert Winter, *The Beethoven Sketchbooks: History, Reconstruction, Inventory* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985): 4.

<sup>97</sup> Johnson et. al., *The Beethoven Sketchbooks*: 6.

reference and who represents “as it seems, the divine yet at the same time demonic creative and destructive forces of Nature and earthly activity.”<sup>98</sup>

For Nottebohm, Beethoven was caught up in a fierce struggle with his *Dämon*. At the same time, however, Beethoven allowed himself to be led by a spirit (*Geist*), and even served as amanuensis for such a spirit. Thus the *geistig* (read: non-sensual) and passionate realms with which Beethoven so intensely engaged do not carry the pejorative associations of Hoffmann’s time. Nottebohm’s situation with respect to these images thus differs radically from Hoffmann’s. By the time that *Beethoveniana* was published, Beethoven had been dead for nearly half a century. Tales of his cantankerous, anti-social personality no longer required vindication. Instead, they served as an essential component of posthumous myth that excused and even valorized as eccentric the composer’s considerable and sometimes violent personal oddities.

### VIII. Positivism

A second philosophical force that makes its presence felt in Nottebohm’s claims about what the sketches can and cannot reveal, and in his decisions about what kind of commentary is appropriate, is positivism. The following list details central positivist doctrines:

- science is the only valid knowledge and facts the only possible objects of knowledge;
- philosophy does not possess a method different from science;
- the task of philosophy is to find the general principles common to all the sciences and to use these principles as guides to human conduct and as the basis of social organization;

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<sup>98</sup> David Luke, Introduction to J.W. von Goethe, *Faust*, Part I, trans. David Luke (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987): xvi, xvii.

- Positivism . . . denies the existence or intelligibility of forces or substances that go beyond facts and the laws ascertained by science. It opposes any kind of metaphysics and . . . any procedure that is not reducible to scientific method.<sup>99</sup>

Positivism gained prominence in the second half of the nineteenth century and the first decades of the twentieth. Based on ideas formulated in the eighteenth century by both British empiricists and French Enlightenment philosophers, positivism received tremendous impetus from the initial successes of the Industrial Revolution that imparted a confidence in the newfound powers of science and machines. Positivism's rationalist/empiricist foundations provided a dramatic contrast to the transcendentalist/idealist focus of the first half of the century. At the same time it carried forward certain central tenets of its immediate predecessors, especially the belief in the inevitability of progress that was common to both philosophies. Positivism manifests itself in three primary applications: the social, the evolutionary, and the critical. I focus here on tenets of social positivism.

Claude Henri de Rouvroy, Comte de Saint-Simon, the father of French socialism, first applied the term positivism to scientific method and its extension to philosophy. August Comte, a sometime disciple and collaborator of Saint-Simon, gave positivism a more forceful expression with his law of three stages. This law stated that both the general history of humanity and the development of the individual pass through three stages: the theological, or fictitious; the metaphysical; and finally, the positive. In this final stage, science turns its attention from seeking ultimate causes, as in the first two

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<sup>99</sup> This summary of positivism's principal doctrines is drawn from Nicola Abbagnano, "Positivism," in *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. by Paul Edwards (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1967), Vols. 5, 6: 414-419. The definitions are from p. 414.

stages, to “discovering the laws of phenomena by observation and reasoning.”<sup>100</sup>

Inherent in and central to the law of the three stages is the notion of progress. The final stage, the positive, marks the pinnacle of human achievement. A further contribution of Comte was his concept of science as description and prediction. Science as description placed an exclusive emphasis on observable data, leaving far behind the religious and metaphysical speculation that dominated the early nineteenth century. Science as prediction demanded rigorous formulations of laws. Data resistant to such formulation was necessarily excluded.

The positivist agenda for natural science, as summarized by Collingwood, consisted of two stages:

first, ascertaining facts; secondly, framing laws. The facts were immediately ascertained by sensuous perception. The laws were framed through generalizing from those facts by induction.

Collingwood points out the tendency of the positivist historians to throw themselves with zeal into the first phase of the program, all the while neglecting the second phase. The result, says Collingwood, “was a vast increase of detailed historical knowledge, based to an unprecedented degree on accurate and critical examination of evidence.”<sup>101</sup>

How does such a two-phase method show its influence in Nottebohm’s working methods? The following excerpts from his introductions demonstrate his professed

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<sup>100</sup> *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Vols. 5, 6: 415.

<sup>101</sup> Both quotations are from R.G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956): 127. See also Leo Treitler, “The Power of Positivist Thinking: Review of *Contemplating Music* by Joseph Kerman,” *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 42 (1989): 375-402. Treitler addresses in considerable detail Kerman’s complaints about the positivist agenda in musicology and points out the caution necessary in applying the positivist label to scholarly activities that do not meet its criteria.

allegiance to such a process. The first excerpt appeared earlier in the discussion of natural laws and the *Gesetzen des Geistes*.<sup>102</sup>

We can observe the progressive development of a plant, become acquainted with the sequence of stages of its growth. Caught up in perpetual transformation, in which it follows fixed laws [*bestimmten Gesetzen*], it constantly manifests something new. But all that is new is also the old. So it is possible to explain its [growth] genetically. It is otherwise in the case of a musical artwork, that, in its general appearance, is bound to the expression of something particular and individual, and in such particularity, [it] follows/obeys not a law of nature, like the plant, but rather laws of the intellect [*den Gesetzen des Geistes*].

The nature of the topic demanded throughout the briefest and most factual presentation possible. In the presentation of the sketches, detailed explanations, aesthetic remarks, and so forth, had to be held off as much as possible. In the belief that a lot of explanation would scarcely contribute to clarity, the author often leaves the reader alone with the sketches, without making a remark about the meaning, relationships, and so forth.<sup>103</sup>

In my earlier discussion of Nottebohm's comparison between the development of a plant and that of a musical work I highlighted two key terms: observation, and specified or fixed natural laws. One may observe the plant's development; these observations in turn provide raw material for the formulation of natural laws. The resonance with the positivist two-step agenda is obvious: gathering facts and framing laws. Situated within Comte's philosophy, the fact-gathering stage has to do with description, the law-framing stage with prediction. This description of a plant, a natural phenomenon, satisfies positivist demands with respect to both scientific method and epistemological possibility.

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<sup>102</sup> See p. 148, n. 42, above.

<sup>103</sup> "Die Natur des Gegenstandes verlangte überall eine möglichst kurze und sachliche Darstellung. Bei der Darlegung der Skizzen waren weitläufige Erklärungen, ästhetisirende Bemerkungen u. dgl. möglichst fern zu halten. In der Meinung, dass vieles Erklären zur Klarheit kaum beitragen würde, lässt der Verfasser den Leser bei den Skizzen oft allein, ohne eine Bemerkung über deren Bedeutung, Beziehung u. dg.l. zu machen." Nottebohm, *Zweite Beethoveniana*: IX.

Framing Nottebohm's comments within the positivist agenda explains his descriptions of the plant's development. It also casts new light on his reticence concerning the organic aspect of composition. Recall his circumscription of the organic within the *geistig* realm. Declaring the organic realm *geistig* removes it from the field of empirical observation. In a positivist framework such a realm of inquiry lies not only outside the bounds of science but also outside the bounds of knowledge. It belongs to a metaphysical stage of inquiry beyond which, according to Comte, humankind had by this point in history progressed. For the positivist thinker this type of inquiry counted as irrelevant. For Nottebohm, it counted as a central component of the musical artwork, however resistant it proved to musicological reconstruction.<sup>104</sup>

Further positivist influences show themselves in the second quotation given above, from the *Zweite Beethoveniana*, where Nottebohm draws attention to the kind of commentary he has provided for the sketches. He explains that he has often left the reader alone with the sketches, since his commentary could scarcely contribute to greater clarity. A significant category of remarks that he claims he will omit is the aesthetic.

Thorny issues surrounding attempts to define an aesthetics for music are well known from Hanslick's *Vom Musikalisch-Schönen*, published in 1854. And similar themes arise in the attempts to clarify the character and purpose of their particular fields

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<sup>104</sup> Schenker may well have agreed with Nottebohm that the organic aspect of music lies outside either the deductive or inductive methods of musicology. With reference to the *Urlinie*, he claimed: "Ich habe die Urlinie erschaut, nicht errechnet!" Schenker, "Fortsetzung der Urlinie-Betrachtungen," in *Das Meisterwerk in der Musik*, Vol. 2: 41. Two published translations of this telling phrase have come to my attention: (1) "I was given a vision of the Urlinie, I did not invent it;" and (2) "I apprehended the Urlinie, I did not calculate it." The first is from Sylvan Kalib, "Thirteen Essays From the Three Yearbooks, *Das Meisterwerk in der Musik*, by Heinrich Schenker: An Annotated Translation," Ph. D. diss., Northwestern University, 1973, Vol. 2: 218. The second is from John Rothgeb, trans., "Further Considerations of the Urlinie II," in *The Masterwork in Music*, Vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996): 19. I am grateful to William Rothstein for referring me to these sources.

of inquiry: aesthetics, in the case of Hanslick, and sketches in the case of Nottebohm. Hanslick demanded of musical aesthetics that it model itself on the practices of physical sciences such as chemistry and physiology. His was a serious inquiry in search of nothing less than musical laws. Because he emphasized the formation of laws, Hanslick demanded that feelings be excluded from the inquiry, except as a negative force. He did not deny the relevance of feeling to music. But he denies the place of feeling in aesthetics. No one agrees about feelings, he argues. If an audience hears a piece of music, all members will agree that the piece is beautiful, but they will not agree about its emotional content. In his introduction to the eighth edition of the treatise he sums up the problem as follows: “. . . from all customary appeals to feeling, we can derive not a single musical law.”<sup>105</sup>

Hanslick, like Nottebohm, is in search of hard knowledge. At the outset of his treatise, Hanslick argues: “If it is not to be wholly illusory, this investigation will have to approach the method of the natural sciences. . . .”<sup>106</sup> Hanslick discusses those aspects of music or, rather, places those aspects of music in the realm of aesthetics, which follow what he calls natural or primitive laws. Musical structures satisfy this requirement. He writes:

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<sup>105</sup> Hanslick, *On the Musically Beautiful*: xxii. [“. . . dass man aus all den üblichen Appellationen an das Gefühl nicht ein einziges musikalisches Gesetz ableiten kann.” Hanslick, *Vom Musikalisch-Schönen*: v.]

<sup>106</sup> Hanslick, *On the Musically Beautiful*: 1. [“Sie wird, will sie nicht ganz illusorisch werden, sich der naturwissenschaftlichen Methode wenigstens so weit nähern, dass sie versucht, den Dingen selbst an den Leib zu rücken, und zu forschen, was in diesen, losgelöst von den taufendfältig wechselnden Eindrücken, das Bleibende, Objective sei.” Hanslick, *Vom Musikalisch-Schönen*: 2.]

. . . the satisfying reasonableness which can appear in musical structures [*Formbildungen*] is based upon *certain primitive basic laws*, which nature, in the organization of the human organism and in the external manifestations of sound, has laid down.<sup>107</sup>

Hanslick's standpoint resembles Nottebohm's in another important respect.

Hanslick refers several times to the process of composition—a topic that is intimately bound up with the sketchbooks. When writing about the starting point of a composition, the devising of a particular melody, he argues:

Through this primitive, mysterious power, *into the workshop of which the human eye will never penetrate*, there resounds in the mind/spirit of the composer a theme, a motive. To the origin of this grain of seed we cannot return; we must accept it as a simple fact [emphasis added].<sup>108</sup>

Like Nottebohm, Hanslick attributes an organic quality to the initial stages of composition when he introduces the metaphor of the seed to describe the earliest stages of composition. Also like Nottebohm, he declares this realm inaccessible to investigation.

A particularly striking aspect of both Hanslick's and Nottebohm's approaches is their belief that the researcher can maintain such discrete boundaries between different kinds of knowledge. For Hanslick this meant that feelings could be kept separate from aesthetic inquiry; for Nottebohm this meant that he could examine, select, and transcribe the sketches, all the while eschewing the force of aesthetic considerations. The latter

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<sup>107</sup> Hanslick, *On the Musically Beautiful*: 30. ["Das befriedigend Vernünftige, dass an und für sich in musikalischen Formbildungen liegen kann, beruht in gewissen primitiven Grundgesetzen, welche die Natur in die Organisation des Menschen und in die äusseren Lauterscheinungen gelegt hat." Hanslick, *Vom Musikalisch-Schönen*: 79.]

<sup>108</sup> "Durch jene primitive, geheimnisvolle Macht, in deren Werkstätte das Menschaugen nun und nimmermehr dringen wird, erklingt in dem Geist des Komponisten ein Thema, ein Motiv. Hinter die Entstehung dieses ersten Samenkorns [grain of seed] können wir nicht zurückgehen, wir müssen es als einfache Thatsache hinnehmen." Hanslick, *Vom Musikalisch-Schönen*: 83.

seems contradicted when, further in Nottebohm's introduction to the Kessler sketchbook, he writes: "In the selection of certain sketches for publication here, those have been chosen which appear noteworthy for artistic or other reasons."<sup>109</sup> His commentary for the *Eroica* sketchbook, moreover, is rife with interpretive remarks. Concerning sketches for the principal subject, for instance, he writes:

. . . Beethoven did not remain on the path started in these sketches. In two sketches given below the principal subject comes four times, and the fourth time it is again in B-flat major. The reason for Beethoven's eventual return after such repetition, and after the statement of the theme in B-flat, is not hard to surmise. A three-fold presentation was sufficient to establish the theme firmly, and the modulation to B-flat major would simply have weakened the ensuing entry of the second group melody in the same key.<sup>110</sup>

Here Nottebohm inserts himself into Beethoven's creative workshop. He supplies a narrative not only of the decisions Beethoven might have made but also of the rationale for his choices. Robert Winter's criticism concerning Nottebohm's lack of attention to the telescoped drafts also contributes to our understanding of Nottebohm's scholarly choices. In the *Zweite Beethoveniana* it is obvious that Nottebohm treats the telescoped drafts as asides, despite the considerable quantity of such drafts. The reality of the many decisions Nottebohm made, on practical, aesthetic, or philosophical grounds, is impossible to ignore. Furthermore, as evident by the commentary cited here, he was

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<sup>109</sup> "Bei den zur Veröffentlichung ausgewählten Skizzen wurde auf solche gesehen, welche in künstlerischer Hinsicht oder aus irgend einem andern Grunde bemerkenswerth erscheinen." Nottebohm, *Ein Skizzenbuch*: 8.

<sup>110</sup> Nottebohm, *Two Beethoven Sketchbooks*: 54. ["Beethoven ist . . . nicht auf dem in diesen Skizzen eingeschlagenen Wege geblieben. In zwei später vorzuführenden Skizzen . . . wird das Hauptthema viermal und das vierte Mal wieder in B-dur gebracht. Der Grund, warum Beethoven schliesslich von der öfteren Wiederholung und von der Aufstellung des Themas in B-dur zurückkam, scheint uns nahe zu liegen. Ein dreimaliges Vorführen des Themas genügte zu dessen Einprägung, und durch die Vorwegnahme der Tonart B-dur wäre der in derselben Tonart erfolgende Eintritt der Seitenpartie geschwächt worden." Nottebohm, *Ein Skizzenbuch aus dem Jahre 1803*: 10.]

unable to hold to his standard of providing “throughout the briefest and most factual presentation possible.”<sup>111</sup>

## IX. Conclusion

We see that Nottebohm occupies a pivotal and somewhat anomalous position in the histories of both musical analysis and sketch studies—pivotal, because of his groundbreaking efforts in making certain sketch materials widely available, and anomalous because of his reluctance to use these materials for analytic purposes. This chapter has been concerned primarily with exploring the philosophical streams that inform Nottebohm’s standpoint and the meaning he attributes to the word organic. Analysts both before and after Nottebohm, Lobe and Schenker prominent among them, studied the sketches to find in them aspects that they considered organic. Clearly these writers carried out their analytic work with different philosophical commitments and different ideas about what might be called organic. But that is the subject of another investigation.

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<sup>111</sup> “Die Natur des Gegenstandes verlangte überall eine möglichst kurze und sachliche Darstellung.” Nottebohm, *Zweite Beethoveniana*: IX. Cited above, pp. 182, 183, n. 103.

## Chapter 4: Schenker and Counterpoint: Mechanics, Metaphor, and Metaphysics

The first chapter cites a definition from Raymond Williams's *Keywords* that draws attention to the opposition of the organic and the mechanical. Example 4-1 presents a table of conceptual oppositions for which that between the mechanical and the organic is primary.<sup>1</sup>

<b>Mechanical</b>	<b>Organic</b>
machine	organism
technique	<i>Geist</i>
subjective	objective
rule	law
foreground	background
artisan/architect: uses pre-existent blueprint or plan	genius: form created simultaneously with the content

**Example 4-1**  
**Mechanical/Organic Oppositions**

These oppositions constitute a central component of Schenker's theories of tonal music.

My concern in this chapter is to demonstrate, first, the ways in which they shape

Schenker's discussions of the organic and, second, the essential role they play in defining

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<sup>1</sup> I have drawn these oppositions from a number of sources: (1) Plato's organic model for rhetoric, discussed on pp. 255, 256 of this chapter; (2) selected writings of Goethe and Schelling (a useful summary appears in M.H. Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp*: 186); (3) Schopenhauer's account of genius in *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, ed. Paul Deussen (Munich: R. Piper, 1924), Vol. 1: 218, 233; Vol. 2: 380, 422, 433 (cited in Korsyn, "Schenker's Organicism Reexamined": 94); and (4) Schenker's own writings, citations from which appear throughout this chapter.

the place of species counterpoint in Schenker's theoretical system. I begin with Schenker's important early article "Der Geist der musikalischen Technik."

### I. "Der Geist der musikalischen Technik"

In his early article "Der Geist der musikalischen Technik," published in Leipzig in 1895, Schenker had not yet committed himself to the organicist position that so powerfully informs his later writings. The essay demonstrates nevertheless his familiarity with issues engendered by organicist critical positions and, especially, crucial distinctions involving the organic and the mechanical. Near the beginning of the essay he writes:

I want to make a striking, but evident comparison between the discipline of counterpoint and the discipline of purely mechanical finger-dexterity that every performing artist must acquire if he is to meet at least the mechanical challenges [*mechanische Technik*] posed by an artwork. In the same way that the purely mechanical discipline of finger-dexterity prepares the fingers . . . to meet the mechanical challenges of any artwork . . . the discipline of counterpoint likewise enables the imagination to see countless different dispositions and transformations of a theme, in order to determine the disposition best suited to the emotional compass of the artwork being contemplated. \*\*But once the work's contrapuntal techniques have been fixed permanently, they become just as subjective as the work's emotional compass.

For this reason, I believe that the counterpoint of J.S. Bach, for example, is the remarkably versatile and brilliant soul of his artworks. Surely he acquired it through long and strict intellectual discipline [*einer langen und strengen Schule seines Geistes*] in addition to his special talent: but since its use in his compositions is subjective, one ought not to mistake it for the training he had previously completed. And one does confuse the two when one maintains that his contrapuntal technique is merely mechanical. . . . Since the listener may well be unable to comprehend Bach's expansive spirit [*Geist*] in terms of his own more limited spirit [*Geist*], he assumes, merely because his own interest wanes, that the soul of Bach's art is also exhausted; at the point where his own

inspiration leaves off, he begins to imagine that the music becomes a mechanical formula.<sup>2</sup>

Here Schenker introduces a nexus of terms—counterpoint, technique, mechanical, subjective—central for his efforts to differentiate counterpoint as pedagogical exercise from counterpoint in the completed work of art. It is noteworthy that, to this point in the essay, he has not directly opposed the mechanical and the organic. In fact, he has avoided the term organic altogether. What he does oppose are the mechanical exercise and the finished work of art. The latter of these he describes in loosely organic terms: it is produced by inspiration; it has soul.<sup>3</sup>

In these paragraphs Schenker describes counterpoint as a *mechanical technique*—mechanical, that is, up to a certain point, and when employed in a certain way. For, while

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<sup>2</sup> “Crass, aber deutlich will ich die Schule des Contrapunctes mit der Schule jener absoluten, mechanischen Fingerfertigkeit vergleichen, die ein jeder reproducirende Künstler sich doch angeeignet haben muss, wenn er die Technik eines Kunstwerkes, die mechanische Technik, erfüllen soll. Aehnlich, wie durch die Schule der absoluten, mechanischen Fingerfertigkeit die zur Freiheit, Unabhängigkeit und Kraft erzogenen Finger in den Stand gesetzt werden, die mechanische Technik eines jeden Kunstwerkes zu erfüllen . . . wird auch durch die Schule des Contrapunctes die Phantasie befähigt, zahllose Charaktere und Wandlungen des Gedankens zu sehen, um schliesslich für den Stimmungskreis des zu schaffenden Kunstwerkes den zusagendsten Charakter zu bestimmen. In demselben Maasse aber, als der Stimmungskreis des Werkes subjectiv ist, ist in ihm alle contrapunctische Technik, die einmal unwiderruflich gewählte, subjectiv geworden. Darum meine ich, ist die Contrapunctik eines J.S. Bach eine tausendfach und herrlich eigenthümlich webende Seele seiner Kunstwerke, zwar gewonnen aus einer langen und strengen Schule seines Geistes und gewiss auch einer besonderen Naturanlage, aber, da sie in den Werken subjectiv erstanden, ist sie niemals mehr mit der vorausgegangenen Schulung zu verwechseln. Und man verwechselt Beide, wenn man seine contrapunctische Technik für eine blos mechanische hält. . . . Da man den weiten Geist Bach’s im eigenen, engeren Geist nicht gut wohl begreifen mag, so nimmt man, nur selbst erlahmend, an, die Seele der Bach’schen Kunst sei auch dort erlahmt und zu einer mechanischen Formel geworden, wo die eigene Beseelung aufgehört hat.” Heinrich Schenker, “Der Geist der musikalischen Technik,” *Musikalisches Wochenblatt* 26 (1895): 245-46, 257-59, 273-74, 279-80, 309-310, 325-326; Reprint, Leipzig: E.W. Fritsch, 1895; reprinted in *Heinrich Schenker als Essayist und Kritiker: Gesammelte Aufsätze, Rezensionen und kleinere Berichte aus den Jahren 1891-1901*, ed. Hellmut Federhofer (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 1990): 135-154; trans. William A. Pastille as “The Spirit of Musical Technique,” *Theoria* 3 (1988): 91, 92. Additional page number references to Pastille’s translation are cited in parentheses in the main body of the text.

<sup>3</sup> I elaborate on the importance of soul later in the chapter.

he presents finger-dexterity and counterpoint as analogues of one another, each of which is sufficient to address mechanical aspects of the artwork, Schenker's ensuing discussion suggests that counterpoint can play a role other than mechanical. I have placed an asterisk in the quotation to highlight the point at which Schenker shifts his point of view. Here he hints at an objective/subjective opposition in the use of counterpoint. When used "objectively"—Schenker does not introduce this word, but the context implies it—counterpoint's function is mechanical. Engaging his contrapuntal knowledge in an exercise mode, the composer explores possibilities for tonal music generally. The process ceases to be mechanical at that point when the composer makes his choices, when he fixes permanently the work's contrapuntal techniques within a specific musical context. This *subjective* aspect shows itself in the finished musical work.

It is essential to note how vehemently Schenker opposes a view that assigns to Bach's contrapuntal writing *only* mechanical significance. In his words: ". . . since its use in Bach's compositions is subjective, one ought not to mistake it for the training he had previously completed." But what is the difference? How does Bach's subjectivity transform the "training" (exercises) into something inspired, something with soul? Schenker points to a key factor in the equation: inspiration ("at the point where [the listener's] own inspiration leaves off, he begins to imagine that the music becomes a mechanical formula"). When working in exercise mode, the composer or student need not be inspired. His task is only to master mechanical components of composition.<sup>4</sup> When creating a musical artwork, the situation is rather different. The composer works

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<sup>4</sup> In his monograph *J.S. Bach's Chromatic Fantasy and Fugue*, trans. and ed. Hedi Siegel (New York: Longman, 1984): 60, 61, Schenker associates mechanics with the amateur, soul with the experienced composer: "This form [the fugue] has been plagued by the mechanical writing of amateurs; soulless activity will never produce a genuine fugue."

now with the specific requirements of the individual musical work and not with contrapuntal requirements more generally. We can read subjectivity in this sense as something that imparts individuality: the composer's subjective input produces the *particular* artwork.

This understanding of subjectivity is important, and problematic. In the context of the organic-mechanical opposition, "subjective" falls on the side of mechanics (see Table 4-1). Schenker has, however, in this very context, contrasted the mechanics of contrapuntal exercises with the counterpoint that rightly belongs to the subjective, inspired work of art. In other words, he counts the subjective as something opposed to the mechanical. The confusion can be ameliorated somewhat if we understand Schenker's two meanings of subjective. As employed in "Geist," subjective means simply particular or individual. In the context of the organic-mechanical opposition, however, subjective denotes failure on the part of the composer to produce an artwork whose meaning is "objective"—universal in the precision of its communication.

Schenker addresses this issue in the final volume of *Meisterwerk*:

The work of art . . . is looked upon always as a subjective creation of the artist—this makes its recipients impatient with one another. Even when faced with the most subjective of Beethoven's music, however, this view is erroneous, for the genius in his work is in fact objective enough to preclude completely all intolerant, subjective critiques and theories based on feelings.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Heinrich Schenker, "Miscellanea: Thoughts on Art and its Relationships to the General Scheme of Things," trans. Ian Bent, in *The Masterwork in Music*, Vol. 3 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997): 69 [henceforth "Miscellanea"]. ["Das Kunstwerk . . . wird stets als eine nur subjective Schöpfung des Künstlers angesehen, das macht die Empfänger gegeneinander unduldsam. Selbst aber dem subjectivsten Beethoven gegenüber ist dieser Standpunkt falsch, denn in seinem Werk ist das Genie auch hinlänglich objektiv, um subjektivunduldsame Gefühlsurteile und Theorien völlig auszuschliessen." Heinrich Schenker, "Vermischtes: Gedanken über die Kunst und ihre Zusammenhänge im Allgemeinen," *Das Meisterwerk in der Musik*, Vol. 3 (Vienna: Drei Masken, 1930; repr. Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1974): 105

Schenker argues here that the masterwork is *both* subjective and objective. It does bear subjective traits of the composer, the stamp of personal style. This in no way detracts, however, from the composer's presenting "objective" (read: universal) artistic truth. In his article "Schenker's Organicism Reexamined," Kevin Korsyn links Schenker's concern for objectivity to Schopenhauer's philosophy. Korsyn cites these excerpts from *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, where Schopenhauer argues:

The gift of genius is nothing but the most complete objectivity.

The *punctum saliens* of every beautiful work, every great and profound thought, is an entirely objective perception. But such a perception is absolutely conditioned by a complete silencing of the will which leaves the person as pure subject of knowing. The aptitude for the prevalence of this state is simply genius.

. . . objectivity, i.e., genius.<sup>6</sup>

Schenker amplifies the opposition of contrapuntal exercise and art in the discussion that follows. Citing a letter from Beethoven to his pupil Archduke Rudolf (1 July 1823), Schenker highlights Beethoven's emphasis upon composing away from the keyboard according to the strictures of counterpoint. One must start simply, writes Beethoven, and then move on to more elaborate figurations. The end result of such practice: not a headache, as the pupil might fear, but the pleasurable realization that he

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(henceforth "Vermischtes").] Schenker's reference to "critiques and theories based on feelings" reiterates Hanslick's concerns in *Vom musikalisch-Schönen*, discussed in Chapter 3.

<sup>6</sup> See Kevin Korsyn, "Schenker's Organicism Reexamined," *Intégral* 7 (1993): 93. ["[so] ist Genialität nichts Anderes, als die vollkommenste Objectivität. . . ." "Das *punctum saliens* jedes schönen Werkes, jedes grossen oder tiefen Gedankens, ist eine ganze objektive Anschauung. Eine solche aber ist durchaus durch das völlige Schweigen des Willens bedingt, welches den menschen als reines Subject des Erkennens übrig lässt. Die Anlage zum Vorwalten dieses Zustandes ist eben das Genie." "Objectivität, d.i. Genialität. . ." Schopenhauer, *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, ed. Paul Deussen, 1:218; 2: 422; 1: 233. Translated as *The World as Will and Representation* by E.F. J. Payne (New York: Dover, 1966), 2 vols., 1: 185, 2: 371; 1: 198. Cited in Korsyn: 92, 93.]

now “discover[s] himself in the midst of art” (“Spirit”: 92-93).<sup>7</sup> A subtle transformation takes place, the exact nature of which neither Schenker nor Beethoven spells out, in which the student, by practicing strict counterpoint exercises, finds his way into the realm of art.

Later in the essay Schenker deals more explicitly with philosophical aspects of composition. At this point he confronts directly the potential for the compositional process to be “organic.” The first model of composition he offers closely resembles eighteenth-century aesthetic theories in which the artisan artist plays a central role. Openly acknowledging the active role of the composer in composition, and the arbitrary nature of his compositional choices, Schenker argues:

[I]n reality, musical content is never organic, for it lacks any principle of causation. An invented melody never has a determination so resolute that it can say, “only that particular melody may follow me, none other.” Rather, as part of the labor of building content, the composer draws from his imagination various similarities and contrasts, from which he eventually makes the best choice. His final decision obscures the other materials he had to choose from (the rejected portions can often be found in his studies and sketches), and reveals only that which appealed to him most (“Spirit”: 99).<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Beethoven’s letter, cited in Schenker’s article: “Ohne Clavier zu schreiben, ist ebenfalls nöthig und manchmal eine einfache Melodie-Choral mit einfachen und wieder mit verschiedenen Figuren nach den Contrapunten und auch darüber hinaus durchführen, wird E.K. Hoheit sicher kein Kopfweh verursachen, ja eher, wenn man sich so selbst mitten in der Kunst erblickt, ein grosses Vergnügen.” Schenker, “Geist”: 141, 142. Schenker cites the letter as an example of Beethoven’s clear understanding of counterpoint’s essence, an understanding which pedagogues both before and after him (among them Fux, Marpurg, Cherubini, Albrechtsberger, and Bellermann) had failed to articulate.

<sup>8</sup> “In der That ist kein musikalischer Inhalt organisch. Es fehlt ihm ein jeglicher Causalnexus, und niemals hat eine erfundene Melodie darf mir folgen, eine andere nicht. Gehört es doch zu den Schmerzen des Inhaltsaufbaues, dass der Componist von seiner Phantasie sich mehrere Aehnlichkeiten und Contraste verschafft, um schliesslich die beste Wahl zu treffen. Durch die Wahl, die er so getroffen, erfährt man zwar nicht, was er sonst noch zur Auswahl vorrätthig hatte (das Unterdrückte kann man oft aus seinen Studien und Skizzen erfahren), wohl aber, was ihm persönlich am besten gefiel.” Schenker, “Geist”: 148, 149.

In this description, the imagination supplies various materials; the artisan composer selects from these and crafts the musical work. Such a composer stands at a distance from his object, “survey[ing] [with his imagination] the entire content . . . from a bird’s-eye view, so to speak (“Spirit”: 99).”<sup>9</sup>

Schenker also proffers in the article what he believes to be an organic method of composition, or at least a method that includes an organic aspect:

Nevertheless, I do recognize one aspect of the musical imagination that seems to correspond quite accurately to the scientific notion of the “organic”. . . . I believe that after the composer’s imagination has generated a particular pattern, it is literally besieged by a multitude of similar patterns. The first of these is often so irresistible that the composer includes them in the developing content without ever recognizing their similarity (“Spirit”: 100).<sup>10</sup>

Here Schenker restricts his definition of organic to materials “untainted by consciousness,”<sup>11</sup> to acts separate from the composer’s will.

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<sup>9</sup> “Nun kann es geschehen, dass die Phantasie des Componisten . . . den gesamten Inhalt, . . . gleichsam aus der Vogelperspektive überschaut. . . .” Schenker, “Geist”: 149.

<sup>10</sup> “Indessen kenne ich eine Erscheinung in der musikalischen Phantasie, auf die der naturwissenschaftliche Begriff des ‘Organischen’ ganz streng zu passen scheint. . . . So finde ich, dass die Phantasie, nachdem sie ein bestimmtes Gebilde hervorgebracht hat, von vielen Gebilden ähnlicher Natur förmlicher belagert ist, und es ist die Macht dieser ähnlichen Gebilde über den Componisten oft so unwiderstehlich, dass er sie in den zu bauenden Inhalt einschliesst, ohne sich deren Aehnlichkeit gar zum Bewusstsein geführt zu haben.” Schenker, “Geist”: 150. In his article “The Origins of Schenker’s Thought: How Man is Musical,” *Journal of Music Theory* 33 (1989): 297, n. 31, Allan Keiler cites Schenker’s “organic” description of musical works from a 1894 essay about the pianist d’Albert: “In the literature of music there are works that came about in such a way that within the endless chaos of fantasy the lightning flash of a thought suddenly crashed down, at once illuminating and creating the entire work in the most dazzling light. Such works were conceived and received in one strike, and the whole fate of the creation, life, growth, and end lay already designated in the first seed.” Schenker, “Eugen d’Albert,” *Die Zukunft*, Bd. 9 (6 October 1894): 33. Keiler includes the description in his own article to emphasize that Schenker’s belief in the potential for composition to be organic was not an isolated event in this first decade of his publishing career. This description appeared one year before that in “Geist.” I return to Keiler’s argument in the conclusion to the chapter.

<sup>11</sup> “. . . so lange es vom Bewusstsein nicht befleckt worden. . . .” Schenker, “Geist”: 150.

In the decades following “Geist,” Schenker’s theoretical stance underwent deep-seated transformations.<sup>12</sup> Notably, the elements of organicism explicated in “Geist” remained largely intact. His belief about whether or not these conditions obtained in music, however, changed radically. Schenker eventually defined a purely musical causality. In addition, he espoused a theory of composition in which the composer’s conscious mind does not intervene. The opposition of the mechanical and the organic, meanwhile, continued as a significant and defining force in his writings. Concerning the terms mechanical/organic, machine/organism, rule/law, and artisan/genius, Schenker increasingly dramatized their unbridgeable opposition. Counterpoint, in contrast, continued to occupy an ambivalent position. As an exercise, Schenker continued to describe it in mechanical terms.<sup>13</sup> As the conceptual foundation for free composition,

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<sup>12</sup> Various categorizations for Schenker’s publishing career are possible. For present purposes, and at the suggestion of William Rothstein, I recognize a three-fold division: (1) early writings, especially as represented by “Geist”; (2) middle writings, including *Harmonielehre* and the two volumes of *Kontrapunkt* in which Schenker is much occupied with the psychology of the listener; and (3) later writings (post 1920), in which Schenker has formulated the *Urlinie* concept and in which he is increasingly occupied with the genius artist. This chapter is concerned with the ways in which the organic-mechanical opposition informs Schenker’s theorizing across his career. As a result, I emphasize continuities rather than disjunctures.

<sup>13</sup> See, for instance, his remark in *Counterpoint I*: “I have already discussed in the introduction how this rhythmic appearance, *demanded solely by the mechanics of exercises*, led to the illusion that they constituted a special and allegedly still valid genre of composition, namely ‘strict composition’” [emphasis added]. In his criticisms of Riemann, Schenker attacks the notion that the pupil should, in the context of counterpoint exercises, “express the little melody in its best and most artistic form.” Schenker contends that the exercise lacks the necessary context and scope to determine precisely its appropriate expression (8). Both quotations are from Heinrich Schenker, *Counterpoint I*, trans. John Rothgeb and Jürgen Thym, ed. John Rothgeb (New York: Schirmer Books, 1987): 18, 8 [henceforth CI]. Additional references to *Counterpoint I* give page numbers for the English translation in parentheses in the main body of the text. The German original for these quotations is as follows:

“Wie diese schon durch die Aufgabentechnik allein rein mechanisch geforderte rhythmische Erscheinung umgekehrt aber zur Illusion geführt hat, als hätte man es dabei gar mit einer besonderen und angeblich noch immer aktuellen Kompositionsgattung, nämlich der des „Strengen Satzes“, zu tun, wurde bereits in der Einleitung dargelegt.”

however, counterpoint embodies the prized organic qualities of objectivity, law, and *Geist*.

## II. Strict Counterpoint and Free Composition: Where (and How) Does Schenker Draw the Line?

That counterpoint was central to Schenker's theoretical enterprise is clearly indicated by the working title he conceived for his multi-volume *Neue musikalische Theorien und Phantasien*. As late as 1922 Schenker advertised *Der freie Satz*, on the back leaf of *Kontrapunkt: Zweite Halbband [=Kontrapunkt II]*, as *Neue musikalische Theorien und Phantasien, Band II<sup>3</sup> Kontrapunkt Fortsetzung: Der freie Satz (In Vorbereitung)*.<sup>14</sup> At this crucial juncture in his publishing career Schenker construes *Der freie Satz* as essentially an extension of contrapuntal practice, even if it would depend heavily upon the notion of structurally significant harmonies or *Stufen*.<sup>15</sup>

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“Kaum kann man es greller, als es mit diesen Worten geschieht, ausdrücken, dass der Kontrapunkt bereits selbst Komposition, und zwar im delikatesten Sinn des Wortes verstanden, zu betreiben habe. Man achte: der Schüler hat hier zu lernen, die kleine Melodie wirklich nur gerade aufs Beste, aufs Künstlerichste auszudrücken.” Heinrich Schenker, *Kontrapunkt I* (Vienna: Universal Edition A.G., 1910): 27, 12.

<sup>14</sup> I am indebted to Richard Kramer for bringing this to my attention.

<sup>15</sup> This foundational premise retained its force for Schenker through his last works. The published (posthumous) version of *Der freie Satz*, for instance, devotes an entire section to strict counterpoint, which Schenker prefaces as follows: “According to the presentation in parts I and II, the foreground has an organic relationship to the background and middleground; therefore strict counterpoint is implicitly present in the foreground. Everything which has been said regarding the intrinsic properties of the intervals and the motion of the voices in my *Kontrapunkt*, volumes I and II, retains its validity in free composition.” Schenker, *Free Composition: 55* [henceforth *FC*]. [“Da gemäss der Darstellung im ersten und zweiten Teil der Vordergrund zum Hinter- und Mittelgrund eine organische Beziehung hat, so geht der strenge Satz mittelbar auch im Vordergrund mit. Alles was vom Wesen der Intervalle und von der Stimmenbewegung in meiner ‘Kontrapunktlehre,’ I und II, gesagt worden ist, behält auch im freien Satz seine Gültigkeit. . . .” Schenker, *Der freie Satz: 95*.] Additional references to *Free Composition* give page numbers for the English translation in parentheses in the main body of the text.

The title of Schenker's projected third volume of *Kontrapunkt*, with its implications for continuity between counterpoint and free composition, may well belie the fact that Schenker always employed a two-pronged approach to the matter. In his introduction to the first volume of *Kontrapunkt*, published in 1910, he set the following tasks for himself: first, "at the outset to draw the boundaries between the *pure theory of voice leading and free composition*"; second, and more imperatively, "to reveal the *connection between counterpoint* (which may be considered the first musico-grammatical exercises) *and the actual work of art*—to show the nature and foundation of this connection. "For," he contends, "there is indeed a relationship between counterpoint and composition, although it is far from what has been supposed by theorists of both the old and the new schools (CI: 10)."<sup>16</sup> Schenker thus revisits the topic introduced in "Geist"—counterpoint's relation to the musical artwork. Here in *Kontrapunkt* he resolves to investigate the matter systematically, and to clarify it once and for all.

Example 4-2 summarizes important arenas in which Schenker places counterpoint

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<sup>16</sup> ". . . zunächst die Sonderung der reinen Stimmführungslehre von dem freien Satz vorzunehmen." And, ". . . nämlich den Zusammenhang zwischen dem Kontrapunkt (als gleichsam den ersten musik-grammatischen Übungen) und dem wirklichen Kunstwerk zu offenbaren, zu zeigen, welcher Art er denn sei, und woraus er sich gründe. Denn es gibt in der Tat zwischen Kontrapunkt und Komposition einen Zusammenhang, wenn er auch weit davon entfernt ist, eine volle Identität beider vorzustellen, und daher eben auch ein völlig anderer ist als derjenige, den die Theoretiker der älteren wie der neueren Schule bisher vermutet haben." Schenker, *Kontrapunkt I*: 15. Schenker discusses aspects of the counterpoint/free composition distinction already in *Harmonielehre*. He does not, however, bring the same focus to the topic there as he does in *Kontrapunkt I*. Robert Snarrenberg's formulation in the *New Grove* article on Schenker provides valuable commentary: "The core of [Schenker's] theory is contained in the three volumes of *Neue musikalischen Theorien und Phantasien*, i: *Harmonielehre* (1906); ii: *Kontrapunkt* (bk 1, 1910; bk 2, 1922); and iii: *Der freie Satz* (1935). *Conceptually speaking*, the beginning of the set is *Kontrapunkt*, in which Schenker explicated the rules of the Fuxian species method and critiqued the formulations and explanations of Fux, Albrechtsberger, Cherubini and Bellermann [emphasis added]." Robert Snarrenberg, "Heinrich Schenker," in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, Vol. 22, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (London: Macmillan, 2001): 479. Other publications in which Schenker addresses the topic include: *J.S. Bach's Chromatic Fantasy and Fugue* (1909); *Erläuterungsausgabe*, Op. 110 (1914); *Freier Satz* (drafted in 1917, abandoned before 1922); *Der Tonwille*, Issue 1 (1921); *Kontrapunkt II* (1922, but begun earlier).

and free composition in opposition to one another. In the ensuing chapter sections I consider the oppositions in turn and show how Schenker engages each in the *Neue musikalische Theorien und Phantasien* and in the volumes of *Meisterwerk*.

<b>Strict Counterpoint</b>	<b>Free Composition</b>
based on the cantus firmus	based on scale degrees ( <i>Stufen</i> )
real	<i>geistig</i>
concerned with eternally valid principles	concerned with history & with compositional practice
basic laws and concepts	prolongations of laws and concepts

**Example 4-2**  
**Strict Counterpoint and Free Composition**

- Cantus Firmus and *Stufen*

In strict counterpoint the cantus firmus in whole notes provides the basis for the exercise. It establishes the diatonic tonality of the exercise with its beginning and ending on the tonic pitch and its stepwise approach to the final tonic. Furthermore, it institutes a strict rhythmic procession in whole notes that permits no deviations. In the later species, when dissonance becomes possible, dissonant musical events must resolve within the space of one measure. The cantus firmus thus fixes musical events both tonally, in one key,<sup>17</sup> and rhythmically, in the space of one measure, or two half-note beats. Finally, the cantus firmus establishes the melodic, vocal basis of strict counterpoint. It eschews leaps that suggest chordal (harmonic) outlines, and avoids dissonant intervals or sums of

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<sup>17</sup> Schenker's focus lies with cantus firmi that remain in one key. I have encountered two places in which Schenker discusses modulation in the species exercise, however: at the ends of his sections on the cantus firmus (Schenker, CI: 101) and on first species counterpoint (Schenker, CI: 165-170).

intervals that produce tuning difficulties in singing.<sup>18</sup> The requirements of a melodic line, moreover—melodic fluency, a single climax—are primary for shaping the musical events in the exercise.<sup>19</sup>

The *Stufen* constitute an important organizing principle for musical events in free composition. (Counterpoint is the other.) In *Harmonielehre* Schenker describes the *Stufe* as a “higher and more abstract unity” than the triad, an entity that may “comprise several harmonies, . . . [all of which] would be *subsumed under the concept of the triad on C as a scale-step [emphasis added].*”<sup>20</sup> A little later he supplies an analogy:

The scale steps then resemble powerful projector lights; in their illuminated sphere the parts go through their evolution in a higher and freer contrapuntal sense, uniting in harmonic chords, which, however, never become end in themselves, but always result from the free movement (*H*: 155).<sup>21</sup>

Schenker’s multi-perspective accounting of the *Stufen* is characteristic: he depends upon both a philosophical and an analogical explanation. A central feature of Schenker’s

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<sup>18</sup> See Schenker, *CI*: 52: “. . . the melody of the cantus firmus therefore must be constructed only of seconds, thirds, perfect fourths and fifths, both kinds of sixths, and the perfect octave. The reason for this restriction is not only the dissonant character (together with its expressive consequences) of the intervals just cited, but also the difficulties of intonation attendant on them.” [“. . . so dass die Melodie des C.F. daher nur aus Sekunden, Terzen, der reinen Quart und Quint, aus beiden Sexten und der reinen Oktav gebaut werden darf. Der Grund dieses Verbotes ist nicht allein die Dissonanzhaftigkeit der eben genannten Intervalle, samt derem Folgen für den Ausdruck, sondern auch die mit ihnen eigentümlich verbunden Intonationsschwierigkeit.” Schenker, *Kontrapunkt I*: 76.]

<sup>19</sup> I have summarized these features of the cantus firmus from Schenker’s lengthy discussion in *CI*: 17-109.

<sup>20</sup> Heinrich Schenker, *Harmony*, trans. Elisabeth Mann Borgese (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1954): 139. [Henceforth *H* in the main body of the text.] I have altered Borgese’s translation slightly. [“Denn die Stufe bildet eine höhere abstrakte Einheit, so dass sie zuweilen mehrere Harmonien konsumiert. . . . um derentwillen sie dann alle unter den Begriff eben des Dreiklages auf C, als einer Stufe, subsumiert werden müssen.” Heinrich Schenker, *Harmonielehre* (Vienna: Universal Edition, 1906; photocopy edition in 1978): 181.]

<sup>21</sup> “Die Stufen sind dann gleichsam mächtige Scheinwerfer, in deren erhelltem Bezirk die Stimmen in höherem und freierem kontrapunktischem Sinne ihre Evolutionen ausführen, zu harmonischen Klängen zusammentretend, die als niemals Selbstzweck sind, sondern aus der freien Bewegung resultieren.” Schenker, *Harmonielehre*: 199, 200.

philosophical grounding is his invocation of *concepts*, the features of which shall become clearer as we proceed. The light analogy is one to which Schenker returns on numerous occasions.<sup>22</sup> Extrapolating from the image, we can infer that the cantus firmus serves as a tiny reading light, proceeding from one word or small group of words to the next. It illuminates only small, isolated events, and encompasses at the most a short sentence. The *Stufen*, by comparison, cast a broad sweep with their large beam. They thereby provide the interpretive framework for complexities that vastly exceed the reading light's limited capacity.

The *Stufen* gained increasing importance for Schenker as his career progressed. Of special interest to this study are the ways in which Schenker accounts for their origin. In *Harmonielehre*, Schenker offers Nature as source. Several references point to reproductive functions of the natural world.<sup>23</sup> When discussing the centrality of the overtone series to the generation of pitches that comprise the major triad, for instance, Schenker invokes generational descent (from parent to child), and he appeals to "Nature's procreative urge" (*H*: 23, 24). To account for the primacy of the fifth, Schenker claims that "the fifth enjoys among the overtones the right of primogeniture, so to speak" (*H*:

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<sup>22</sup> In a letter written to August Halm in 1920, Schenker writes: "Most important for me is  $\Pi^2$ , in which the voice leading of free composition and its *complete identity* with that of so-called strict counterpoint is uncovered and demonstrated. 'Semper idem, sed non eodem modo' penetrates into every section: the torchlight from this same motto emanates from strict counterpoint in three voices, shines upon counterpoint in four and more voices, upon combinations of the species, and then upon free composition." Cited in Hedi Siegel, "When 'Freier Satz' was part of *Kontrapunkt*," in *Schenker Studies 2*, ed. Carl Schachter and Hedi Siegel (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999): 12.

<sup>23</sup> Robert Snarrenberg's article, "Competing Myths: The American Abandonment of Schenker's Organicism," focuses on Schenker's metaphors of birth and gestation and, especially, the tendency for American practitioners of Schenker to overlook them. See Robert Snarrenberg, in *Theory, Analysis, and Meaning in Music*, ed. Anthony Pople (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

26).<sup>24</sup> Nature's priorities then become the priorities of the artist. Because Nature establishes the priority of the fifth-relationship through the overtone series (G is the most potent overtone from C),<sup>25</sup> it is the fifth-relationship that characterizes the motion of the *Stufen* (*H*: 29). In the second volume of *Kontrapunkt* he writes that "scale degrees . . . have a course originally predetermined by [Nature] alone. . . ."<sup>26</sup>

The *Stufen* retained a central theoretical stronghold in Schenker's later writings. By the time of *Der freie Satz*, however, he attributed to them significant contrapuntal content in addition to their decisive harmonic grounding. In a brief conclusion to his discussion of paragraphs 53-78, he writes:

Of course, the descending fifths in the bass present the fifth *as verified by nature* [emphasis added]. But upon considering the results of §§ 56, 57, 59, 60, 63, 73, and 74, we find that such fifths are also a necessary outgrowth of voice-leading. Thus they combine in themselves a harmonic and a contrapuntal law (*FC*: 34).<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Schenker's discussion of generational descent appears on pp. 35 and 36 of *Harmonielehre*. The German original for the quotations that follow: "Zeugungslust der Natur"; "Die Quint gleichsam als Erstgeburt unter den Obertönen ist. . . ." Schenker, *Harmonielehre*: 37, 39, respectively.

<sup>25</sup> In this context Schenker declares G the most potent overtone from C. Strictly speaking C is, of course, the most potent overtone. In his discussion, however, Schenker ignores the octave overtone entirely. He wishes instead to clarify the relationship between the fifth and the third. Here, he argues, the fifth has precedence: the fifth results from the third division, the third from the fifth division of the overtone series. See Schenker, *Harmony*: 26.

<sup>26</sup> Heinrich Schenker, *Counterpoint II*, trans. John Rothgeb and Jürgen Thym, ed. John Rothgeb (New York: Schirmer Books, 1987): 15. [Henceforth CII.] Additional references to *Counterpoint II* give page numbers for the English translation in parentheses in the main body of the text. ["Denn wie wir wissen, sind die Stufen mehr der Natur als der Kunst untertan; sie haben einen ursprünglich nur von der ersteren allein vorgeschriebenen gang, . . ." Heinrich Schenker, *Kontrapunkt II* (Vienna: Universal Edition, 1922): 17.

<sup>27</sup> "Wenn wir die Ergebnisse der §§ 56, 57, 59, 60, 63, 73, 74 betrachten, bemerken wir, dass die Quintfälle des Basses nicht nur die durch die Natur beglaubigte Quint hervorkehren, sondern auch die Notwendigkeit der Stimmführung in sich tragen, dass sie somit ein *harmonisches* und *kontrapunktisches Gesetz* in sich vereinen." Schenker, *Der freie Satz*: 69.

In addition, Schenker placed tremendous emphasis on the primary fifth-motion involving tonic and dominant. When discussing the *Stufen* in his chapter on specific foreground events, he writes:

Scale-degrees are present even in the fundamental structure itself. These degrees are the strongest of all, since the fundamental structure assures the coherence of the work (*FC*: 111).<sup>28</sup>

Of possible functions for other *Stufen*, Schenker cites two: (1) a chord that belongs to one of the cadences of the fundamental structure; (2) a chord that stands apart from a cadence. The consonance of the latter underscores “what was originally a voice-leading event, such as a neighboring note” (*FC*: 112).<sup>29</sup> *Stufen* other than I or V thus fail to achieve status as independent tonal events in their own right.

In other settings Schenker presents Nature and the world of harmony in a more mysterious light, removing them from the visceral world of procreation. At the same time he implicitly links as equals Nature, truth, and art. In his introduction to *Harmonielehre* Schenker claims that, “[I]n contrast to the theory of counterpoint, the theory of harmony presents itself to me as a purely *geistig* universe, a system of ideally moving forces, born of Nature or of art” (*H*: xxv).<sup>30</sup> Later, Schenker explains how the genius composer can produce good music even when he sets out with a “wrong theoretical preconception.” Schenker compares him to a sleepwalker, and argues that the

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<sup>28</sup> “Schon der Ursatz zeigt Stufen; diese Stufen sind die stärksten gemäss der Bedeutung des Ursatzes für den Zusammenhang, . . .” Schenker, *Der freie Satz*: 173.

<sup>29</sup> “Entweder gehören die Klänge zu einer der Ursatzform-Kadenzen mit dem für sie charakterischen Anteil der kontrapunktisch-melodischen Führung, oder sie stehen trotz der Wirkung einer IV. oder VI. Stufe ausserhalb einer Kadence und unterstreichen mit ihrer Konsonanz nur ein ursprünglich rein Stimmführungsgemässes wie etwa oft bei einer Nebennote.” Schenker, *Der freie Satz*: 174.

<sup>30</sup> “Stellt sich mir nämlich, im Gegensatz zur Lehre vom Kontrapunkt, die Lehre von der Harmonie im ganzen als eine bloss geistige Welt dar, als eine Welt von ideell treibenden Kräften, seien es natur- oder kunstgeborene. . . .” Schenker, *Harmonielehre*: v.

“superior force of truth—of Nature, as it were, is at work mysteriously behind [the composer’s] consciousness, guiding his pen . . .” (*H*: 60).<sup>31</sup>

The *geistig* quality that Schenker attributes to the *Stufen* thrusts to the forefront the dichotomous ontological statuses of the *cantus firmus* and *Stufen*: real and ideal, respectively. Schenker thus engages philosophical issues familiar from the discussion of Goethe and Schelling in Chapter 1. His introduction to the first volume of *Kontrapunkt* invokes the “real world of written exercises” (*CI*: 12). In an aside to his discussion of first species in two voices, Schenker comments that “free composition alone can dispense with an actual distinct extension in time of the organizing tone (such as is provided by the *cantus firmus* in the exercises of the later species) and posit only ideal tones that can be expected to bear the burden of dissonances. Yet,” he argues, “these ideal tones certainly are so present in our consciousness that they can . . . be described as real” (*CI*: 112).<sup>32</sup> In *Kontrapunkt II* Schenker summarizes the opposition like this:

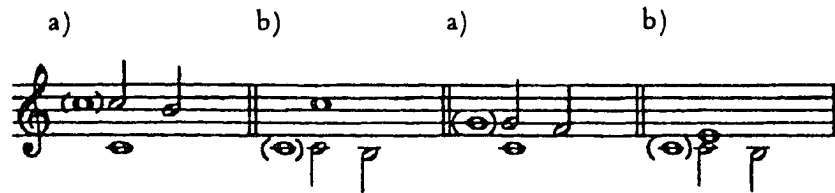
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<sup>31</sup> “Er ist, als komponierte geheimnisvoll hinter ihrem Bewusstsein und in ihrem Namen die weit höhere Macht einer Wahrheit, einer Natur, der es gar nichts verschläg. . . .” Schenker, *Harmonielehre*: 77. The somnambulist image clearly refers to Schopenhauer’s model, discussed in Chapter 3. Oswald Jonas takes up the image in his introduction to the English translation of *Harmony*: “The composer, his balance centered unconsciously or instinctively in the *Ursatz*, can wander unerringly, like a somnambulist, and span any distance and bridge any gap, no matter what the dimension of his work.” Oswald Jonas, Introduction to *Harmony*, by Heinrich Schenker: xxiv.

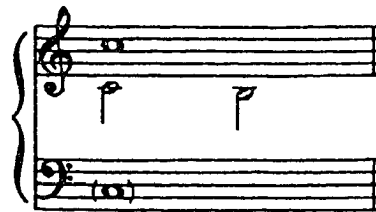
<sup>32</sup> “Erst der freie Satz vermag selbst auf ein wirkliches und deutliches Liegenbleiben des sammelnden Tones (wie es der C.f. bei den Aufgaben der späteren Gattungen ist) zu verzichten und auch nur ideelle Töne anzunehmen, denen das Tragen von Dissonanzen durchaus zugemutet werden kann. Doch freilich sind diese ideellen Töne so im Gefühl gegenwärtig, dass sie in diesem Sinne auch wieder als reell bezeichnet werden können.” Schenker, *Kontrapunkt I*: 154. I have made small changes to Rothgeb’s translation.

It is most thoroughly in free composition that the secret of the outer voices gains new and elevated significance. There, finally, the transcendental [*jenseitigen*] world of the scale degrees casts a light of its own on the physicality of the outer voices . . . (CII: 6).<sup>33</sup>

Schenker's discussion of the passing tone in two voices contributes crucial information concerning the functions of strict counterpoint and *Stufen* in real and ideal realms. Examples 4-3 and 4-4 reproduce Schenker's examples 88 and 89 from *Kontrapunkt II*.



**Example 4-3 (Schenker's Ex. 88)**  
The passing tone in two-voice counterpoint



**Example 4-4 (Schenker's Ex. 89)**  
The passing tone in two-voice counterpoint, with "*Stufe*"

In the two measures "a" from Example 4-3, the passing motion occurs in the upper voice while the lower voice sustains. "That act of sustaining," writes Schenker, "alone prolongs in one's memory the sound of the consonant first interval, and all the more

<sup>33</sup> "Vollends im freien Satze gewinnt das Geheimnis der Aussenstimmen neue erhöhte Bedeutung, wo endlich auch die Stufe aus ihrer jenseitigen Welt noch ein eigen Licht auf deren Körperlichkeit wirft. . . ." Schenker, *Kontrapunkt II*: 6. Here again Schenker uses light as an analogy for the scale steps.

clearly so because all intervallic definitions are based on the lowest voice” (CII: 57).<sup>34</sup>

The situation differs when the passing motion occurs in the lowest voice, as in the two measures “b.” Since this voice no longer provides an audible continuation of the consonant harmony established on the downbeat, Schenker suggests an alternative—his Example 89—and explains:

If, for the sake of greater clarity, we write at b the tone to be prolonged in a lower register—since it is purely *geistig* in nature, then we gain an insight into the true nature of the lower voice (to be presented more fully in free composition) and how, in relation to the scale degree conceived as lying still lower, it actually takes on the meaning of another upper voice (CII: 57).<sup>35</sup>

What Schenker illustrates here is closely analogous to a *Stufe*, a phenomenon which in this context he describes as an inaudible, *geistig* lowest voice.<sup>36</sup> The “*Stufe*’s” presence transforms the previously lowest voice into an upper voice.

Schenker’s commentary for the example clarifies both the ontological status of such notes and their function for the listener:

Alongside all of the corporeality (which is always to be understood as independent) of the intervals available in strict counterpoint, the first appearance of the dissonant passing tone produces a curious intrusion of the imaginary [*Vorgestelltem*]: it consists in the covert retention, *by the ear*, of the consonant point of departure that

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<sup>34</sup> “. . . Denn sofern bei a) der tiefere Ton liegen bleibt, trägt schon dessen Liegenbleiben allein die Erinnerung des ersten konsonanten Intervalles fort, und zwar um so deutlicher, als jegliche Bestimmung der Intervalle von der Tiefe aus geschieht. . . .” Schenker, *Kontrapunkt II*: 58.

<sup>35</sup> “Verlegt man nun bei (b) bloss einer grösseren Verdeutlichung halber den fortzutragenden Ton, da er nun einmal rein geistiger Natur ist, besser noch in die Tiefe, so gewinnt man zugleich Einblick in das wahre, im freien Satze noch näher darzustellende Wesen der tieferen Aussenstimme, wie sie gegenüber dem noch tiefer gedachten Stufenton Bedeutung wieder nur einer Oberstimme erhält.” Schenker, *Kontrapunkt II*: 58, 59. John Rothgeb discusses this passage in his article “Strict Counterpoint and Tonal Theory,” but stops short of addressing philosophical and ontological matters. See Rothgeb, “Strict Counterpoint and Tonal Theory,” *Journal of Music Theory* 19 (1975): 270.

<sup>36</sup> To qualify as a *Stufe* the lowest voice would have to operate within the tonal system of seven *Stufen*.

accompanies the dissonant passing tone on its journey through the third-space. It is as though the dissonance would always carry along with it the impression of its consonant origin . . . [emphasis added] (CII: 57, 58).<sup>37</sup>

Here Schenker collapses the sensual work of the ear with the functioning of the imagination (*Vorgestelltem*). Significant for the current discussion is his introduction of the listener's imagination into the act of listening. According to Schenker's conception of the *Stufen*, the listener holds in her imagination musical events no longer literally sounding.<sup>38</sup>

#### - Eternally Valid Principles versus History and Compositional Practice

Schenker's opposition of "eternally valid principles" to "history" and "compositional practice" provides an additional point of demarcation between strict counterpoint and free composition. In the first chapter devoted to the cantus firmus, Schenker poses a rhetorical question, in response to a passage from Bellermann: "Is it the purpose of counterpoint to deal with music history and to introduce us to the old masterworks rather than to concern itself, first and foremost, with eternally valid principles of voice leading? (CI: 32)."<sup>39</sup> The ensuing discussion makes clear his commitment to the latter. For Schenker, instruction in counterpoint teaches the student

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<sup>37</sup> "Bei aller der stets als unabhängig zu verstehenden Körperlichkeit der im strengen Satze möglichen Intervalle enthüllt sich somit bei der Uerscheinung des dissonanten Durchganges gleichwohl schon ein seltsamer Einschlag von Vorgestelltem: er besteht in der geheimnisvoll wirkenden Erinnerung an den konsonanten Ausgangspunkt, die den dissonanten Durchgang auf seinem Weg durch den Terzraum begleitet. Es ist, als würde die Dissonanz auch den Einschlag der Ausgangskonsonanz stets mit sich führen. . . ." Schenker, *Kontrapunkt II*: 59.

<sup>38</sup> This description recalls Kant's faculties of apprehension and comprehension. See discussion above, p. 68.

<sup>39</sup> ". . . denn hat etwa die Lehre vom Kontrapunkt auch Musikgeschichte zu treiben, und ex offo in die alten Meisterwerke einzuführen, statt mit ewig gültigen Stimmführungsgrundsätzen sich zunächst zu befassen?" Schenker, *Kontrapunkt I*: 50.

not repertoire, but a nucleus of principles that transcend history and its artifacts. When discussing the effects of passing and neighboring tones in two voices, Schenker restates his belief that counterpoint teaches “eternally valid” principles: “The scale of values of weak-beat dissonances established above is completely independent of time and fashion,” he writes. “The effects depicted in the scale above remain the same through all eternity, and are ranked only among themselves!” (CI: 180).<sup>40</sup>

How do these eternally valid principles of voice leading, these timeless conceptions of consonance and dissonance, differ from music history and from compositional practice? Schenker offers a number of criteria. First, he claims for these principles sources impervious to historical vicissitudes and change. In his introduction to *Kontrapunkt I*, for instance, he argues for counterpoint’s vocal origins. Because the human larynx is unchanging, musical principles established by the Church for singing, especially those concerning the size and quality of acceptable intervals, have an absolute quality (CI: 12). When establishing intervals permissible for the cantus firmus, for instance, Schenker precludes those that produce difficulties in tuning.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> “Die oben dargestellte Bewertungsskala der Dissonanzen auf dem Aufstreich ist von Zeit und Mode durchaus unabhängig. . . . Die in der Skala oben angeführten Wirkungen bleiben in alle Ewigkeit hinein dieselben und rangieren gleichsam nur unter sich selbst!” Schenker, *Kontrapunkt I*: 242. Compare, too, his statements in “Geist” and in *Der freie Satz*: (1) “Since, therefore, we do not have to be alienated from old contents, I believe I can say that the substance of musical art is eternal. This substance never contradicts itself, no more than we do when we are delighted by Brahms today, but by Palestrina or by another pre-modern composer tomorrow.” Schenker, “Spirit”: 101. [“Und da wir so den früheren Inhalten nicht entfremdet sein müssen, so glaube ich sagen zu dürfen, es ist der Stoff der musikalischen Kunst ewig. Dieser Stoff widerspricht sich eben niemals und nirgends, und ebensowenig widersprechen wir uns selber, wenn wir heute Brahms unser Entzücken schenken, morgen aber Palestrina oder einem anderen vor-Modernen.” Schenker, “Geist”: 151.] (2) “Despite the eternal sameness of the linear progressions, there is still room in the art of music for countless gifted composers!” Schenker, *FC*: 27. [“Trotz dem ewigen Einerlei an Zügen gibt die Kunst der Musik Raum noch für unzählbare Genies!” Schenker, *Der freie Satz*: 60.]

<sup>41</sup> See the discussion of the cantus firmus above, pp. 200, 201, and especially n. 18.

Second, Schenker argues that these principles, though discernible in particular historical settings, transcend the specifics of that setting. In the *Miscellanea* to *Meisterwerk* III, for instance, Schenker claims that, “even if there be a link between the artwork and its people and surrounding landscape, art has an unconditional quality to its particular laws and their fulfillment that transcends people and landscape.”<sup>42</sup>

What, then, constitutes music history? For Schenker it is the history of compositional practice, the instantiation of eternally valid principles in specific works of art. It is on this point that Schenker attacks Albrechtsberger who, in his own manual of counterpoint, confuses strict counterpoint with actual compositions. Albrechtsberger’s definition of strict composition reads like this: “Strict composition encompasses the imitative style used in churches, the rigorous and serious counterpoint with or without chorale; furthermore, simple and double fugues, and finally the canon” (CI: 3).<sup>43</sup> In Schenker’s pedagogical system, acquainting oneself with music history’s artifacts is not the starting point for musical instruction, but rather its ultimate goal (CI: 32). As late as the “Miscellanea” from *Meisterwerk* III, Schenker argues: “. . . intellectual [*geistig*] nourishment needs to be adjusted as the intellect [*Geist*] grows. Hence it is utterly misguided to hold up a Johann Sebastian Bach as a model to beginners. . . .”<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Schenker, “Miscellanea”: 69, 70. [“Mag auch das Kunstwerk mit Volk und Landschaft zusammenhängen, die Kunst behält über Volk und Landschaft hinweg gleichwohl auch ein Unbedingtes in ihren besonderen Gesetzen und deren Erfüllung.” Schenker, “Vermischtes”: 106.]

<sup>43</sup> “Zu ihm gehören die kirchenmässigen Nachahmungen; ferner die männlichen und ernsthaften Kontrapunkte, ohne oder mit einem Choral; sodann die einfachen und Doppelfugen; endlich der Canon.” Schenker, *Kontrapunkt* I: 5.

<sup>44</sup> Schenker, “Miscellanea”: 75. [Ähnlich sollte wohl auch die geistige Nahrung dem Wachstum des Geistes angepasst werden. Demnach ist es durchaus verfehlt, einen Seb. Bach den Anfängern vorzusetzen. . . .” Schenker, “Vermischtes”: 115.]

- Basic Laws, Concepts, and Prolongations

In many of his writings Schenker marks a gap between “basic laws” and “prolongations” of those laws as a means to differentiate strict counterpoint from free composition. In this way he transforms the original opposition *rules* versus *laws* (Example 4-1) to *laws* versus *prolongations* (Example 4-2).

Laws and Rules

Prior to Schenker’s own in-depth treatment of species counterpoint, many writers treated it as a rule-based discipline. In his introductory conversation with Josephus, Fux (alias Aloysius) defines counterpoint like this: “. . . a composition which is written strictly according to technical rules.”<sup>45</sup> The rule-based framework brought with it frequent invocations of exceptions, a theoretical point which proved disturbing for Schenker. Citing a passage from Albrechtsberger’s *Gründliche Anweisung zur Composition* (1790), Schenker demonstrates how his predecessor spells out a rule, only to invoke an exception in the sentence immediately following: “In strict composition, two notes of the same letter-name . . . are not permitted in succession in a single measure. . . . This rule, however, has two exceptions . . .” (CI: 3).<sup>46</sup>

In the *Meisterwerk* essay “Das Organische der Fuge,” Schenker critiques Marpurg’s landmark *Abhandlung von der Fuge* (1753-4). Though the discussion has shifted here from strict counterpoint to fugue, a form of free composition, Schenker rails

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<sup>45</sup> Johann Joseph Fux, “The Study of Counterpoint,” rev. ed., from *Gradus ad Parnassum*, trans. and ed. Alfred Mann (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1971): 23.

<sup>46</sup> “Auch sind im strengen Satze two Noten von einerley buchstaben als c c, d d, gleich nach einander. . . . Doch hat diese Regel wiederum two Ausnahmen. . . .” Schenker, *Kontrapunkt I*: 5.

against Marpurg, as he did against Albrechtsberger, for his reliance upon a theoretical framework of rules and exceptions:

Quite in the manner of the early theorists, [Marpurg] sets these up as case-by-case foreground *rules* with case-by-case *exceptions*. He still has no idea of a background, which alone can breathe true life into a fugue so that, like all forms of life, it has a necessary course—a fugue dictated by background *laws* that have nothing to do with existing foreground *rules and exceptions* [emphasis added]. . . .<sup>47</sup>

Schenker opposes the rule-and-exception framework on several grounds. In the case of Marpurg, Schenker criticizes his predecessor's failure to grasp music's essence: the background. Marpurg's failing then is not merely semantic but conceptual. An additional ground for criticism concerns the precise nature of rules and laws. Each constitutes a radically different basis for composition, as we shall soon see. Finally, the rule-and-exception framework produces what for Schenker was a disquieting narrative of the relationship between strict counterpoint and free composition. Schenker spells out this narrative in *Kontrapunkt I*, attacking Cherubini for failing to understand "the mission of contrapuntal teaching":

Is this rule of counterpoint—the prohibition of one or another interval—supposed to be binding also on free composition, or is it the task of contrapuntal theory merely to provide an initial approach to the problem? Is everything written after those earliest epochs to be ascribed only to "exceptions" and violations of allegedly inviolable "rules of composition"—in other words, to be regarded only as *badly written*? (CI: 75).<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Heinrich Schenker, "The Organic Nature of Fugue," trans. Hedi Siegel, in *The Masterwork in Music*, Vol. 2: 32. ["[Er] stellt auch die eigenen Grundsätze wieder ganz in der Art der Alten auf, d.h. nur als fallweise Vordergrundregeln mit fallweisen Ausnahmen—er ahnt noch nichts von jenem Hintergrund, der allein auch der Fuge wahres Leben spendet, notwendig so verlaufend, wie alles übrige Leben, und von hinter gründigen Gesetzen beherrscht, die mit den überkommenen Vordergrundregeln und Ausnahmen nichts zu schaffen habe. . . ." Heinrich Schenker, "Das Organische der Fuge," in *Das Meisterwerk in der Musik*, Vol. 2: 58.]

<sup>48</sup> "Soll diese Regel des Kontrapunkts, d.i. das Verbot von diesem oder jenem Intervall, noch immer auch den freien Satz binden, oder ist es Aufgabe der Kontrapunktslehre, bloss erst das

In other words, applying the *rules* of counterpoint to free composition brings an intuitively nonsensical conclusion: most of the music we know and value is badly written. It is not hard to imagine why Schenker found such a narrative troublesome. Indeed, in *Kontrapunkt I* Schenker proposes a solution to the impasse. He proclaims a new purpose for contrapuntal study and a new narrative for its relationship to free composition:

One sees, then, how one and the same basic phenomenon [*Urphänomen*] manifests itself in so many forms, yet without completely losing its identity in any of them! However much a given variant may conceal the basic type [*Urtypus*], it is still the latter alone that occasions and fructifies the new manifestation. But to reveal the basic type together with its variants, and [thereby] to uncover only prolongations of a fundamental law [*Urgesetz*], even where apparent contradictions hold sway—this alone is the task of counterpoint! (CI: 241).<sup>49</sup>

Key terms, which Schenker uses here synonymously, include basic/fundamental law, phenomenon, and type.<sup>50</sup> All are present in strict counterpoint; all appear in prolonged form in free composition. This new narrative for contrapuntal study replaced the rule-based framework, a feature of mechanics, with laws, a feature of the organic. To understand the foundational nature of this theoretical transformation and the import it

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Problem zu eröffnen? Sollte alles, was seit jenen ältesten Zeiten komponiert wurde, wirklich nur auf „Ausnahmen“ und Verstößen wider eine angeblich unumstößliche „Kompositionsregel“ beruhen, im Grunde also nur—schlecht geschrieben sein?” Schenker, *Kontrapunkt I*: 105.

<sup>49</sup> “Man sieht also, wie ein und dasselbe Urphänomen in so vielen Formen sich manifestiert und doch in keiner von ihnen sich ganz verliert! Will nun auch fürs erste die jeweilige Abwandlung noch so wenig den Urtypus erkennen lassen, gleichwohl ist es der letztere allein, der auch die neue Erscheinung zeitigt und befruchtet. Gerade aber den Urtypus samt dessen Abwandlungen aufzuzeigen, und eben nur Prolongationen eines Urgesetzes zu enthüllen, auch dort, wo scheinbar Widersprüche gegen dieses zu Tage treten, ist allein Aufgabe des Kontrapunktes!” Schenker, *Kontrapunkt I*: 315. Rothgeb translates *Urtypus* as basic form. In the translation given above I have changed it to basic type.

<sup>50</sup> These are terms that Pastille associates with the writings of Goethe. See William Pastille, “Ursatz: The Musical Philosophy of Heinrich Schenker”: 73-138. In these chapters Pastille discusses the influence of Goethe’s thought on Schenker, and especially the importance of morphology.

held for Schenker's theoretical enterprise, we need to know something of the history of rules and laws.

The rule/law distinction appears in literary criticism early in the nineteenth century. In his seminal criticism of Shakespeare's plays, August Wilhelm von Schlegel opposes mechanical and organic unities, denigrating the former because they depend upon rules.<sup>51</sup> When he demonstrates in Shakespeare's works the presence of the valued organic unities—unities that result from the operation of laws—Schlegel confers upon Shakespeare the early nineteenth-century's most prestigious stamp of approval.

Late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century philosophical discourse was similarly focused on the opposition of rules [*Regeln*] and laws [*Gesetze*]. Kant premised his critical philosophy upon a general concept of law "characterized by *objective universality* and *necessity* [emphasis added]." Kant's concept of law distinguishes theoretical laws from rules, and practical laws from rules and counsels. To convert a theoretical *rule* of relation into a *law* in Kant's system, the rule must be phrased in terms of causality. Thus, the rule "if the sun shines long enough upon a body it grows warm," phrased in terms of causality, becomes the law "the sun is by its light the cause of heat."<sup>52</sup> Features of Kant's definition important for this discussion include his distinction between rules and laws, and his invocation of universality, necessity, and causality as features of the latter.

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<sup>51</sup> Benziger, "Organic Unity": 36, 37.

<sup>52</sup> Immanuel Kant, on "Laws," from Howard Caygill, *A Kant Dictionary*, Blackwell Philosopher Dictionaries (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1995): 275. The example of a rule transformed into a law is from Kant's *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics*.

For Hegel, a rule differs from a law in that it admits exceptions ('As a rule . . .').<sup>53</sup> Rule involves undifferentiated uniformity; hence, regularity, which is closely related to symmetry. Regularity obtains in a series of parallel lines of equal length. Law, on the other hand, consists in a *necessary connection* between distinct features. Lawfulness is evident, for instance, in the irregular orbits of the planets.

Terms central to Kant's and Hegel's definitions of law—necessity, causality, and connection or coherence—circulate in many of Schenker's writings. In the quotation from "Das Organische der Fuge," cited on p. 212, we note him championing a fugue that, like all forms of life, has "a necessary course." A larger issue with which Schenker grappled throughout his career was the relative degree of causality present from the simplest two-voice exercise in strict counterpoint to free composition.<sup>54</sup> In "Geist" Schenker argued that music cannot be organic because it lacks causality. As his career as a music theorist progressed, however, he grew increasingly certain of a purely musical causality and, therewith, a defensible argument for an organic view of music. In the first volume of *Kontrapunkt* (1910), Schenker notes the causality evident in fourth-species counterpoint: ". . . it is prudent to find precisely in the dissonant syncopé a technical means of establishing a purely musical causality . . . (CI: 291)."<sup>55</sup> He argues further that

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<sup>53</sup> Hegel, on "Law, rule," in Michael Inwood, *A Hegel Dictionary*: 160.

<sup>54</sup> Kevin Korsyn relates Schenker's concern with causality to Kantian philosophy in his "Schenker and Kantian Epistemology," *Theoria* 3 (1988): 44-56.

<sup>55</sup> "Will man dem verborgenen Sinn der Entwicklungsgeschichte unserer Kunst näherkommen, so empfiehlt es sich, gerade in der dissonanten Synkope ein technisches Mittel rein musikalischer Kausalität zu sehen. . . ." Schenker, *Kontrapunkt I*: 376.

the syncope causes the “harmonies [to] appear to be linked more intimately and with seemingly greater necessity . . .” (CI: 291).<sup>56</sup>

A final term arising from the rule/law distinction is connection or coherence, indicated by the German *Zusammenhang* in Schenker’s writings. In his criticisms of Rameau, Schenker attacks a musical theory that fails to promote an understanding of connection:

It was an incapacity to appreciate the power of remote connections [*Zusammenhänge*], indeed, connections of any sort in music, for connection, while indispensable, entails physical pain, no less, for the man of chaos.<sup>57</sup>

In contrasting Rameau’s mechanical theory with organic processes, Schenker places at the center of the opposition organic cohesiveness (*Zusammenhanges*) and mechanical successions (*Folgen*). “. . . the mechanical nature of the theory was to lead to mechanical creativity!” he writes. “In place of an organic musical cohesiveness, there came to be only mechanical successions. . . .”<sup>58</sup> The difference is crucial to Schenker’s theory.

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<sup>56</sup> “Auch in dieser, ja selbst in der vorgeschrittensten, erscheinen die Harmonien desto inniger, scheinbar notwendiger verkettet. . . .” Schenker, *Kontrapunkt I*: 377. Causality is a central concern of *Freier Satz*. In the manuscript the last chapter is titled “*Von der musikalischen Kausalität: Rückblick und Epilog*.” I am grateful to William Rothstein for drawing this to my attention.

<sup>57</sup> Heinrich Schenker, “Rameau or Beethoven? Creeping Paralysis or Spiritual Potency in Music?” trans. Ian Bent, in *The Masterwork in Music*, Vol. 3: 5. [“Es war ein Versagen von der Wucht weiter Zusammenhänge, ja, vor dem Zusammenhang in der Musik überhaupt, der, obwohl unentbehrlich, dem Menschen des Chaos geradezu einen körperlichen Schmerz bedeutet.” *Idem*, “Rameau oder Beethoven? Erstarrung oder Geistiges Leben in der Musik?” in *Das Meisterwerk in der Musik*, Vol. 3: 17.]

<sup>58</sup> Schenker, “Rameau or Beethoven?”: 6. [“. . . der mechanische Stand der Lehre musste auch zu mechanischem Schaffen führen! Statt eines musikalisch-organischen Zusammenhanges gab es nur mechanische Folgen. . . .” Schenker, “Rameau oder Beethoven?”: 17.] Harald Krebs has noted Schenker’s increasingly vitriolic stance toward Rameau as his (Schenker’s) career progressed. Krebs suggests that Germany’s humiliating defeat in the First World War may very well have fueled Schenker’s anti-French sentiments. See Harald Krebs, “Schenker’s Changing View of Rameau: A Comparison of Remarks in *Harmony*, *Counterpoint*, and ‘Rameau or Beethoven?’” *Theoria* 3 (1988): 59-72.

Successions dictate motion from one musical event to the next but have no power to establish longer goals or to an effect a conclusion. Such would be the case with Rameau's perfect cadences, which propel themselves forward from one chord to the next but which lack a definite beginning and end.<sup>59</sup> Cohesiveness obtains where music is propelled forward by its motion toward specific goals, wherewith it demonstrates its possession of truly organic properties.

A lingering question in this discussion of laws is the source of their power. If Schenker is adamant about their immutability, he is less single-minded about the basis of their authority. The law of the passing tone, first in two-part second species and then in the "Bridges to Free Composition," illustrates some of the varied sources upon which Schenker draws.<sup>60</sup> It is noteworthy that, while discussing only a single law, he claims multiple sources for its authority. When introducing the passing tone in second species, for instance, Schenker summons the authority of Judaic and/or Christian religious texts, proclaiming: "In the beginning is consonance!"<sup>61</sup> For his purposes, the utterance

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<sup>59</sup> This holds true at least for the *Traité de l'harmonie*. In later writings Rameau introduced the concept of *ton régnant* which, in the resolution from *dominant-tonique* to *tonique* of the *ton régnant* signals an end, at least when the *Basse Continue* duplicates the route of the *Basse Fondamentale*. I am grateful to William Rothstein for this clarification.

<sup>60</sup> Schenker is inconsistent with his terminology. Sometimes he refers to the passing tone as a law, sometimes as a principle, and sometimes as a concept.

<sup>61</sup> There are at least three sources for this reference: (1) the first utterance in the book of Genesis: "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth"; (2) the Gospel of John 1.1: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God"; and, (3) Goethe, *Faust I*: lines 1224 ff. In this scene Faust is himself reading from the Gospel. The allusion to the Judaic Torah (first source) is in keeping with Schenker's "Mosaic aspirations," explored by Robert Snarrenberg in "Schenker's Senses of Concealment," *Theoria* 97 (1992). Wayne Alpern cites Schenker's tendency to view himself as "a musical Moses chosen to deliver the 'monotheistic doctrine of art from a Mount Sinai' by revealing its eternal commandments." Wayne Alpern, "Music Theory as a Mode of Law": The Case of Heinrich Schenker, Esq.," *Cardozo Law Review* 20 (1999): 1462.

requires no further explanation. In the next breath he appeals to the dialectical formula of nineteenth-century idealism:

*In the beginning is consonance, that is, agreement! Only after a consonance follows the antithesis, the dissonance, and ultimately agreement has the last word! [emphasis original] (CI: 184).<sup>62</sup>*

For Schenker, the passing tone displays the structure of Fichte's and Hegel's dialectical model. Its great importance lies in the fact that, more so than a simple extension and confirmation of the harmony through a consonant leap, its "transient independence increases the value and power of the unity of the two . . ." (CI: 183, 184).<sup>63</sup> According to this formulation, the passing tone would seem to possess metaphysical authority: its dissonant force initiates a dialectical necessity to return to a higher, more compellingly articulated consonance.

In the "Bridges to Free Composition" of *Kontrapunkt II* Schenker introduces a construct called "An Instance of Tying from a Dissonance." His Example 381 is given here as Example 4-5.



**Example 4-5**  
**"An Instance of Tying from a Dissonance"**

<sup>62</sup> "Am Anfang ist die Konsonanz, die Übereinstimmung! Erst auf eine Konsonanz folgt der Widerspruch, die Dissonanz, bis endlich Übereinstimmung das letzte Word behält!" Schenker, *Kontrapunkt I*: 248.

<sup>63</sup> "Vielmehr steigert die vorübergehende Selbständigkeit den Wert und die Kraft der von Anfang an angestrebten und doch wieder auch behaupteten Einheit beider Stimmen." Schenker, *Kontrapunkt I*: 247.

The construct involves a fourth-species syncope and what Schenker construes as an underlying passing-tone motion in the upper-most voice: E-D-C. When discussing the relative forces of the musical laws operative in the construct, the passing tone and the syncope, Schenker argues that “in view of the cohesiveness so strongly expressed between passing tone and the long path ahead, the significance of tying recedes behind that of the passing tone” (CII: 262).<sup>64</sup> Schenker does not spell out the source of the passing tone’s import. He merely comments that “the weight emanating from a passing tone *naturally* establishes from the outset the path to achievement of the *ultimate goal*” [emphasis added] (CII: 262).<sup>65</sup>

My earlier discussion of Schenker’s critique of Rameau drew attention to Schenker’s concern for what he terms organic cohesiveness. A central component of that

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<sup>64</sup> “Das weitaus wichtigste Ergebnis, zu dem obige Erscheinungen hinleiten, bleibt in grundsätzlicher Hinsicht aber dieses, dass sie uns zum erstenmal, und zwar noch bei einem C.F., die Möglichkeit zeigen, . . . wie angesichts eines so stark sich äussernden Zusammenhanges zwischen Durchgang und weit gestrecktem Weg die Überbindung als solche hinter den Durchgang zurücktritt.” Schenker, *Kontrapunkt II*: 253. An interesting conflict arises here between a statement Schenker makes in *Kontrapunkt I* and the one from *Kontrapunkt II*, cited here. In his chapter on fourth species in *Kontrapunkt I*, Schenker writes: “Considering that a seed of such propulsion was contained even in the simplest *passing motion* . . . , it is clear that the compelling force of the dissonant syncope must be viewed as incomparably stronger and more urgent” [emphasis original] (CI: 291).” [Lag ähnlich übrigens auch schon im allereinfachsten Durchgang ein Keim solchen Zwanges zur Fortschreitung . . . , so ist es klar, dass der Zwang der dissonanten Synkope als eine unvergleichlich stärkere und zwingendere Wirkung empfunden werden musste. KI: 376, 377.] According to this description, it is the syncope whose force is superior to that of the passing tone. A further confusion comes in Schenker’s discussion in KI of six transformations of the syncope. The final transformation—what he calls a “purely *rhythmic form*”—amounts to nothing more than an arbitrary rhythmic displacement, which would be described more accurately and more compellingly as simply an anticipation. (The example he cites is from Beethoven, Piano Sonata Op. 27 No. 2/II) (CI: 285.). In this form, the syncope lacks the “compelling force” that in his first description seems essential to the character of the syncope. As far as I can tell, Schenker makes no attempt to reconcile the contradiction.

<sup>65</sup> “. . . wie der von einem Durchgang ausgehende Druck naturgemäss den Weg bis zur Erreichung des letzten Zieles schon von vornherein festlegt. . . .” Schenker, *Kontrapunkt II*: 253.

cohesiveness is the achievement of goals. In his writings Schenker associates goals with life-forms, the absence of goals or the presence of only partial goals with the machine:

In its linear progressions music again mirrors the human soul in all its movements and transformations—“Everything ephemeral is only an image”—How different is the idol of today, the machine! With its effects it simulates the organic, but since its parts are directed toward only a partial goal, a partial achievement, it leads as a whole only to a sum [*Summe*], that has nothing in common with the human soul (*FC*: xxiii).<sup>66</sup>

The passing tone in the “Instance of Tying from a Dissonance” achieves its “weight,” then, from its possession of life-like qualities. In Schenker’s terms, it carries with it the impulse necessary to achieve its goals.

Claiming a lawful basis for counterpoint had far-reaching consequences for Schenker’s theories. Schenker inherited a theoretical tradition that failed to define systematically the boundaries between counterpoint and free composition. In his introduction to *Kontrapunkt I* he set as his first agenda item defining these boundaries. His second agenda item demands that he demonstrate connections between the two. It is at this juncture that laws (and concepts) make their signal contribution. First demonstrated in counterpoint, Schenker argues that the force of these laws holds in free composition, albeit in prolonged form. In postulating prolongations rather than exceptions, Schenker achieves more than a simple linguistic or semantic gain.

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<sup>66</sup> “In ihren Zügen spiegelt die Musik die Menschenseele in allen ihren Bewegungen und Wandlungen wieder—‘alles Vergängliche ist nur ein Gleichnis’—wie anders aber das Idol von heute, die Maschine: mit ihrer Wirkung täuscht zwar auch sie ein Organisches vor, da aber ihre Bestandteile auf je ein Teilziel, eine Teilleistung festgelegt sind, führt sie als Ganzes doch nur zu einer Summe, die mit der Menschenseele nichts gemeinsam hat!” Schenker, *Der freie Satz*: 19. The phrase in quotations—“alles Vergängliche ist nur ein Gleichnis”—is taken from the final lines of Goethe’s *Faust II*, the closing refrain sung by the Chorus Mysticus: “Alles Vergängliche / Ist nur ein Gleichnis; / Das Unzulängliche / Hier wird’s Ereignis; / Das Unbeschreibliche / Hier ist es getan; / Das Ewig-Weibliche / Ziehe uns hinan.” Goethe, *Faust II*, in *Goethes Werke*, Vol. 3: Lines 12104-12111. Goethe worked on the second volume of *Faust* intermittently from 1800-1831. It was published in 1832.

Prolongations support his argument for the continuity between counterpoint and free composition. Furthermore, it is here that we can observe the influence of Schenker's legal education. He writes of laws that one discovers in Nature, laws with features such as necessity, causality, and coherence, as defined by writers like Kant and Hegel. At the same time, however, the theory of prolongations directs attention to the interpretive character of laws, the necessity to elucidate in particular situations the relevance or applicability of a law. As in a society's legal system, laws exist on the books and yet require interpretation for individual cases. The music analyst must similarly operate as a judge, whose function it is to demonstrate how the laws of tonal music operate in both real and *geistig* realms.<sup>67</sup>

Schenker's invocation of laws accomplishes a significant gain for counterpoint within his theory. In positing counterpoint as the locus for laws fundamental to free composition, Schenker elevates counterpoint from a purely pedagogical discipline to one bound up with genuine artistic necessity. Seizing counterpoint from the mechanical realm to which he initially relegates it in "Geist," Schenker locates it now in the superior and universally valid purview of laws.

### Concepts

Closely related in function to laws are musical constructions Schenker terms concept (*Begriff*). The philosophical origin of the term and its equivalents lies in

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<sup>67</sup> Wayne Alpern notes in his article that some writers have shied away from investigating Schenker's legal education, in part because "music scholars untrained in the law have tended to exaggerate its rigidity and thus failed to accurately assess the influence of Schenker's legal education upon his musical development." Alpern, "Music Theory as a Mode of Law": 1467.

Socratic-Platonic philosophy.<sup>68</sup> The most familiar expression that comes down to us from this time is “Idea.”<sup>69</sup> Philosophers from Plato through to Locke and Leibniz adopted one of two principal stances with respect to Ideas: first, the mind has innate ideas, present without having been derived from previous experience; and second, the mind’s ideas are imprinted through experience. Plato’s philosophy fits the first of these categories. His theory of anamnesis (“recollection”) posits human knowledge of Ideas from a previous existence. Learning thus constitutes a process of recollection. Aristotle’s philosophy corresponds to the second of the two categories. His dependence on empiricist methodologies stemmed from his belief that knowledge of Ideas derives from observation, from sources outside the mind.

The seventeenth-century philosophers René Descartes (1596-1650) and John Locke (1634-1704) renewed basic tenets of Plato’s and Aristotle’s positions to account for the abstraction of ideas and notions from sensible experience. While Descartes posited innate ideas, Locke proposed two foundational beliefs: the unformed character of the human mind (the *tabula rasa*), and the certainty that learning occurs with external stimulation and imprinting. A significant terminological development came in the philosophy of Leibniz (1646-1716). Deliberately departing from the imagistic implications of the term “ideas,” Leibniz substituted the German *Begriff*, which translates the past participle of the Latin verb *concipere*: ‘to take to oneself, to take and hold.’

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<sup>68</sup> My discussion of concepts is based on these sources: J. Mittelstrass, “Begriff,” in *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*, Vol. 1, ed. Joachim Ritter (Basel: Schwabe & Co., 1971): Cols. 780-785; “Innate ideas,” “Ideas,” “Concept,” in Ted Honderich, ed., *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy*; “Concept,” in Howard Caygill, *A Kant Dictionary*; and “Concept,” in Michael Inwood, *A Hegel Dictionary*.

<sup>69</sup> A detailed history of Plato’s Ideas appears in David Ross, *Plato’s Theory of Ideas*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1953).

Leibniz defined concepts as ‘any representation of a thing,’ and he classified them according to their degrees of clarity, distinctness, completion, and adequacy. Christian Wolff (1679-1750) took up Leibniz’s neologism in his *Logic*. In this way it became a part of German philosophical language.

It was in the philosophy of Kant that concepts acquired a more stable definition. In a climate of competing empiricist and rationalist explanations, Kant, in his pre-critical writings, sought first and foremost to avoid the extremes of either group. He focused his attention on the human power to reflect on the form and content of experience. At this point Kant defined two classes of concepts: (1) derived or complex concepts, open to analysis; and (2) simple and unanalyzable/basic or elementary concepts. Over a period of ten years Kant continued to study the issue, and eventually formulated his theory of categories to explain what he had earlier termed “basic concepts.” His theorizing at this point included two types of concepts: (1) derived or empirical concepts, drawn from experience by means of comparison, reflection, and abstraction; and (2) basic or ‘pure’ concepts, not abstracted from experience, and investigated by metaphysics. A lingering problem that remained for Kant was the role of intuition. What relation do intuitions have to the pure concepts? Kant adopted the position that concepts (*noeta*) anticipate the shape in which intuitions (*aestheta*) are presented to the understanding.

Nineteenth-century philosophers of art put an especially provocative spin on issues of necessary truth, *a priori* knowledge, and innate ideas. According to the epistemology favored by Schlegel and Coleridge, ideas and forms are innate in the mind of the artist. The mind of the artist is, in turn, a mirror of the Divine Mind.<sup>70</sup> The artist

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<sup>70</sup> Benziger, “Organic Unity”: 37.

thus becomes a person apart from society, set aside for the priestly function of transmitting fundamental truths to society.

How does Schenker's notion of concepts fit into this innate ideas/blank slate controversy? His discussion of Nature and the artist in *Harmonielehre* is instructive. For Schenker, Nature is the source of the concepts he terms *Stufen*. Leading up to his explication of the *Stufen*, Schenker clarifies Nature's role in the development of the tonal system. In addition, he posits Nature as the source from which the artist divines artistic truth:

Nature's help to music consisted of nothing but a hint, a counsel forever mute. . . . No one could exaggerate, hence, the admiration and gratitude we owe to *the intuitive power with which the artists have divined nature*. . . . This hint, then, was dropped by Nature in the form of the so-called "overtone series." This much-discussed phenomenon, which constitutes Nature's only source for music to draw upon, *is much more familiar to the instinct of the artist than to his consciousness* [emphasis added] (*H*: 20).<sup>71</sup>

Schenker's description shows his affinity with his nineteenth-century forebears. Like them, he attributes to artists a special predilection for artistic truth.<sup>72</sup> Also in keeping with nineteenth-century proclivities, Schenker locates this capacity outside of the artist's consciousness, ascribing it variably to "instinct" or to "intuitive power." This latter emphasis recalls Kant's concern to define intuition's role in apprehending concepts. For

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<sup>71</sup> "Sie ist nichts mehr als ein Wink, ein ewig stummer Rat. . . . Daher die Kraft der Intuition, mit der die Künstler hier die Natur errieten, nicht hoch, nicht dankbar genug anzuerkennen und zu bewundern ist. . . . Ihren Wink aber deponierte die Natur in der sogenannten Obertonreihe. Diese vielgenannte Naturerscheinung, welche so die einzige Quelle der Natur bildet, woraus die Musik schöpft, ist seltsamerweise dem Instinkt der Künstler vertrauter als ihrem Bewusstsein. . . ." Schenker, *Harmonielehre*: 32, 33.

<sup>72</sup> Schenker would return to this theme numerous times in his later writings. In the *Meisterwerk* essays, for instance, he became increasingly obsessed with the person of the genius whose "inner gaze is directed ever upwards, towards the Creator. . . ." Schenker, "Miscellanea": 69. A small but significant change has taken place in Schenker's thought: he speaks here not of Nature but of God. This religious dimension is especially significant for Schenker's last writings.

Schenker, Nature is the source into which the artist's instinct and intuition tap to apprehend such concepts as *Stufen*.

### Prolongation

Two examples of prolongation, the passing tone and the syncope, flesh out Schenker's ideas of how laws and concepts first discovered in strict counterpoint continue to operate in the greater time-spans and complexities of free composition. The dissonant passing tone, first introduced in the space of three beats, expands in Schenker's theory to include passages occupying two bars (an instance of tying from a dissonance) and, eventually, to entire sections of works in free composition. One aspect of the expansion occurs in time. The second-theme area of a sonata form, typically represented by melodic scale-degree 2 (^2) combined with scale-step motion to V, supplies a familiar example of such an expansion in time.<sup>73</sup> Schenker's figure 154/2 (my Example 4-6), an analytic example from the first movement of Beethoven's Piano Sonata in C Major, Op. 2 No. 3, charts the course of musical events through the first ninety measures.

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<sup>73</sup> Schenker affirms the passing-tone status of scale-degree 2 when discussing specific characteristics of the middleground. In his § 91 he writes: "Since it is associated with the fundamental structure, the first ^2 remains true to the law of the passing tone within the space of a third; it never takes on the character of a lower neighboring note. The passing tone and neighboring tone are entirely different concepts." Schenker, *Free Composition*: 37. ["Auf Grund der Fühlungnahme mit dem Ursatz bleibt die erste ^2 dem Gesetz des Durchganges im Terzraum treu und begibt sich dadurch des Charakters einer tieferen Nebennote von vornherein: Durchgang und Nebennote sind ganz verschiedene Begriffe." Schenker, *Der freie Satz*: 72.]

**Example 4-6**  
**Beethoven's Piano Sonata in C Major, Op. 2, no. 3**

The passing tone  $\hat{2}$ , whose appropriate supporting harmony arrives at measure 47, is the primary melodic event of the second theme area. Though not literally present in the music for the entire forty-eight measures (mm. 43-90), as one of the tones of the *Urlinie* the second scale degree manifests a *geistig* presence through the duration of the second theme. Furthermore, it is subject to such transformations as changing octaves and to such prolongational techniques as descent into an inner voice. In this setting, then, the passing tone vastly extends the half-measure allotment for a passing tone established by Schenker in the second-species exercise.

Schenker expands the passing tone in tonal space as well. Already in *Kontrapunkt I* he claims that free composition “emancipates the passing dissonance from the postulate of the second” (CI: 184).<sup>74</sup> In the second volume of *Meisterwerk*, in the essay “Further Considerations of the Urlinie II,” Schenker details the prolongation of the law of the passing tone from passing-tone spans belonging to strict counterpoint—the third and fourth—to the linear progressions of free composition which, though greater in length, derive yet from the law of the dissonant passing note: “fifth- and sixth-

<sup>74</sup> “Was den freien Satz anbelangt, so emanzipiert er die durchgehende Dissonanz zunächst vom Postulat der Sekund. . . .” Schenker, *Kontrapunkt I*: 248.

progressions (a sixth-progression is an inversion of the third-progression), seventh- and ninth-progressions representing steps of a second and descending register transfers expressed as octave-progressions. . . .” He comments that “free composition prolongs with the greatest freedom the law of retention of the primary note,” and that, in all instances of a linear progression, “the primary note is to be retained until the point at which the concluding note appears.”<sup>75</sup>

These examples contribute significant details to Schenker’s theory of the passing tone, as well as to his tonal theories generally. First, they demonstrate Schenker’s efforts to maintain continuity between principles of strict counterpoint and those of free composition. In both the sonata-form movement and the passing motion spanning the interval of a ninth, the primary note is retained spiritually/mentally until the concluding note appears. Second, the examples and their accompanying explanations argue for the increasing importance of concepts and spiritual or mental tones as essential components that underlie tonal music. Schenker begins the second *Urlinie* essay like this:

The *geistig* unity of a linear progression signifies a *geistig* tension between the beginning and end of the progression. . . . This tension alone engenders musical coherence.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> Heinrich Schenker, “Further Considerations of the Urlinie II,” trans. John Rothgeb, in *The Masterwork in Music*, Vol. 2: 10,1. [“Mit grösster Freiheit prolongiert der freie Satz das Gesetz vom Festhalten des Kopftones, . . .;” “Der freie Satz fügt den vom strengen Satz übernommenen Zügen im Terz- und Quartraum prolongierend nun auch noch Quint- und Sextzüge (Sextzug=Terzzug in Umkehrung), Sept- und Nonenzüge für Sekundschrirte, Höher- und Tieferlegungen in Oktavzügen hinzu. Die Füllung dieser Züge geschieht mittels Durchgängen, die nun einen freieren Satz führen;” and “. . . ist doch der Kopftone des Zuges so lange fortzutragen, bis der Endton erscheint.” Schenker, “Fortsetzung der Urlinie-Betrachtungen,” in *Das Meisterwerk in der Musik*, Vol. 2: 26; 11.]

<sup>76</sup> Schenker, “Further Considerations of the Urlinie II”: 1. [“Die geistige Einheit eines Auskomponierungszuges bedeutet eine geistige Spannung zwischen Anfang und Ende des Zuges: ist doch der Kopftone des Zuges so lange fortzutragen, bis der Endton erscheint. Diese Spannung allein schafft den musikalischen Zusammenhang. . . .” Schenker, “Fortsetzung der Urlinie-Betrachtungen”: 11.] Rothgeb translates “geistige” as “conceptual.”

While strict counterpoint in a two-voice framework depends upon aural retention of the initiating cantus firmus pitch in a passing-tone setting—whether the counterpoint appears in the upper or the lower voice—free composition depends upon spiritual or mental retention of the *Stufe*. Acoustical realities (physical, corporeal), sufficient for the cantus firmus pitches of the counterpoint exercise which restrict passing-tone dissonances to just one beat, do not maintain their force in the prolonged time- and interval spans of free composition.

Fourth-species resolutions in the mixed species provide an example of prolongation as it relates to concepts. The following is from Schenker's commentary in *Kontrapunkt II*. His accompanying models are given here as Examples 4-7 and 4-8.

Regardless of whether the second half-note continues the harmony of the downbeat, as here [Example 328] or introduces a new one [Example 329], at the downbeat where the dissonance appears, the content originally associated with the syncope -9 or -4 (that is, -9-8; -4-3) is nevertheless conceptually fulfilled, so that even with voice leadings in which . . . the resolving upbeat shows an interval different from 8 or 3, the fundamental concepts -9-8, -4-3 are nevertheless retained in their full purity in our imagination despite such a resolution. The essence of the syncopes -9 and -4 in this sense, therefore, remains completely untouched by the voice leading at the upbeat. . . . what must be seen in the voice leading of our examples is a conflation of two acts, thus an *abbreviation*, which, without canceling the fundamental concepts -9-8 or -4-3, nevertheless effects a modification in their external appearance, and in this sense introduces a prolongation [emphasis added] (CII: 213).<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> “. . . geht auf dem Niederstreich wo die Dissonanz in Erscheinung tritt, der mit der Synkope -9 beziehungsweise -4 ursprünglich verbundene Inhalt -9-8, -4 -3 dennoch begrifflich in Erfüllung, so dass selbst bei Stimmführung, wo . . . der lösende Aufstreich ein anderes Intervall als 8 oder 3 zeigt, sich in unserer Vorstellung trotz solcher Lösung gleichwohl der Urbegriff -9-8, -4-3 in seiner vollen Reinheit gegenwärtig erhält. Das Wesen der Syncopen -9 and -4 bleibt in diesem Sinne also von dem durch die Stimmführung nachträglich herangebrachten Intervall des Aufstreiches völlig unberührt . . . vielmehr hat man in der Stimmführung unserer Beispiele eine Zusammenziehung zweier Akte, also eine *Abbreviation* zu sehen, die, ohne dem Urbegriff -9-8 oder -4-3 aufzuheben, gleichwohl aber, wie man sieht, eine Veränderung in dessen äusserer



**Example 4-7 (Schenker's Example 328)**  
**Syncopations in Mixed Species**



**Example 4-8 (Schenker's Example 329)**  
**Syncopations in Mixed Species**

In these examples, the “real” details of the music, the notes on the page, depart from the requirements of strict counterpoint. In the first, the second-species F is dissonant with the fourth-species syncopated G on the downbeat. Strict counterpoint requires that the F remain stationary until the dissonant syncopation resolves. Instead, it moves to a new pitch on the upbeat, without, however, changing the harmony. In Example 4-8, the second-species F moves on the upbeat and produces a new harmony. In both cases, Schenker accounts for the anomalous resolutions with a theoretical tenet he calls *abbreviation*.<sup>78</sup> The examples cited here imply a temporal succession of events: first, resolution of the suspension; second, the motion of the lower voice. Abbreviation

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Erscheinung bewirkt und in diesem Sinne eine Prolongation schafft.” Schenker, *Kontrapunkt II*: 207, 208.

<sup>78</sup> The concept of abbreviation is not original with Schenker. It occurs in the writings of a number of historical theorists, C.P.E. Bach prominent among them.

transforms the succession into a simultaneity. From the perspective of the listener the resolution does not appear in the surface of the music; instead, it resides in her imagination or is “fulfilled conceptually.”

Schenker’s argument for these syncopes encapsulates a foundational principle in his theory: for Schenker, concepts, like eternally valid principles, exist as entities apart from any specific instantiation. The music analyst, then, in coming to understand a musical passage, must differentiate the specific compositional realization from the concept that is its basis. In keeping with this differentiation between concept and musical realization, Schenker describes prolongations as modifications in external appearance. The inner essence remains untouched. In this regard, Schenker’s notion of a concept resembles Plato’s Ideas: both retain their purity regardless of their instantiation in the corporeal world.<sup>79</sup>

Schenker’s theory of laws and concepts depends upon a multi-dimensional view of music, which he conceives most simply as background and foreground. An aspect of this formulation especially significant for the current study is the historic association of the surface with the mechanical and of the background with the organic. August Wilhelm von Schlegel, setting a precedent for much organicist criticism in the nineteenth century in his *Vorlesungen über deutsche Literatur und Kunst*, privileged events beneath the surface. He attacked dramatists whose works “reveal *on their surface* a mechanically perfect chain of causes and effects [emphasis added].”<sup>80</sup> Schlegel locates mechanics on the surface; organic coherence lies beneath.

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<sup>79</sup> William Pastille discusses this aspect of Schenker’s thought in “Ursatz: The Musical Philosophy of Heinrich Schenker”: 20.

<sup>80</sup> Benziger: 39.

Schlegel devotes his essay to a study of ancient Greek drama, completed artistic products passed down through millennia. His concern, however, lies not only with the finished artistic product but also with the artistic process. Schlegel believes that the artist “should create as does nature itself, developing his characters from that bit of the true *natura naturans* which is his own soul, and the external effects will take care of themselves.”<sup>81</sup> Creating “from the soul,” beginning from within, ensures that surface effects exhibit the cohesiveness of their subterranean origin.

Echoes of Schlegel’s background/foreground distinction reverberate in many of Schenker’s texts. In his attack on Marpurg (cited above, p. 212) Schenker locates laws in the background (the realm of the organic), rules and exceptions in the foreground (the purview of the mechanical). Excerpts from *Der freie Satz* contribute additional models:

Thus, in the foreground, coherence lies behind the tones, as, in speech, the coherence of thought lies behind the words (*FC*: 6).

Is it not strict counterpoint alone which permits us to recognize the real intervals behind those on the surface? . . . (*FC*: 16).

The forms of the fundamental structure represent a primordial state which exists beneath all voice-leading transformations (*FC*: 17).<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Both quotations are from Benziger, “Organic Unity”: 39. *Natura naturans* denotes creative energy; *natura naturata* signifies created form. The distinction originates with Spinoza; Coleridge came to it by way of Friedrich Schelling. See Lawrence Kramer, “The Strange Case of Beethoven’s *Coriolan*,” *The Musical Quarterly* 79 (1995): 278, n. 15. Creating “from the soul” recalls Goethe’s formulation in the introduction to the first issue of the periodical *Propyläen*. There his interest lies with the artist who can penetrate to the depths of his own soul. See discussion above, pp. 153, 154.

<sup>82</sup> “Also steckt jeglicher Zusammenhang im Vordergrund gleichsam hinter den Tönen wie in der Sprache hinter den Worten.”

“Und ist es nicht auch der strenge Satz allein, der uns hinter vorgeschobenen Intervallen die eigentlichen erkennen lässt. . . ?”

“Die Ursatzformen stellen einen Zustand dar, der noch vor allem Stimmführungsverwandlungen liegt.” Schenker, *Der freie Satz*: 31, 46, 48, respectively. Here I have cited excerpts from *Der freie Satz*. The formulation is not unique to this publication, however. As early as the introduction to *Counterpoint I*, Schenker argued that free composition constitutes only a

. . . a sequence of tones cannot live in the foreground unless the total tension of the fundamental linear progression provides it with breath (*FC*: 13).<sup>83</sup>

In the first two Schenker suggests a region *behind the surface* in which coherence and the “real intervals” reside. In the third he invokes a primordial state that exists (conceptually) prior to the transformations that appear in the surface of the music. Finally, Schenker asserts in the fourth quotation the primacy of the background. It is from the background that the organic originates; it is this same background which is the source for laws.

As we noted in Hoffmann’s review of Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony, the background or inner structure of music is not immediately or readily accessible. Schenker has this complaint about the commonplace man:

[t]he commonplace man always hankers after rules and schemas. If one shows him how the genuine rule lies only behind the surface particulars, then he rejects such a rule because he does not have the intellectual [*geistigen*] eyes with which to perceive it. He wants rules that stare him right in the face, rules that stick out in the foreground.<sup>84</sup>

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prolongation of counterpoint and, furthermore, that “those who have *true understanding*, see [in free composition] the fundamental contrapuntal [laws] *profoundly* and *mystically* at work in the background [emphasis added].” Schenker, *Counterpoint I*: 13. [Ähnlich formen ja auch die neuen Gewalten, die der freie Satz in der Musik mit sich bringt, eine scheinbar neue Ordnung, und dennoch sieht der Kenner im Hintergrunde tief und mystisch die grundlegenden kontrapunktischen Gesetze wirken. . . .” Schenker, *Kontrapunkt I*: 21.]

<sup>83</sup> “Keine Tonfolge lebte im Vordergrund, wenn wir die Gesamtspannung des Urlinie-Zuges nicht ihren Atem einbliese. . . .” Schenker, *Der freie Satz*: 43.

<sup>84</sup> Schenker, “Miscellanea”: 75. [“Der Durchschnittsmensch verlangt immer nach der Regel, nach dem Schema. Zeigt man ihm nun, wie erst hinter dem Besonderen die wahre Regel liege, so lehnt er eine solche Regel ab, weil er sie mit seinem geistigen Auge nicht wahrnehmen kann: die Regel will er im äussersten Vordergrund, dicht vor seinem Auge haben.” Schenker, “Vermischtes”: 114.] Schenker uses *Regel* here in a sense that in other contexts denotes law.

In this he carries forward the tenet expressed powerfully in Hoffmann's review of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony that "only a very profound study of the inner structure of Beethoven's music unfolds the high rational awareness of the master. . . ."<sup>85</sup>

### III. Counterpoint as Metaphor and Metaphysics

In "Geist," Schenker attributes to counterpoint aspects of both the mechanical and the organic. As an exercise, counterpoint compares to finger drill at the piano; as a component of Bach's compositional style, it constitutes the music's soul. As late as *Kontrapunkt* II (published in 1922, but begun earlier), Schenker maintained his interest in counterpoint as pedagogical training ground, a discipline centered on the exercise and one designed to exemplify simply and clearly the principles and laws that constitute the basis for free composition. When defined according to these terms, counterpoint continues to exist as a domain distinct from and even opposite to free composition. At the same time, however, and increasingly after he published the second volume of *Kontrapunkt*, Schenker imputed to counterpoint organic qualities in both metaphorical and metaphysical senses.

Even when advocating counterpoint as a pedagogical discipline, Schenker seizes upon a potent organicist image:

Here one sees again the fact, already familiar from organic nature, that *it is indispensable to pass through an embryonic stage of development* [emphasis added] (CI: 10, 11).<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> Cited in Chapter 2, p. 49, n. 6.

<sup>86</sup> "Wie man sieht, wiederholt sich auch darin die schon aus der organischen Natur bereits bekannte Tatsache, dass das Durchlaufen eines embryonischen Stadiums unerlässlich ist!" Schenker, *Kontrapunkt* I: 17.

Schenker's metaphoric association between organic nature and counterpoint study is superficially straightforward. Conceived of as embryonic, counterpoint comes first in the composer's musical education. When it becomes the source of "organic continuity" later in the artist's life, however, revitalizing him at a time when his creative powers might otherwise fade and die, it evinces an enduring power that pushes the figurative relationship to a new, metaphysical level. Imbued with a creative force that "increase[s] the content of [the artist's] life and art until the end,"<sup>87</sup> counterpoint assumes a role much like that of Herder's organic power that, even in the finished product, is present as a "vital power . . . that continues to display itself actively."<sup>88</sup> The laws of counterpoint are embryonic not only because they come first but also because they constitute a first stage of growth and development. Later stages build upon this initial impetus, giving rise to

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<sup>87</sup> The passage in its entirety: "One can go further still: lack of technique penetrates artists to the core. When an artist has reached his fortieth year, he becomes listless, at odds with art, at odds with life. He does not know what to do; there is no longer a goal for him; all powers decline. He lacks an organic continuity in pursuing a clear goal in life; he ages and dies. . . . Wherever one looks today, a burial ground of artists! . . . And all because the artist neglected in his youth to base his art on a sound foundation that could revitalize him time and time again even in later years. How different, on the other hand, are our masters! Just see how, as a true artist, each of them—to paraphrase a line from the Song of Solomon—'ascends like a column of smoke,' increasing the content of his life and art until the end, ever richer, ever more perfect. This is the blessing of what I would like to call technique." Schenker, *CI*: xxii, xxiii. ["Ja, man kann noch weiter gehen und sagen: der Mangel an Technik rächt sich an den Künstlern bis ins Mark! Hat ein Künstler von heute bis 40. Lebensjahr erreicht, so ist er missmutig, zerfallen mit der Kunst, zerfallen mit dem Leben; er weiss nicht, was weiter beginnen, kein Ziel schwingt sich mehr in ihm auf, alle Kräfte versagen; es fehlt ihm an organischer Kontinuität, an einer geradlinigen Fortsetzung seines Lebensinhaltes; er wird ein Greis, er ist—tod. . . . Wo man heute hinblickt, ein Leichenfeld von Künstlern! . . . Das alles aber nur, weil der Künstler es in der Jugend versäumt hat, seine Kunst auf eine rechtschaffeneren Basis zu stellen, die ihn dann im späteren Alter immer wieder hätte regenerieren können. Dagegen wie anders die Gestalten unserer Meister! Man sehe nur, wie jeder von ihnen, ein wirklicher Künstler, um ein Wort aus dem Hohenlied zu gebrauchen, 'wie ein gerader Rauch aufsteige,' den Inhalt seines Lebens und seiner Kunst bis ans Ends immerzu steigernd, immer voller und vollendeter! Ja, das ist der Sagen dessen, was allein ich wahre 'Technik' nennen möchte!" Schenker, *Kontrapunkt I*: XVIII.]

<sup>88</sup> Herder, *Reflections*: 21.

something more dynamic and mature, something which may now bear little surface resemblance to its earliest beginnings.

Schenker introduces this notion of counterpoint as the source for ongoing vitality in the introduction to *Kontrapunkt I*, but it continues to hold force through much of his career. As late as the *Meisterwerk* essay “The Art of Improvisation,” he writes:

This generation has not the slightest inkling that all its despair and impotency, the tormented quest for that which is ever different . . . originates simply in the incapacity for the artistic linearization of tonal concepts that are given in nature.<sup>89</sup>

Linearization constitutes the contrapuntal element. According to this description, the entire culture suffers from its failure to produce artists capable of tapping into the energy supplied by the triad of Nature and the laws of counterpoint.<sup>90</sup>

Schenker carries forward this metaphoric/metaphysical description of counterpoint when he describes its role in free composition. Here, counterpoint no longer functions as an exercise. Instead, its principles are embodied in specific musical constructs: the linear progression, to which category the *Urlinie* belongs; and the *Ursatz*, which combines the *Urlinie* and *Bassbrechung* contrapuntally. An excerpt from *Der freie Satz* describes important features of the linear progression:

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<sup>89</sup> Heinrich Schenker, “The Art of Improvisation,” trans. Richard Kramer, in *The Masterwork in Music*, Vol. 1: 2. [Das Geschlecht ahnt nicht, dass alle seine Verzweiflung und Ohnmacht, die quälende Lust nach immer anderem . . . bloss vom Unvermögen zur künstlerischen Horizontalisierung naturgegebener Klangideen herrührt.” Schenker, “Die Kunst der Improvisation,” in *Das Meisterwerk in der Musik*, Vol. 1: 11.]

<sup>90</sup> In *Wittgenstein's Vienna* (New York: 1937), Allan Janik and Stephen Toulmin argue that, in the early twentieth century, “a critique of any of the arts was implicitly a critique of culture and society as a whole (197).” Schenker’s writings clearly exemplify this trend, though for him the critique was frequently explicit. Cited in Nicholas Cook, “Schenker’s Theory of Music as Ethics,” *Journal of Musicology* 7 (1989): 420.

In every linear progression is the eternal form of life—birth to death. The linear progression begins, lives its own existence [*Dasein*] in the passing tones, ceases when it has reached its goal—this is organic like all life (*FC*: 44).<sup>91</sup>

Here Schenker compares the form of the linear progression to that of life forms generally.

In the second sentence he anthropomorphizes the musical construct: the linear progression not only exhibits the *form* of organic life, but it is itself alive and lives its own life. He envisions a three-stage life process: beginning, life in the form of passing tones, cessation upon reaching the goal.<sup>92</sup>

Equating musical life with human and biological life carries forward a theme developed in many of Schenker's writings. It is, moreover, an obvious way in which he considers music to be organic. In *Kontrapunkt II*, an analogy expresses the relationship most simply: “. . . in the life of tones, as in life generally, any stronger effect drives a weaker one into the background” (*CII*: 40).<sup>93</sup> In the preface to *Harmonielehre* Schenker conveys the relationship more vividly. He stresses “the biological factor in the life of the tones,” and claims that “We should get used to the idea that tones have lives of their own, more independent of the artist's pen in their vitality than one would dare to believe (*H*:

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<sup>91</sup> “In jedem Zug ist die ewige Lebensformel: Geburt und Ende gegeben. Der Zug setzt ein, lebt in den Durchgängen sein eigentliches Dasein und hört auf, wenn er sein Ziel erreicht hat—das ist organisch wie alles Leben.” Schenker, *Der freie Satz*: 81.

<sup>92</sup> For Schenker, the presence of goals constitutes a defining feature of life forms. It is on the basis of this criterion that he distinguishes the machine from the organism. (See discussion above, p. 220, and n. 66.) In another passage he argues: “The *goal* and the course to the goal are primary. Content comes afterward: without a goal there can be no content.” Schenker, *Free Composition*: 5. [“Das Ziel, der Weg ist das Erste, in zweiter Reihe erst kommt der Inhalt: ohne Ziel kein Inhalt.” Schenker, *Der freie Satz*: 29.]

<sup>93</sup> “Dadurch wird nun neuerdings bestätigt, dass im Tonleben, wie im Leben überhaupt, jede stärkere Wirkung die schwächere in den Hintergrund drängt.” Schenker, *Kontrapunkt II*: 42. Schenker introduces this analogy in his discussion of the relative strength of linear and harmonic events.

xxv).”<sup>94</sup> Here Schenker locates the tones in the real world, attributing a biological factor to their life. In his introduction to *Kontrapunkt I*, Schenker claims that “. . . compositions (which seemingly belong to a transcendental world) often have a far longer life than human generations, and that, therefore, they have to be understood almost as animate creatures, just as human beings themselves” (CI: xix).<sup>95</sup> His description contains a striking paradox: the compositions “seemingly belong to a transcendental world,” but at the same time “have to be understood almost as animate creatures, just as human beings themselves.” He seems unable, or unwilling, to locate them in either the transcendental or the real realm.

Schenker reveals an additional characteristic of linear progressions in *Der freie Satz* when he posits a reciprocal relationship in the compositional act:

In the linear progressions the composer lives his own life as well as that of the linear progressions. And, conversely, their life must be his, if they are to signify life to us (*FC*: 5).<sup>96</sup>

Positing reciprocity between the composer and the linear progressions makes more explicit and more profound the equal terms on which the composer and the music relate. Their individual lives are not merely parallel, but are profoundly bound up with one another.

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<sup>94</sup> “Besonderen Wert glaubte ich auf die biologischen Momente im Leben der Töne durchgängig legen zu sollen. Möchte man sich endlich doch mit dem Gedanken befreunden, dass die Töne wirkliches Eigenleben haben, das in seiner Animalität vom Künstler unabhängiger erscheint, als man es sich anzunehmen getraute!” Schenker, *Harmonielehre*: vi.

<sup>95</sup> “. . . dass die Lebensdauer der scheinbar nur in einer übersinnlichen Welt hängenden Tongebilde nicht selten die menschlicher Generationen weit übertrifft und dass sie daher irgendwie fast für Lebewesen zu nehmen sind, ebenso wie die Menschen selbst; . . .” Schenker, *Kontrapunkt I*: x.

<sup>96</sup> “In den Zügen lebt der Komponist sein eigenes Leben wie das der Züge, also ist umgekehrt ihr Leben das seine, wie sie denn auch uns wieder Leben bedeuten sollen.” Schenker, *Der freie Satz*: 29.

Schenker had much invested in this reciprocity between the composer and his music. In *Der freie Satz* he writes: "Music is not only an object of theoretical consideration. It is subject, as we ourselves are subject" (*FC*: 9).<sup>97</sup> In *The Ideology of the Aesthetic* Terry Eagleton locates this tendency to treat the work of art as a subject in the late eighteenth century, especially as developed in the philosophy of Kant:

For Kant . . . the disinterested gaze which reads the world purely as form is a way of eliciting the object's enigmatic purposiveness, lifting it out of the web of practical functions in which it is enmeshed so as to endow it with something of the self-determining autonomy of a subject. It is by virtue of this crypto-subjectivity that Kant's aesthetic object 'hails' individuals, speaks meaningfully to them, assures them that Nature is not after all entirely alien to their preoccupations.<sup>98</sup>

The tendency to treat inanimate objects as subjects extended far beyond aesthetics.

Fichte, whose writings Schenker knew, held a similar view of his subject matter, claiming that his topic of his philosophical conversation was "a living and active thing which engenders insights from and through itself, and which the philosopher merely contemplates."<sup>99</sup>

An additional aspect of reciprocity is exhibited by the tendency for writers of the early nineteenth century to attribute soul to artworks. This contributes significantly to the artwork's potential to function as a subject. In comparing the organism to the machine (see above, p. 220), Schenker condemns the machine because it has nothing in common with the human soul. He expresses this view especially pointedly in *Der freie Satz*.

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<sup>97</sup> "Die Musik ist nicht allein Object einer theoretischen Betrachtung, sie ist genau so Subjekt, wie wir selbst Subjekt sind." Schenker, *Der freie Satz*: 36.

<sup>98</sup> Terry Eagleton, *The Ideology of the Aesthetic* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990): 169. Cited in Korsyn, "Schenker's Organicism Reexamined": 90, 91.

<sup>99</sup> Fichte, *Science of Knowledge*: 30. For German original, see Chapter 2, p. 87, n. 78.

Already in the first volume of *Kontrapunkt*, however, he confronts issues of soul in music. In a description of the cantus firmus he writes:

In the cantus firmus we encounter a spare melodic beauty burdened with the purpose of an exercise, but a beauty nonetheless. The *little organism*, produced under observance of so many restrictions, *still has its soul* [emphasis added] (CI: 95).<sup>100</sup>

An essential feature of the cantus firmus that imputes to it an organic quality is its possession of a soul. One writer commenting on issues of romanticism and transcendence has termed this habit of attributing soul to inanimate objects “an ingenious and often unconscious reflex of metaphorical transposition.”<sup>101</sup> Schenker, however, frequently treated the comparison quite literally, as in his description of counterpoint as pedagogical discipline that pushes the organic description beyond the metaphorical to the metaphysical (see above, p. 233-235).<sup>102</sup> This proclivity pervaded his writing for his entire career.

One final aspect of the reciprocity between artist and artwork concerns the unique role of the genius in society. Schenker’s *Meisterwerk* essays are replete with references to the separation of the genius from his cultural milieu. In the *Miscellanea* from Volume 3 Schenker contrasts the genius with creative artists in the broadest sense. Creative artists receive applause and acclaim from their audiences, claims Schenker. He terms this “a reversing of the current of their own energies.” The genius cannot expect such a

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<sup>100</sup> “Wir haben eben im C.f. zwar eine mit einem Aufgabezweck belastete karge Melodieschönheit, aber immerhin eine. Der kleine, mit Beobachtung so vieler Verbote künstlich hergestellte Organismus hat dennoch auch seine Seele!” Schenker, *Kontrapunkt I*: 134. Rothbeg’s translation gives “Seele” as animation.

<sup>101</sup> Thomas Weiskel, *The Romantic Sublime: Studies in the Structure and Psychology of Transcendence* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985): 2. Cited in Korsyn, “Schenker’s Organicism Reexamined”: 89.

<sup>102</sup> See also the discussion of metaphor in Chapter 1, p. 20.

response. Because he works with such intensity, no audience could possibly “give him back applause and acclaim at the same intensity as the energies that stream into his works.”<sup>103</sup> How, then, does he restore his creative energy? Through counterpoint. In the introduction to *Kontrapunkt I*, Schenker argues that instruction in counterpoint provides an ongoing source of creative energy. In later writings, Schenker maintains counterpoint’s centrality, but he locates its power in the specific construct of the *Ursatz*. Like Herder’s organic creative force, the *Ursatz* is ever present “in the creative act. . . . The *Ursatz* is always creating, always present and active (*FC*: 18).”<sup>104</sup>

Schenker’s efforts to demonstrate parallels between the life of tones and life generally have been noted in recent scholarly work. In his article “Schenker’s Theory of Music as Ethics,” Nicholas Cook sees in this tendency an indicator of Schenker’s engagement with Schopenhauerian philosophy. For Schopenhauer, “music . . . mirrors the very rhythm of the will, its unity in multiplicity.”<sup>105</sup> Wayne Alpern reads in this propensity an instance of Schenker’s link to his legal education: “Tonal relationships in Schenkerian theory are an acoustical analog of relationships between people in a legal system.”<sup>106</sup> These writers maintain a respectful distance in their attributions: “music *mirrors* the very rhythm of the will. . . . ;” “tonal relationships . . . *are an acoustical analog* . . . [emphasis added].” Schenker, conversely, posits a complete identity between

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<sup>103</sup> Schenker, “Miscellanea”: 70. [“Beifall, Ruhm bedeuten dem Schaffenden, im weitesten Sinne des Wortes, gleichsam ein Rückströmen seiner eigenen Kräfte: so viel Kraft er an die Empfänger hingegen, so viel erhält er auch von ihnen zurück. Vergebens erwartet aber ein solches Rückströmen das Genie: von wem sollte ihm denn auch der Beifall, der Ruhm in dem Masse kommen, als es Kräfte in sein Werk verströmt hat?” Schenker, “Vermischtes”: 107, 108.]

<sup>104</sup> “Der *Ursatz* bleibt immer schöpferisch, er ist immer und überall zugegen und wirkend. . . .” Schenker, *Der freie Satz*: 49. The reference to Herder appears in Chapter 1, p. 21 and n. 39.

<sup>105</sup> Claud Sutton, *The German Tradition in Philosophy* (London, 1974): 82. Cited in Cook, “Schenker’s Theory of Music as Ethics”: 420.

<sup>106</sup> Alpern, “Music Theory as a Mode of Law”: 1482.

music and life. Those same metaphors that assign qualities of soul to music and that attribute to it the status of a subject, traffic in metaphysics. Going beyond metaphor, Schenker claims that music does not merely exhibit qualities of a subject; it *is* subject. It does not merely possess qualities of a soul; it possesses a soul of its own.

Schenker also attributes organic, living qualities to the *Urlinie*, the linear progression that constitutes the upper voice of the *Ursatz*. In *Der freie Satz* he writes:

The traversal of the fundamental line is *the most basic of all passing motions*; it is the necessity (derived from strict counterpoint) to continue in the same direction which creates coherence, and, indeed, makes this traversal the beginning of all coherence in a musical composition [emphasis original] (*FC*: 12).<sup>107</sup>

“Coherence” and “necessity” are terms derived from Kant’s and Hegel’s definitions of laws. Both terms figure centrally in Schenker’s characterizations of the organic.

Counterpoint’s organic features are also exhibited in the interaction between the *Urlinie* and the *Bassbrechung*, which combine to form the *Ursatz*. Individually, neither creates the masterwork. It is “only when they act together, when unified in a contrapuntal structure, [that] they produce art” (*FC*: 11).<sup>108</sup> Counterpoint thus serves as an active relational principle governing the interaction of the *Ursatz* components. Later in *Der freie Satz* Schenker writes: “All musical content arises from the confrontation and adjustment of the indivisible *Urlinie* with the two-part *Bassbrechung*” (*FC*: 15).<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> “Also ist der Durchgang der Urlinie der erste Durchgang überhaupt, und gerade der ihm vom strengen Satz her anhaftende Zwang, in derselben Richtung fortzuschreiten, in der er begonnen hat, bedeutet Zusammenhang, macht ihn zum Anfang allen Zusammenhanges in einer musikalischen Komposition.” Schenker, *Der freie Satz*: 41.

<sup>108</sup> “Weder also die Urlinie noch die Brechung des Basses kann für sich allein bestehen, erst miteinander wirkend, zu einem kontrapunktischen Satz vereint, bringen sie Kunst hervor.” Schenker, *Der freie Satz*: 40.

<sup>109</sup> “Aller Inhalt der Musik besteht nun darin, dass sich die unteilbare Urlinie mit der zweigeteilten Bassbrechung auseinandersetzt.” Schenker, *Der freie Satz*: 45.

According to this description counterpoint binds together two otherwise discrete entities, operating as a dynamic and creative agent that opens the gateway to art. Its function recalls Schelling's system of forces central to his definitions of the organic discussed in Chapter 1 (see pp. 27, 28). In his formulation of the organic, Schelling emphasized not objects but rather forces and relational principles that bind one object to another.

So far, the discussion has focused on counterpoint in its specific musical realizations—linear progressions, the *Urlinie*, and the *Ursatz*—and the ways in which these constructs can be considered organic. For Schenker, counterpoint also assumes a more abstract function in tonal composition that is nevertheless essential to the work of art's being organic. As a form of tacit knowledge, counterpoint supplies the basis for a composer's improvisatory processes, the "richness of ideas" from which he produces his artworks and a central component of Schenker's beliefs about what constitutes the organic.<sup>110</sup>

Schenker's beliefs about the nature of improvisation underwent numerous changes in his career. There were nevertheless two points on which he remained constant: first, he always held improvisation to be an essential component of artistic processes; and second, he always considered it in opposition to the mechanical. For Schenker, improvisation was essential to his notion of music's being organic. It addressed the need, explicated by organicist writers before him, that the work of art not

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<sup>110</sup> The composer's "richness of ideas" is a formulation that permeates *Ein Beitrag zur Ornamentik*: "To recapitulate what I have said up to this point: for C.P.E. Bach, richness of ideas is paramount." Heinrich Schenker, "A Contribution to the Study of Ornamentation," trans. Hedi Siegel, in *The Music Forum*, Vol. 4 (Columbia: Columbia University Press, 1976): 33. ["Fasse ich das bisher Vorgebrachte zusammen, so heisst es: Am Anfang ist der Reichtum der Gedanken bei Bach!" Schenker, *Ein Beitrag zur Ornamentik*, rev. ed. (Vienna: Universal Edition, 1908): 14.]

only exhibit organic features in its completed form, but that it come into being in a way that resembles that of organisms.<sup>111</sup> Excerpts from selected writings illustrate key moments in Schenker's formulation of his ideas about improvisation.

The letter from Beethoven to his pupil Archduke Rudolph, cited in "Geist," describes an improvisational procedure in which the pupil employs progressively more complex contrapuntal strategies until he eventually discovers himself in the realm of art. The pupil does not set out to create art but he slips into this other realm imperceptibly as he exercises his contrapuntal skills. Beethoven emphasizes: first, counterpoint's role as springboard for the foray into the artistic realm; and second, the spontaneity that characterizes the process of improvisation. The formulation is Beethoven's. Schenker includes it in his article because he believes that it describes most accurately the relationship between counterpoint and composition and, especially, the improvisatory aspect which figures so centrally to that relationship.<sup>112</sup>

In *Harmonielehre*, published in 1906, the discussion of improvisation centers on the elaboration of a harmonic plan in the context of modulating and preludizing. Schenker uses as examples unmeasured fantasias of C.P.E. Bach, the Prelude from J.S. Bach's E-Flat Major 'Cello Suite, and Mozart's Fantasia in D Minor (K. 397). He adds dotted lines to indicate hypothetical measures in the C.P.E. Bach fantasias; in all of the examples he places Roman numerals between or beneath the staves to indicate the scale-step progression. For Schenker, these "real" pieces count as traces of a harmonically based improvisatory practice. In addition, they constitute more than a pedagogical

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<sup>111</sup> Schlegel's insistence on the *natura naturans* expresses this need. See discussion above, p. 231.

<sup>112</sup> Schenker, "Geist": 92, 93.

exercise. He believes that the student can (and should) engage principles of free composition, including “a freely invented motif, free and variegated rhythm, as well as the harmonic tools offered by the diatonic system” (*H*: 336).<sup>113</sup> He speculates, moreover, that “the method of modulating and preluding as I conceive it would . . . incite the student’s imagination, rendering it both more fluid and more self-reliant (*H*: 338).<sup>114</sup> Thus, as in the Beethoven letter cited in “Geist,” something initially conceived of as pedagogical can at the same time introduce the student to the profundities of art. In addition, Schenker’s idea that improvisation can serve as a means to develop the student’s imaginative capacities matches precisely his beliefs about the role of counterpoint in a student’s education, as expressed in “Geist”: “. . . the discipline of counterpoint likewise enables the imagination to see countless different dispositions of a theme . . .” (cited above, p. 190). Therefore, exercises in either harmony or counterpoint improve the imagination and serve as forays into art.

In “Vom Organischen der Sonatenform,” published in 1926, Schenker’s contrapuntally derived *Ursatz* constitutes the operative principle for improvisation. He distinguishes it from earlier improvisational models in several ways. First, the *Ursatz* belongs exclusively to the artist:

The concept of sonata form, as the theorists have taught it until now, lacks precisely the essential feature—that of organicism—which alone is determined by the composing-out of the *Urlinie* and the bass arpeggiation. The capacity for such a comprehensive feeling

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<sup>113</sup> “. . . frei erfundenes Motiv, freier und mannigfaltiger Rhythmus, ferner die harmonischen . . . Mittel. . .” Schenker, *Harmonielehre*: 445.

<sup>114</sup> “Wer weiss, ob nicht übrigens die Methode des Modulierens und Präludierens, wie ich sie mir denke, die Phantasie des Schülers flüssiger und selbstbewusster machen könnte. . . .” Schenker, *Harmonielehre*: 447.

for the principal chord *is a privilege of geniuses*, which Nature has bestowed upon them [emphasis added].<sup>115</sup>

One does not practice the use of the *Ursatz*, unlike the student Schenker envisions in “Geist” and in *Harmonielehre* who hones his skills with practice in strict counterpoint and modulating and preludizing, respectively. Instead, the genius taps into the creative force of the *Ursatz* via his intuitive powers. In this way, he produces the organic work of art.

Second, the improvisational style explicated in *Harmonielehre* can involve real-time improvisation at the keyboard, practiced by a performer like C.P.E. Bach before an audience.<sup>116</sup> The *Stufen* guide its harmonic progress and, according to the examples Schenker supplies in *Harmonielehre*, it takes the form of a fantasia or fantasia-like piece. Composing according to the dictates of the *Ursatz* is rather different. Its foundation is contrapuntal and it governs the composition of *all* tonal forms. Harmony does continue to play a role, however. Because free composition contains *Stufen* and unfolds the triad of Nature, it is harmonic in a very broad conceptual sense but not in a chord-to-chord sense. A fundamental feature of the *Stufen* nevertheless maintains a thread of continuity

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<sup>115</sup> Heinrich Schenker, “On Organicism in Sonata Form,” trans. William Drabkin, in *The Masterwork in Music*, Vol. 2: 23. [“Dem Begriff der Sonatenform, wie ihn bis heute die Theorie lehrt, fehlt gerade das wesentlichste Merkmal, das des Organischen, wie es allein durch die Erfindung der Teile aus der Einheit des Hauptklangs bedingt ist, d.h. durch die Auskomponierung der Urlinie und der Bassbrechung. Die Fähigkeit zu einer solchen Durchempfindung des Hauptklangs ist ein Vorzug der Genies, den sie von Natur ausgeniessen; . . .” Schenker, “Vom Organischen der Sonatenform,” in *Das Meisterwerk in der Musik*, Vol. 2: 45.]

<sup>116</sup> In the *Versuch über die wahre Art das Clavier zu spielen*, C.P.E. Bach outlines expectations for a clavier player: “It is not enough that a player on the clavier should satisfy the expectations we rightly have of any instrumentalist, that is, that he be able to perform a piece composed for his instrument according to the rules of good execution. He must, besides, extemporize in a variety of manners; *work up a given composition on the spot*, observing the strictest rules of harmony and melody [emphasis added]. . . .” C.P.E. Bach, *Versuch* (Berlin, 1753). Translation from Richard Taruskin and Piero Weiss, *Music in the Western World: A History in Documents* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1984): 269.

between them and Schenker's later discussions of improvisation that center on the *Ursatz*. Both the *Stufen* and the *Ursatz* belong to transcendental or ideal realms of existence. Neither constitutes simply "the notes on the page."

So far I have discussed the specific form in which the tacit contrapuntal knowledge shapes the improvisatory compositional process as expressed in Schenker's later theory: the *Ursatz*. An additional aspect of Schenker's theories about improvisation requires clarification: the specific nature of improvisation. In his translation of Schenker's essay "Vom Organischen der Sonatenform," William Drabkin supplies a footnote to clarify his translation of "*Erfindung aus dem Stegreif* [invention by extemporization]." Drabkin explains that he translates *Stegreif* as

"improvisation," understood not as composition on the spur of the moment, but rather in the sense of a piece being created according to internalized principles of musical structure as opposed to a series of "rules."<sup>117</sup>

For Drabkin, Schenker's meaning of improvisation does not imply composition "on the spur of the moment." Drabkin refers here to live improvisation, making up the piece in the spotlight of performance as a keyboardist would have done in C.P.E. Bach's time.<sup>118</sup>

This is not what Schenker envisions. Drabkin's disclaimer is nevertheless misleading. In light of Schenker's frequent reference to the impulsive aspect of composition, it seems unwise to discount entirely the spontaneous aspect of Schenker's meaning. This very meaning suggests itself already in "Geist," and is reinforced in *Ein Beitrag zur*

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<sup>117</sup> Schenker, "On Organicism in Sonata Form": 23, n. 2.

<sup>118</sup> Personal communication via email.

*Ornamentik*, where Schenker argues that C.P.E. Bach composed not mechanically but spontaneously. Spontaneity thus counts as a synonym for improvisation.<sup>119</sup>

An expression Schenker uses throughout his sonata-form essay, *Stegreifwurf*, reinforces the spontaneous aspect of Schenker's concept of improvisation: "Yet the central question [is]," writes Schenker, "could Haydn have worked out the two arpeggiations without an *improvisatory impulse* [*Stegreifwurf*] showing him the way? [emphasis added]."<sup>120</sup> Another description from the essay dramatizes the impromptu aspect of improvisation Schenker has in mind:

Even here it may be said that a fifth-progression, like the first one in bars 1-31, cannot possibly be created except by improvisation. And if the first fifth-progression points to the next one, then one can hear with true devotion this storm of improvisation as it roars/rages, creating life and coherence from one linear progression to the next.<sup>121</sup>

I stress this spontaneous, even stormy (*stürmische*) aspect of Schenker's descriptions for several reasons. First, I hope to establish as accurately as possible Schenker's meaning. Second, I point up ways in which Schenker's descriptions carry forward blustery images of Beethoven established by his earlier biographers and reviewers such as E.T.A.

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<sup>119</sup> He writes: "To recapitulate what I have said up to this point: for C.P.E. Bach, richness of ideas is paramount. It is this richness alone that bestows on his ideas the gift of sounding spontaneous—eternally improvised. . . ." Schenker, "A Contribution to the Study of Ornamentation": 33. ["Fasse ich das bisher Vorgebrachte zusammen, so heisst es: Am Anfang ist der Reichtum der Gedanken bei Bach! Nur Reichtum allein ist es, der ihm die Absichtslosigkeit, das Ewig-Improvisierte der Gedanken spendet, ihm die Vielheit und Mannigfaltigkeit bringt." Schenker, *Ein Beitrag zur Ornamentik*: 14.]

<sup>120</sup> Schenker, "On Organicism in Sonata Form": 24. ["Nun aber die Hauptfrage: Wäre es Haydn möglich gewesen, die beiden Brechungen so auszuführen, wenn ihm nicht ein Stegreifwurf die Wege gewiesen hätte?" Schenker, "Vom Organischen der Sonatenform": 48).] Note the central role played by the "improvisatory impulse." *It leads the way.*

<sup>121</sup> Schenker, "On Organicism in Sonata Form": 26, 27. ["Schon hier ist zu sagen: Ein Quintzug wie der erste in T. 1-31 ist nicht anders als aus dem Stegreif zu erfinden möglich, und gibt der eine Quintzug auch die nächsten Züge ein, so hört man mit wahrer Andacht diesen Sturm des Stegreifs, wie er dahinbraust, Zug um Zug Leben und Zusammenhang schaffend!" Schenker, "Vom Organischen der Sonatenform": 49.]

Hoffmann, who described Beethoven's "fire," and Gustav Nottebohm, who depicted a composer caught up in a violent struggle with his own genius. Finally, I wish to demonstrate a crucial way in which Schenker's images recall early organicist theories of artistic creation. In *Don Juan*, for example, Byron described poetry as "the lava of the imagination whose eruption prevents an earthquake."<sup>122</sup> Lobe, reporting a process in which he himself had little faith, describes the composer's thoughts ". . . in a gush, stream[ing] forth out of his excited mind in an immediate revelation. . . ."<sup>123</sup>

This type of creative process is intimately bound up with beliefs about organic artistic production. Put another way, to qualify as organic works of art must come into being via a dramatic outburst. The image contributes more than descriptive detail, however. Organicist theorists believe that the eruptive process is essential to producing the organic form which the composition must take. According to the table of mechanical-organic oppositions, the artisan/architect artist championed by the eighteenth century uses a pre-existent blueprint or plan to produce his art (see Example 4-1, p. 190).<sup>124</sup> Such a model directly opposes the genius artist, in whose mind form is created simultaneously with the content. The concern appears already in Plato's *Phaedrus*, where Plato requires that the subject matter of the organic speech be instrumental in determining its completed form. August Schlegel, writing in the early nineteenth century, formulated it like this:

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<sup>122</sup> Cited in Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp*: 49.

<sup>123</sup> Lobe, *Lehrbuch*: 337. Cited above, p. 141 and n. 27.

<sup>124</sup> A comprehensive examination of Schenker's theories of form has been undertaken by Charles J. Smith in his article, "Musical Form and Fundamental Structure: An Investigation of Schenker's *Formenlehre*," *Music Analysis* 15 (1996): 191-297.

Organical form is innate; it unfolds itself from within, and acquires its determination contemporaneously with the perfect development of the germ.<sup>125</sup>

A metaphor supplied by Hanslick mimics this formulation with a concrete example:

“Musical champagne . . . has the peculiarity that it grows along with the bottle.”<sup>126</sup>

Schenker engaged in polemics with contemporary music theorists throughout his career. Championing improvisation as *the* organic compositional style constituted a central tenet of his attack, a biting opposition to the fallacies (as he saw them) of the form theorists.<sup>127</sup> His favorite derogatory term for their theoretic searches was the schematic formula. The phrase is ubiquitous in *Ein Beitrag zur Ornamentik*:

What first strikes one about Bach’s compositional technique *is the absence of any kind of schematic formula*, whether in regard to form, idea, or harmony. . . . Instead, everything—at its inception as well as during its successive development—exists by grace of an improvisatory imagination [emphasis added].

. . . we perceive that *any kind of schematic formula* is foreign to [the] genius [of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven] and that a natural spontaneity characterizes their activity [emphasis added].<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>125</sup> Schlegel, *Course of Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature*: 340. The German original was cited in Chapter 1, p. 8, n. 14.

<sup>126</sup> Hanslick, *On the Musically Beautiful*: 32. [“Der musikalische Champagner hat aber das Eigenthümliche, er wächst mit der Flasche.” Hanslick, *Vom Musikalisch-Schönen*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed.: 51.]

<sup>127</sup> Ian Bent provides an extensive list of *Formenlehren* in *Music Analysis in the Nineteenth Century*, Vol. 1: 129. Examples include: Richter’s *Die Grundzüge der musikalischen Formen und ihre Analyse* (1851); Bussler’s *Musikalische Formenlehre* (1878); Riemann’s *Katechismus der Kompositionslehre (Musikalische Formenlehre)* (1889); and Prout’s *Musical Form* (1893) and *Applied Forms* (1895). Bent notes the telling shift from a comprehensive multi-volume textbook of composition which includes matters of form to an independent textbook devoted to form.

<sup>128</sup> Schenker, “A Contribution to the Study of Ornamentation”: 27, 33, 34.

[“Was an Bach’s Kompositionstechnik zunächst auffällt, ist die Abwesenheit einen jeglichen Schemas. Nirgends eine Vorgefasstheit; nirgends ein Vorsatz, sei es in bezug auf Form, Gedanken oder Harmonien. . . . Vielmehr ist alles, erste Erfindung wie fortlaufende Entwicklung, einzig auf die Gnade einer sozusagen improvisierenden Phantasie gestellt.” Schenker, *Ein Beitrag zur Ornamentik*: 10.

To recapitulate what I have said up to this point: for C.P.E. Bach, richness of ideas is paramount. It is this richness alone that bestows on his ideas the gift of sounding spontaneous—eternally improvised . . . . *It allows him to rise above the mechanical aspects of modulation and frees him from all concern for “form”* [emphasis added].

Schenker also introduces the terms “mechanics” and “form.” He opposes both to the richness of improvisation.

Reiterating his life-long preoccupation with the matter, Schenker begins the *Meisterwerk* essay “Sonatenform” with a concerted attack on the form theorists.

Concerning Haydn’s compositional method, Schenker claims:

Haydn did not know any theories of form as we know them; the new life that he generated he created out of the life of his spirit/mind. The *Urlinie* and *Bassbrechung* ruled over him with the power of an instinct, and from them he developed the inspired capacity for creating tension across the whole of a work as a unity (*Meisterwerk*: 24).<sup>129</sup>

Rebutting their practice, Schenker argues that a principle other than that of key scheme or theme arrangement produces the work’s organic unity. The kinds of details that these theorists read off the surface of the music—the modulatory scheme, the principal divisions such as exposition, development and recapitulation, the number of themes—

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“Fasse ich das bisher Vorgebrachte zusammen, so heisst es: Am Anfang ist der Reichtum der Gedanken bei Bach! Nur Reichtum allein ist es, der ihm die Absichtslosigkeit, das Ewig-Improvisierte der Gedanken spendet, ihm die Vielheit und Mannigfaltigkeit bringt. . . . er ist’s, der ihm das Mechanische der Modulation vergeistigt und ihn im übrigen aller Sorgen der „Form“ enthebt: . . .” Schenker, *Ein Beitrag zur Ornamentik*: 14. (Parts of this were cited in this chapter, notes 110, 119.)

“Daher nehmen wir auch bei diesen Meistern [Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven] wahr, dass ein jegliches Schema ihrem Genie fremd und eine natürliche Absichtslosigkeit ihr Schaffensprinzip ist.” Schenker, *Ein Beitrag zur Ornamentik*: 14.]

<sup>129</sup> Schenker, “On Organicism in Sonata Form”: 24. [“Haydn kannte ja noch keine Formenlehren, wie wir sie kennen; das neue Leben, das er zeugte, schöpfte er aus dem Leben seines Geistes. Ihn beherrschte die Urlinie und die Bassbrechung mit der Macht einer Naturtriebes und von ihnen bezog er auch die geniale Spannkraft zur Bewältigung des Ganzen als einer Einheit.” Schenker, “Vom Organischen der Sonatenform: 46, 47.]

cannot explain the cohesiveness that operates beneath the surface and that the analyst uncovers through detailed study.<sup>130</sup> Schenker's Haydn foregoes the conscious intervention that is the hallmark of the artisan composer.<sup>131</sup> He exemplifies the unconscious, organic aspect of composition that Schenker described in "Geist" but whose role in composition he deemed at that time incidental, if indeed it operated at all (see discussion above, p. 196 and n. 10).

Schenker devotes the first part of the sonata-form essay to analyzing Haydn's Piano Sonata in G Minor (Hob. XVI: 44). He prefaces his discussion with this comment:

To the many examples of sonatas that I discussed in the issues of *Tonwille* and the first volume of *Meisterwerk*, I add the following illustrations to substantiate the crucial features of improvisation in their particulars [emphasis added].<sup>132</sup>

The particulars Schenker describes center upon the creative force of the *Ursatz* that "ruled over [Haydn] with the power of an instinct."<sup>133</sup> In another passage from the essay, Schenker maintains that in the initial improvisatory impulse everything essential for the

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<sup>130</sup> Schenker registered this complaint already in "Geist": "How absurd one would seem, both to oneself and to others, if one tried to classify, for example, poetic works according to the number of themes they contain: say, three themes make a sonnet, four an ode, and so on. But in music—just imagine!—the number of themes is still tallied diligently, and the form is characterized by it." Schenker, "Spirit": 102. ["Wie lächerlich erschiene man sich und Anderen, wenn man z.B. die poetischen Werke nach der Zahl der Gedanken classificieren wollte, etwa drei Gedanken machen ein Sonett, vier eine Ode u.s.w. In der Musik, aber, man denke es nur aus, wird die Zahl der Gedanken noch immer fleissig registriert und darnach die Form charakterisiert." Schenker, "Geist": 152, 153.] This caricature recalls Ul'ibishev's description of the hack music reviewer. See Chapter 1, p. 44, n. 83.

<sup>131</sup> Compare the discussion of Milton in Chapter 3, of whom Samuel Taylor Coleridge wrote: "he stands *ab extra*, and drives the fiery chariot and four, making the horses feel the iron curb that holds them in." See p. 165).

<sup>132</sup> Schenker, "On organicism in Sonata Form": 23. ["Zu den vielen Beispielen von Sonaten, die ich in den *Tonwille*-Heften und im Jahrbuch I geführt habe, will ich zur Erhärtung des entscheidenden Stegreif-Merkmale im besonderen noch folgende Beispiele hinzufügen: . . ." Schenker, "Vom Organischen der Sonatenform": 46.]

<sup>133</sup> Schenker, "On organicism in Sonata Form": 24. Cited on p. 250, n. 129.

unity of the entire movement is already present.<sup>134</sup> As the seed from which everything else develops, the initial improvisatory impulse resembles the creative outburst that many romantic poets perceived as the basis for the entire poem.<sup>135</sup> Later in the essay Schenker claims: “. . . anyone capable of hearing the whole coming from the whole would certainly rejoice in the radiance of improvisation. . . .”<sup>136</sup> Schenker’s description recalls ancient organicist doctrine, which requires that the whole precede the parts and that the parts derive from it. Notably, improvisation is essential to this process.

One final aspect of Schenker’s theories of improvisation requires discussion here: his search for improvisational principles in history. In this, he expresses the essential tenet of a theory of law propounded by his teacher, Georg Jellinek. For Jellinek, the purpose and goal of legal training is to find laws in history, rather than to construct laws for the present time.<sup>137</sup> In writings such as *Ein Beitrag* and *Harmonielehre* Schenker modeled his theory of improvisation on C.P.E. Bach’s *Versuch*.<sup>138</sup> The *Meisterwerk*

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<sup>134</sup> The passage in its entirety: “Hardly has the upbeat d2 been suggested than the arpeggiation erupts in bar 1: must it not necessarily have been fixed already in the first moment? Where in the work of a non-genius can we find a similar cohesive power, a similar arpeggiation which connects several elements of the form into one?” Schenker, “On organicism in Sonata Form”: 24, 25. [“Kaum hat der Auftakt d2 angedeutet, stürmt schon in T. 1 die Brechung hinaus—muss sie da nicht notwendig schon im ersten Augenblick festgestanden haben? Wo ist im Werk eines Nicht-Genies eine ähnliche Spannkraft, eine ähnliche Brechung, die in einem mehrere Formteile überspannt?” Schenker, “Vom Organischen der Sonatenform: 48.]

<sup>135</sup> Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp*: 214. “Most romantic poets insisted,” remarks Abrams, that “at its inception a poem is an involuntary and unanticipated *donnée*.” This quotation was cited earlier, in Chapter 3, p. 164, n. 71.

<sup>136</sup> Schenker, “On organicism in Sonata Form”: 29. [“Wer aber das Ganze aus dem Ganzen zu hören vermöchte, wie würde er jubeln über das Strahlende des Stegreifs. . . .” Schenker, “Vom Organischen der Sonatenform”: 54.]

<sup>137</sup> Wayne Alpern highlights this aspect of Schenker’s legal training in his “Music Theory as a Mode of Law”: 1468ff.

<sup>138</sup> In his article “Schenker and Improvisation,” John Rink argues that “Schenker derived his notion of improvisation largely, if not entirely, from C.P.E. Bach, in other words, from an

essay, “The Art of Improvisation,” moreover, adulates the theories of C.P.E. Bach and the compositions of G.F. Handel. Notably, however, though he searched for principles in historical documents, Schenker did not consider these principles to be historically confined.<sup>139</sup> In this he departed from his law-school mentor, who believed that different epochs would yield different laws. For Schenker, the centrality of improvisation extended much beyond the high Baroque and early Classical periods. He regarded improvisation as the necessary source for organic unity in all music, regardless of form or style. In “Vom Organischen der Sonatenform,” he argues that only improvisation can guarantee the organic unity of a work in sonata form:

the concept of sonata form, if it is to express the general more correctly, ought to include the following: *the whole must be created by improvisation*, if it is not to be a mere assemblage of individual parts and motives in the sense of a schema [emphasis original].<sup>140</sup>

This principle governs composition in any form, be it fugue, sonata, or any other form employed by Schenker’s pantheon of mostly German composers.<sup>141</sup>

We have come full circle. In *Kontrapunkt I*, Schenker claimed that counterpoint, instilled in the composer in the embryonic phase of his career, becomes the source of artistic content later in life. Schenker’s description of Haydn’s compositional process

eighteenth-century tradition rooted in thoroughbass practice.” Rink, “Schenker and Improvisation,” *Journal of Music Theory* 37 (1993): 10.

<sup>139</sup> This is in keeping with his more general theoretical stance that he is in search of that “eternally valid nucleus of . . . rules for strict counterpoint. . . .” Schenker, CI: 12. [“. . . aber heute, wo man . . . die Komposition von der durch den strengen Satz repräsentierten Vorschule durchaus zu unterscheiden hat, müssen wir wohl ihren noch immer wahren Kern für den strengen Satz verwenden. . . .” *Kontrapunkt I*: 18.]

<sup>140</sup> Schenker, “On Organicism in Sonata Form”: 23. [“So wäre denn dem Begriff der Sonatenform, um das Allgemeine richtiger auszudrücken, noch hinzuzufügen: D a s G a n z e m u s s a u f d e m S t e g r e i f e r f u n d e n s e i n, wenn es nicht nur eine Klitterung von einzelnen Teilen und Motiven im Sinne eines Schemas seins soll.” Schenker, “Vom Organischen der Sonatenform”: 46.]

<sup>141</sup> Domenico Scarlatti and Frederic Chopin are two notable non-German members.

presents a specific, but still remarkably abstract, musical instantiation of both contrapuntal content and compositional means. The *Ursatz*, consisting of the *Uralinie* and *Bassbrechung*, begins to supply the content, embryonically, one might say.

Improvisation, spontaneous and sweeping but never haphazard, constitutes the means by which such contrapuntal content finds its musical realization.

#### IV. Conclusions

Schenker adopts a polemical theoretical position virtually from the inception of his career. His title for the “Geist” essay, published in 1895, counts as a forceful example. In Schenker’s contemporary philosophical context, discussing *Der Geist der musikalischen Technik* would count, at one extreme, as a nonsensical enterprise and, at the other, as a pointed challenge to a venerable philosophical tradition that holds *Geist* and *Technik* as opposed and irreconcilable. Schenker clearly means it as a challenge. His 1895 readership, many of whom were devoted to organicist explanations of art, would undoubtedly have been familiar with the terms of the opposition.<sup>142</sup> Dramatizing his theoretical agenda with such a deliberate confrontation marks a radical inception for Schenker’s theoretical career.

The mechanical-organic opposition, exposed but not systematically developed in “Geist,” remains a central component of Schenker’s polemic across his career.

Throughout the chapter I have emphasized the ways in which Schenker opposes the mechanical and the organic, holding them as irreconcilable opposites. Concerning the

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<sup>142</sup> “The highest praise that can be rendered to a musical artwork today is to say that it is constructed ‘organically,’” reports Schenker in the essay. Schenker, “Spirit”: 98. [“Heisst doch das höchste Lob, das heute einem musikalischen Kunstwerk gezollt wird, das Werk sei „organisch“ gebaut.” Schenker, “Geist”: 148.]

opposition of counterpoint and free composition, however, he worked to both demarcate them and, at the same time, to abstract principles and laws from the former that held true for the latter. In fact, describing principles established in strict counterpoint as laws and concepts counted as a central component of the connections he wished to establish between the two realms.

The mechanical/organic opposition dates back to ancient Greece. The nineteenth century's source for this ancient doctrine was Plato, whose works became widely available through a translation project begun in 1797 by Friedrich Schleiermacher and August Wilhelm von Schlegel. Throughout the *Phaedrus*, Plato's organic model for rhetoric constitutes the foundation for his criticism of contemporary rhetoric. Plato's critique contrasts principles of organic unity—applicable to prose and oratory, as well as to poetry and tragedy—with mechanical rules as set forth in the *Rules for Fine Writing*, which became a part of the Classical System of Poetics. The primary point of contrast between the two systems is this: while the *Rules for Fine Writing* rely on abstract schemes for making divisions and planning their arrangement, the organic approach requires that the subject of the composition, in all its particularity and idiosyncrasy, “be the determining factor in making . . . divisions and planning their arrangement.”<sup>143</sup>

A point of contention Plato had with the *Rules for Fine Writing* concerns its failure to advance beyond the rules. “. . . [T]hey teach these *antecedents* to their pupils,” writes Plato, “and believe that that constitutes a complete instruction in rhetoric; they don't bother about employing the various artifices in such a way that they will be

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<sup>143</sup> Orsini, *Organic Unity in Ancient and Later Poetics*: 39.

effective, or about organizing a work as a whole . . .” [emphasis added].<sup>144</sup>

A final criticism Plato levels at contemporary rhetoric is its tendency to produce something randomly: “Doesn’t his matter strike you as thrown out at haphazard?” asks Socrates. “Do you find any cogent reason for his next remark, or indeed any of his remarks, occupying the place it does? . . . Can you find any cogent principles of composition which he observed in setting down his observations *in this particular order?*” [emphasis added].<sup>145</sup> Several features of Plato’s critique are important to the current investigation. First is his notion of order. Elements of the speech must occur in a particular order according to the function they serve. A peroration, for instance, cannot appear at the beginning of the speech.<sup>146</sup> Second, Plato criticizes an approach that begins with rules but that ignores the importance both of effect and of the organization of the work as a whole. It is not the case that rules have no place in rhetorical instruction; it is simply that they do not go far enough. Finally, Plato denounces abstract schemas as the basis of divisions and arrangements within the speech. He argues that the subject of the speech must prompt these divisions. Stated another way, the motivation for the formal arrangement must come from within, rather than being imposed from without or decided without consideration of the particularity of the subject matter.

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<sup>144</sup> Plato, *Phaedrus*: 269C.

<sup>145</sup> Plato, *Phaedrus*: 264B. In *The Mirror and the Lamp*, M.H. Abrams comments that one of the primary attractions the organism offered as a model for literary theory in the nineteenth century was a solution to the problem of order. See his discussion on p. 173.

<sup>146</sup> *Phaedrus*: 264A, B. The passage in its entirety: “[Socrates] No: he doesn’t seem to get anywhere near what we are looking for: he goes about it like a man swimming on his back, in reverse, and starts from the end instead of the beginning; his opening words are what the lover would naturally say to his boy only when he had finished. Or am I quite wrong, dear Phaedrus? [Phaedrus]: I grant you, Socrates, that the substance of his address is really a peroration.”

In the nineteenth century, Schelling evinced a similar desire to account for the interaction of mechanism and organism. In 1798 he argued:

The moment we raise up our view of nature to a whole [*ein Ganzes*], the opposition between mechanism and organism disappears.<sup>147</sup>

Schelling's attempt to clarify the relationship between mechanical and organic intersects with that of his musical contemporary, Johann Nikolaus Forkel. In Chapter 1, I cited passages from Forkel's Bach biography to demonstrate his engagement with the opposition (see p. 7). For Forkel, Bach's mastery of the arts of counterpoint constitutes a mechanical component of his musical education. At the same time, however, it develops important sensitivities that lead to the composition of works exhibiting organic properties. Forkel takes as a given the value and necessity of the mechanical.

Furthermore, the organic qualities Forkel notes in Bach's fugues in no way obviate the significance of the mechanical processes that precede and, indeed, make them possible.

How do Plato's and Schelling's formulations compare with Schenker's views on the relationship between mechanical and organic, especially as it pertains to counterpoint and free composition? Contrapuntal mechanics, practiced and honed in the context of exercises extremely limited in scope and purpose, amount to compositional calisthenics. This is one of the simplest and most straightforward ways to think about them. As early as "Geist," however, Schenker hinted at the tenuousness of the boundaries between mechanics and the finished work of art. In that publication he lacked a clear formulation

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<sup>147</sup> "Sobald nur unsere Betrachtung zur Idee der Natur als eines *G a n z e n* sich emporhebt, verschwindet der Gegensatz zwischen Mechanismus und Organismus." Schelling, *Von der Weltseele* (1798). Cited in Werner Keil, "Mechanismus und Organismus: Zu E.T.A. Hoffmanns Rezension der Beethovenschen Klaviertrios Op. 70," *Neues musikwissenschaftliches Jahrbuch* 4 (1995): 77.

of these boundaries, though he did express his intent to clarify the relationship between the two.<sup>148</sup>

Schenker's later writings demonstrate his ongoing concern with the issue, as evidenced by the models he offered to illustrate it. In his introduction to *Kontrapunkt I*, Schenker cites a passage from Goethe's *Faust* that freely alters the normal ordering of German sentence components. Schenker has two things to say about the passage. First, he argues that contextual considerations motivate the alterations. These include issues both technical (prosody and rhyme) and dramatic (Faust's psychological state in that moment of the drama). The latter he categorizes under the heading "psychic forces." Second, he describes the grammatical anomalies of Goethe's sentence as "prolongations of the most ordinary grammatical laws." Transferring the issue to music, Schenker claims that "the phenomena of free composition . . . are invariably to be understood only as the prolongations of those principles (CI: 12, 13)."<sup>149</sup> According to this linguistic model, strict counterpoint establishes basic principles of grammar; free composition

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<sup>148</sup> ". . . I also hope to bring the so-called 'disciplines of harmony and counterpoint' into a desirable proximity with free composition, which is the true life of music. And these disciplines, once clarified, could then provide not only the preparation for expressing oneself in free composition, but also the explanation of the compositions themselves. . . ." Schenker, "Spirit": 93. [" . . . hoffe ich auf Das, was man 'Schule der Harmonie und des Contrapunctes' nennt, in eine wünschenswerthe Nähe des freien Schaffens, also des eigentlichen Lebens der Musik, zu bringen. Und die so erläuterte Schule könnte dann, ähnlich wie die Grammatik der Sprache alle sprachlichen Erscheinungen in der Kunst und im normalen Leben gleichmässig erklärt. . . ." Schenker, "Geist": 142.]

<sup>149</sup> "Sind denn die Gründe, weshalb Goethe zu der obigen Konstruktion gelangen musste, nicht etwa die folgenden, z.B.: der Vers (Prosodie, Reim), der Verdruss Faustens, der ihn psychologisch zwingt, die normale Ordnung der Satzelemente gleichsam zu revolutionieren und frei umzustellen. . . . Verstösst aber, frage ich, schon deshalb allein der zitierte Satz Goethes etwa gegen die deutsche Grammatik überhaupt? Wer kann denn übersehen, dass er, trotz allerhand Umstellungen, im Grunde doch nur Prolongationen auch noch der normalsten grammatischen Gesetze aufweist? . . . so dass die Erscheinungen im freien Satz durchaus nur als deren Prolongationen wieder zu erkennen sind." Schenker, *Kontrapunkt I*: 19, 20.

begins with those principles but prolongs them. In these terms, the mechanical is not antithetical but preparatory to the organic.

Near the end of *Kontrapunkt II*, Schenker adduces the analogy of an umbilical cord to explain the relationship between strict counterpoint and free composition:

According to the above experiments, it is possible in some way to find a unifying tone of longer value that interprets the movement and voice leading of voices led in various rhythms; with this discovery a bridge to free composition is opened, and at the same time it is established that free composition, despite its so extensively altered appearances, is mysteriously bound by this ellipse, as though by an umbilical cord, to strict counterpoint.

In this context strict counterpoint (=mechanics) counts as the parent whose umbilical cord feeds and sustains the more expansive creative potentials of free composition.

Repeatedly throughout his career, then, Schenker argued for connections between the two realms, going so far as to postulate that mechanics can be transformed into the organic.

For Schenker, boundaries between strict counterpoint and free composition blurred when viewed within the greater whole of eternally valid principles, laws, and concepts.

Hegel's dialectical model offers another valuable perspective on the matter of relating the mechanical and the organic.<sup>150</sup> His model consists of three steps:

(1) One or more concepts are taken as fixed, sharply defined and distinct from each other. This is the stage of UNDERSTANDING.

(2) When we reflect on such categories, one or more contradictions emerge in them. This is the stage of dialectic proper, or of dialectical or negative REASON.

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<sup>150</sup> Schenker's familiarity with Fichte's and Hegel's dialectical model, as evidenced by his discussion of the passing tone in second species, was discussed on p. 218.

(3) The result of this dialectic is a new, higher category, which embraces the earlier categories and resolves the contradiction involved in them. This is the step of speculation or positive reason. Hegel suggests that this new category is a ‘unity of opposites’ . . .<sup>151</sup>

If we hold up Schenker’s engagement with the mechanical/organic opposition to this dialectic model, we gain significant insight into and clarity about his theoretical enterprise. According to Hegel’s first step, Schenker takes as “fixed, sharply defined and distinct from each other” concepts of the mechanical and the organic, whose counterparts are strict counterpoint and free composition. Proceeding to the second step, reflecting on these categories revealed disturbing contradictions to Schenker. As early as “Geist” (1895), demarcating strict counterpoint and free composition dissatisfied him. By the time he wrote his Preface and Introduction to *Kontrapunkt I* (1910), he engaged the contradiction head-on and proffered a resolution to the impasse: prolongation (CI: 13). Prolongation achieves the third of Hegel’s steps, a new and higher category. It “embraces the earlier categories and resolves the contradiction involved in them.” Notably, Schenker did not stop with prolongation. In *Kontrapunkt I* he also introduced crucial terminology that put flesh on his prolongational skeleton: eternally valid principles, concepts, and laws. These serve as instruments or categories of prolongation.

An additional aspect of Hegel’s dialectic illuminates the current discussion: the necessity of opposition as a force that defines individual terms. Hegel holds that opposites “change into each other when they are intensified.” He supplies the example of a powerful being who “annihilates all resistance.” When this happens, the being “lapses into impotence, since he no longer has an opponent to test, reveal and sustain his

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<sup>151</sup> Hegel, on “Dialectic,” in Inwood, *A Hegel Dictionary*: 81, 82. Inwood’s discussion explicates Hegel’s dialectic as defined in the philosopher’s *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences* (1817), Vol. 1, and *The Science of Logic* (1812-16).

logic.”<sup>152</sup> Schenker demonstrates his familiarity with this aspect of Hegel’s thought when he introduces the passing tone. In that context he claims that the “transient independence [of the passing tone] increases the value and power of the unity of the two voices . . .” (CI: 183, 184).<sup>153</sup> In other words, the effect of the consonance is more powerful because of the contrasting and clarifying power of the dissonance. If we translate this to Schenker’s organic-mechanical theoretical apparatus more generally, the mechanical in his theory keeps the organic on its toes, so to speak. Were it unnecessary for the organic to contend with the mechanical threat it would express itself less strongly, or not at all.

An issue closely related to Schenker’s ambiguity about placing counterpoint in either mechanical or organic domains concerns definitions of technique. Schenker’s “Geist” includes as one of its agendas a challenge to contemporary definitions of mechanical and organic, of technique and *Geist*, and identifies the means by which the mechanics of exercises (technique) are transformed into the “versatile and brilliant soul of [Bach’s] artworks.”<sup>154</sup>

Schenker revisits the topic of technique in his introduction to *Kontrapunkt I* and shows an increasingly bold stance in his critique of contemporaneous definitions:

Today it is fashion to talk about an “excess of technique,” an excess that allegedly stifles the composer. If we could only gain clarity about what this slogan really means! . . . (CI: xxi).

Lack of technique penetrates artists to the core . . . (CI: xxii).

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<sup>152</sup> Inwood, *A Hegel Dictionary*: 82.

<sup>153</sup> “Vielmehr steigert die vorübergehende Selbständigkeit den Wert und die Kraft der von Anfang an angestrebten und doch wieder auch behaupteten Einheit beider Stimmen.” Schenker, *Kontrapunkt I*: 247.

<sup>154</sup> Cited above, p. 190.

All musical technique is derived from two basic ingredients: voice leading, and the progression of scale degrees. Of the two, *voice leading* is the earlier and more original element (CI: xxv).<sup>155</sup>

In a diatribe against contemporaries who complain of an “excess of technique,” Schenker contends that modern composers suffer in fact from lack of *any* technique. His argument turns on the confusion surrounding the definition and purpose of technique. For Schenker, a composer’s technical development begins with counterpoint. As if to further reinforce the polemic of his “Geist” title, in this introduction to *Kontrapunkt I* Schenker employs an organic analogy to explain the workings of technique:

Is technique not the fulfillment on the part of the artist of those demands which the subject matter itself, far above the artist, imposes on him? In pursuit of such fulfillment, is not technique then a necessary, good, and—so to speak—healthy thing? Is not the technique of a work comparable to the health of a body whose organs fulfill all the functions nature demands of them? (CI: xxi).<sup>156</sup>

With this analogy Schenker achieves two important steps in his argument. First, he demonstrates his commitment to organic models by holding up physical health as exemplar. Second, he challenges received notions of technique as something mechanical

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<sup>155</sup> “Mit Vorliebe spricht man heute von einem ‘Übermass an Technik,’ von einem Übermass, das schon als solches die Komponisten angeblich notwendig lahmlegen muss. Wenn man sich endlich aber nur klar werden wollte darüber, was das Schlagwort eigentlich zu bedeuten hätte!” Schenker, *Kontrapunkt I*: xiv.

“. . . der Mangel an Technik rächt sich an den Künstlern bis ins Mark!” Schenker, *Kontrapunkt I*: xvii.

“Alle musikalische Technik ist auf zwei Grundelemente zurückzuführen: auf die Stimmführung und den Stufengang. Das ältere und ursprünglichere Element von beiden ist die Stimmführung.” Schenker, *Kontrapunkt I*: xxiii.

<sup>156</sup> “Versteht man denn unter ‘Technik’ nicht etwa die Erfüllung jener Forderungen seitens des Künstlers, die der Stoff, hoch über dem Künstler stehend, gar selbst an diesen stellt? Denkt man sich, im Sinne solcher Erfüllung, die Technik denn nicht immer nur als eine wahre, gute, sozusagen gesunde Technik? Ist Technik eines Werkes in diesem Sinne nicht wirklich vergleichbar der Gesundheit eines Körpers, dessen Organe sämtlich die Funktionen ausüben, wie sie die Natur von ihnen eben abverlangt?” Schenker, *Kontrapunkt I*: 14.

and lifeless. Framed within Hegel's dialectical model, Schenker exposes contradictions in the definitions.

Schenker returns to the issue of *Technik* in the *Miscellanea* to *Meisterwerk 3*.

Here he clarifies complaints his opponents have leveled against it:

It is said of Goethe, Schiller and Hölderlin that they lost the immediacy of poetic creativity as a result of their studies of Kant. When it comes to music, in particular, composers are warned against the perils of a so-called music-theoretical training. Such training, so people say, greatly inhibits freedom of creativity. True, where training and the accumulation of knowledge do not lead to inspiration this prejudice may have some justification. History, on the other hand, teaches us that the great masters could never have become for us and for art what they have in fact become had they not possessed the most comprehensive and profound training in all aspects of their art.<sup>157</sup>

The criticisms include lack of spontaneity and inspiration as the fall-out from excessive study and training. Schenker counters this complaint directly. Responding in the spirit of Schelling and Forkel, Goethe and Hoffmann, all of whom maintain the value of rigorous technical training, Schenker contends that precisely this kind of preparation is essential to the success, the ongoing artistic health, of the master composer.

How, then, do we come to terms with Schenker's "Geist" essay? Does it show him as anti-organicist, as William Pastille has argued, or does Kevin Korsyn achieve a more accurate reading by viewing him as a deconstructionist? What about Allan Keiler's "synchronic" approach? Does it yield the most convincing interpretation? It is my belief

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<sup>157</sup> Schenker, "Miscellanea": 70. "[Es wird behauptet, Goethe, Schiller, Hölderlin hätten sich über ihren Kant-Studien um die Unmittelbarkeit des dichterischen Schaffens gebracht. Insbesondere aber wird der Tondichter vor der sog. musiktheoretischen Bildung als einer grossen Gefahr gewarnt: jene Bildung unterbinde, meint man, zu sehr die Freiheit des Schaffens. Freilich, wem Bildung und Erkenntnis nicht in Eingebung münden, der mag sich zu solchem Vorurteil wohl bekennen, dagegen lehrt die Geschichte, dass die grossen Meister und der Kunst niemals das hätten werden können, was sie uns wirklich geworden sind, wenn sie nicht in allen Dingen, die zu ihrer Kunst gehörten, die umfassendste und gründlichste Bildung besessen hätten." Schenker, "Vermischtes": 107.]

that the essay fits none of these categories, and all of them. Pastille paints Schenker as anti-organicist on these grounds: first, Schenker denies a purely musical causality; and second, he argues that the composer's consciousness interferes in the compositional process.<sup>158</sup> Pastille's reading rightly homes in on components of organicism which would remain central for Schenker throughout his career: music's causality and logic, and the intuitive or instinctual process necessary for the composer to produce organic artworks. Unfortunately, Pastille gives no consideration to other significant strains of thought present in the essay that also concern the organic. The result is a caricature of Schenker's message. Just one example will demonstrate. Near the end of "Geist" Schenker discusses issues of content and form. His clear preference lies with content:

. . . I nevertheless find it unnecessary and unproductive always to identify and to study the form in preference to the content. In the strict sense, after all, every content has its own form despite familial, national and racial similarities. In *complex constructions, however, one hears only the content, never the form* [emphasis original].<sup>159</sup>

Schenker's emphasis on content's shaping of form constitutes a powerful strain of organicist thinking, articulated already in the *Phaedrus* of Plato and rejuvenated by August Schlegel in his influential lectures. Schenker himself took up the issue numerous times, perhaps most pointedly in his monograph on Beethoven's Ninth Symphony: "In the beginning was content!"<sup>160</sup> In his later writings, Schenker was much concerned with

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<sup>158</sup> William Pastille, "Schenker, Anti-Organicist," *19<sup>th</sup>-Century Music* 8 (1984): 31, 32.

<sup>159</sup> Schenker, "Spirit": 102. ["... finde ich es dennoch für müßig und unproductiv, immer wieder die Form vor dem Inhalt anzusehen und zu benennen. Im strengen Sinn hat ja schliesslich ein jeder Inhalt seine eigene Form, genau so wie jeder Mensch seine eigene Form hat, trotz der Familien-, National- und Raceähnlichkeiten. Bei zusammengesetzten Bildern aber hört man immer den Inhalt, nie ihre Form." Schenker, "Geist": 152.] Allan Keiler discusses this passage in "The Origin of Schenker's Thought": 286.

<sup>160</sup> Schenker, *Beethoven's Ninth Symphony*: 4. This monograph was originally published in 1912.

demonstrating content's primacy in works be believed were organically composed. Furthermore, the earlier discussion of form in this chapter demonstrated Schenker's outright contempt for theories that privileged form over content. Pastille's failure to consider Schenker's discussion of content in "Geist" thus significantly weakens his efforts to evaluate Schenker's views on organicism at this point in his career. It is in fact impossible to assess Schenker's commitments to organicist thinking, or his lack thereof, without considering the import of a statement like this one.

Allan Keiler published his article, "The Origins of Schenker's Thought: How Man is Musical," as a response to Pastille and others like him who, Keiler argues, have adopted teleological narratives to account for "developments" and trends in Schenker's theorizing. Such narratives, argues Keiler, often take the form of pointing out in earlier writings "clear and unambiguous anticipations" of later work. "Geist" holds an anomalous position in this narrative. Does it constitute a genuine anti-organicist position, which Schenker would ultimately reject; or is it rather an instance of "conflict overcome," rendering Schenker's eventual commitment to organicism an heroic achievement over necessary obstacles?

Keiler dismisses all such narratives shaped by the "tyranny of diachronic inevitability."<sup>161</sup> In their absence, he proposes reading the essay synchronically. For him, this means studying the essay's interactions with writers from Schenker's late nineteenth-century milieu, rather than seeing it as a signpost, anomalous or not, along the way to an eventual, full-fledged commitment to organicism. Keiler's most significant contribution, as I see it, comes in his attention to Schenker's published output in the first

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<sup>161</sup> Keiler, "The Origins of Schenker's Thought": 273-275.

decade of his career: 1891-1901. Keiler proposes a view of “Geist” not as an isolated effort but as one effort within an entire decade of Schenker’s early career. Without question this approach contributes insightful, indeed necessary, data for anyone hoping to understand the import of “Geist.” Keiler undercuts his own argument, however, by his frequent invocations of Schenker’s “mature work” and his claim that we should see the work of his first decade “as the dramatic and unexpected foundation for his later theories.”<sup>162</sup> Describing Schenker’s later work as “mature” presupposes a forward-moving developmental process in his theoretical work. It posits, too, a teleological traversal from immature to mature. An attempt to read Schenker’s first-decade writings “as the dramatic and unexpected foundation for his later theories,” moreover, carries with it its own powerful narrative assumptions: these writings are integral to the writings that follow; their function is not merely synchronic but diachronic.

Korsyn’s reading of Schenker’s early essay is broader in scope than Pastille’s and Keiler’s. Korsyn relates the essay to powerful contemporaneous philosophical streams, at the same time acknowledging Schenker’s debts to idealist philosophy prominent in the first half of the nineteenth century and to philosophers from the second half of the same century. Korsyn notes, for instance, Schenker’s invocation of artificiality, a term that he attributes to the philosophy of Nietzsche. Korsyn places Schenker’s “artificiality” within a table of oppositions that includes natural/artificial, unconscious/conscious, and unwilled/willed. Korsyn then argues: “instead of accepting this system of [organicist] valorizations . . . [Schenker] deconstructs and destabilizes it by showing that the

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<sup>162</sup> Keiler, “The Origins of Schenker’s Thought”: 295.

inorganic side of the opposition contaminates the organic.”<sup>163</sup> Contamination is a strong term and rightly draws attention to Schenker’s denial that a pure, unmediated process of composition, untouched by the corrupting force of the composer’s subjectivity, is possible. It ignores, however, the polemic implicit in Schenker’s title: “Der Geist der musikalischen Technik.” Schenker argues here not for the contamination of *Geist* by *Technik* but rather for the powerful infusion of *Geist* into *Technik*.

How, then, can we read Schenker’s essay? Might I suggest, carefully. The essay is not only complex but desultory in its presentation of ideas. Though significant within Schenker’s first decade of publication, as Keiler has pointed out, the essay lacks the rigor and sophistication of later efforts such as the *Neue musikalische Theorien und Phantasien*. For my own purposes, I view “Geist” as an early attempt by Schenker to grapple with aesthetic and philosophical issues in music. As both Keiler and Korsyn have amply demonstrated, the essay shows numerous debts to Schenker’s contemporary intellectual milieu, in addition to prominent intersections with writers from the late eighteenth and first half of the nineteenth century, prominent among them Kant, Goethe, Hegel, and Schopenhauer. What has concerned me in this chapter is Schenker’s grappling with definitions of the organic, with the constellation of oppositions to which it belongs, and with its application to tonal music and to the process of composition.

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<sup>163</sup> Korsyn, “Schenker’s Organicism Reexamined”: 99. Here Korsyn cites a definition for deconstruction from Jonathan Culler, *The Pursuit of Signs: Semiotics, Literature, Deconstruction* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981): 183: “. . . a hierarchical opposition, in which one term is said to be dependent upon another conceived as prior, is in fact a rhetorical or metaphysical imposition.”

## **Chapter 5: Concluding Thoughts on the History and Survival of an Idea**

The title of the first chapter of this dissertation poses a question: “Why Organicism?” In the subsequent case studies, I hope to have presented an alternative to Kerman’s claims that the history of organicism comprises an anti-heroic narrative in which the overwhelmingly negative force of ideology triumphs, a narrative that has no winners.<sup>1</sup> If Kerman has performed an invaluable service to the music-scholarly community by exposing foundational beliefs that demand more careful examination than they have yet received, his fault, as I see it, lies primarily with where he stops. Kerman makes no attempt to explicate the dynamic philosophical framework and historical conditions necessary for a more complete understanding both of the concept of organicism itself and of the music-analytic practice to which it has given rise.

Thus, I have been concerned with two primary and related goals: first, to consider suppressed or forgotten meanings of organicism, after W.J.T. Mitchell; and second, to examine selected fields—the historical and philosophical—in which the term presents itself to us, after Leo Treitler.<sup>2</sup> My argument is this: if exposing the ideologies that inform, constrain, and shape our methodologies is imperative, then it is equally imperative to acknowledge that exclusive focus on ideology suppresses central meanings of organicism and clouds our understanding of its applications to music analysis. Can ideology be neatly separated from other avenues of inquiry? In many cases, no. Might we, however, gain important insight into a concept and its longevity by focusing our

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<sup>1</sup> See the discussion in Chapter 1, p. 11, for an earlier treatment of ideology. I revisit it on p. 279 of this chapter.

<sup>2</sup> References for Mitchell and Treitler appear in Chapter 1, pp. 2, 3 and notes 3 and 5.

investigative lens in directions other than ideology? It is my hope that through the case studies presented here I have shown precisely the value of such alternative avenues of investigation.

### **I. Suppressed and Forgotten Meanings**

Liberating suppressed or forgotten meanings of organicism proves to be both a thorny and an enriching enterprise. The enterprise is thorny because some uses of organicism prove disturbing, the vehicle of ideological and political enterprises whose values we now decry.<sup>3</sup> Kerman's exposure of ideological aspects of organicism falls into this category. The enterprise is enriching because many of the original associations of organicism supply present-day readers and listeners with some sense of the power and compelling force that first attracted its early practitioners. I have focused on the latter of these, pointing up the commanding philosophical and metaphysical import of the concept in selected historical moments of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Writings from E.T.A. Hoffmann (1810), Alexander Ul'ibishev (1843), Johann Christian Lobe (1850), Gustav Nottebohm (1860's and 70's), and Heinrich Schenker (1895-1935) have yielded rich insights not only into the meaning of the term, as evidenced by its use by individual practitioners at particular moments in history, but also its complex interactions with contemporaneous philosophical streams and music-analytic practice. Because these

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<sup>3</sup> See, for instance, recent articles by Stephen Rumph and Robert Fink. In his "A Kingdom Not of This World: The Political Context of E.T.A. Hoffmann's Beethoven Criticism," *19<sup>th</sup>-Century Music* 19 (1995), Rumph argues that Hoffmann's organic language in the Fifth Symphony review "encodes ideals of the Prussian reform movement and political Romanticism" (p. 58). Robert Fink, in his "Going Flat: Post-Hierarchical Music Theory and the Musical Surface," in *Rethinking Music*, ed. Nicholas Cook and Mark Everist (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), explores aspects of the "surface-depth" metaphor (important to both Hoffmann and Schenker), finishing up with a discussion of the cultural politics to which the metaphor gives rise.

writings appeared in print over a time span of some 125 years, I have been able to construct from them a selective timeline that places organicism in dynamic historical and philosophical settings. An essential fallout from this longitudinal approach is the significant realization that it is impossible to establish or define a single organicism. It is also impossible to identify a logical step-progression from one writer to another. Though these writers clearly interacted with a common nexus of ideas and terminology, their individual choice and application of ideas varied widely.

E.T.A. Hoffmann's review of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony counts as one of the earliest applications of organicist criticism to music analysis. Additionally, it marks the inception of a significant and enduring association of organicism with the music of Beethoven. In terms of intellectual parentage, the review shows significant debts to eighteenth-century theory of the sublime, to pantheistic belief systems that proliferated in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and to a more general theory of Romanticism whose origins lie in early nineteenth-century literary theory. Hoffmann's review also shows his struggles to develop language and models to account for the dramatic and overwhelming effects of Beethoven's music. Finally, the review reveals Hoffmann's efforts to establish an image of Beethoven as a composer whose works exhibit sufficient evidence of *hohe Besonnenheit* as to be credible with audiences already committed to the music of Haydn and Mozart.

Ulißishev's biography of Mozart exemplifies a growing trend to include in biographical writings a significant discussion of the composer's compositional output. For Ulißishev this resulted in two complete volumes dedicated to analytic discussions of Mozart's music. Most significantly for this investigation, Ulißishev employed organic

terminology to describe Mozart's compositional process and musical relationships in the completed composition. His approach to the matter could hardly be said to have initiated any specific analytic method. In fact, he openly decried any such system. His belief in the universality and timeless worth of Mozart's music did, however, prove portentous for later discussions of music that writers termed organic. As I demonstrated in Chapter 4, eternally valid principles and the notion of artworks that transcend their historical milieu count as central tenets of Schenker's theoretical enterprise.

In his multi-volume *Lehrbuch*, Lobe employs organic imagery to describe only the initial moments of composition. His essentially pragmatic agenda, driven by his pedagogical intent, sustains only a brief engagement with organic principles of composition. The remainder he places under the umbrella of mechanics. His encounter with a small quantity of Beethoven's sketches, however, provides fascinating insight into an early attempt to work with the musical content of the sketches. In addition, his efforts in this area supply significant context for the work of Nottebohm and for the sustained musicological and music-analytic interest in sketches that persists to the present day.

Nottebohm's articles on Beethoven's sketches appeared in the 1860's. His concern in defining the organic lay almost exclusively with its application to compositional process. Beethoven's sketches would seem an ideal source for such scholarly endeavors. The fragmentary nature of the sketches, however, made Nottebohm uneasy about attributing organic qualities to the momentary compositional processes they record. Nottebohm's reticence concerning the organic, potentially a pitfall for a study such as the one undertaken here, in fact yields crucial insight into his own philosophical confrontation between the idealist organic and the positivist.

Schenker's engagement with organicism spanned his entire career. Some of the earliest studies of Schenker's intellectual debts, Pastille's prominent among them, focus on writings of Goethe and early nineteenth-century idealism.<sup>4</sup> More recent scholarship, especially that of Keiler and Korsyn, has emphasized borrowings from his early twentieth-century cultural and intellectual milieu.<sup>5</sup> My own study of Schenker has focused on the mechanical-organic opposition and its shaping force throughout Schenker's career. A dialectical understanding of real and ideal, counterpoint and free composition, proves central to his formulation of the relationship between the realms.

Schenker's work can be seen as a culmination of organic thinking to that point in history. The comprehensiveness and dedication with which he pursued his projects and the passion with which he argued for the centrality of organicism to his analytic enterprise is surely unmatched by any other writer. He was not, however, the last to take up organic principles and include them as an integral component of his theoretical agenda. Two contemporaries of Schenker, Arnold Schoenberg (1874-1951) and his pupil Anton Webern (1883-1945), pursued organicist applications to music with great zeal. In his *Fundamentals of Musical Composition*, Schoenberg describes musical form in organic terms, writing on the very first page that "form means that a piece is organized: i.e. that it consists of elements functioning like those of a living organism. . . ."<sup>6</sup> In his lecture series *The Path to the New Music*, Webern makes frequent reference to central tenets of organic thought as explicated by Goethe. In the first lecture he cites Goethe's

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<sup>4</sup> Pastille's dissertation is an important early example. See citation in Chapter 1, p. 16, n. 26.

<sup>5</sup> I discuss articles by Keiler and Korsyn in Chapter 4, pp. 265-276.

<sup>6</sup> Arnold Schoenberg, *Fundamentals of Musical Composition*, ed. G. Strang and L. Stein (London, Faber and Faber: 1967): 1 [written 1937—1948]. Cited in Arnold Whittall, "Form," *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. L. Mace (Accessed 2 March 2003), <http://www.grovemusic.com>

injunction that true works of art demonstrate necessity.<sup>7</sup> In the same lecture Webern counts as essential Goethe's search for hidden natural laws. Webern believes that uncovering these hidden laws will enlighten assessments of music of his own time, the so-called "new music."<sup>8</sup> Finally, as Kerman's critique has demonstrated, organicism has continued to exert powerful influence as a model for music analysts through much of the twentieth century, especially through applications of Schenker's theories.

I am not alone in my efforts to rehabilitate meanings of organicism other than ideological. Ruth Solie's article "The Living Work: Organicism and Musical Analysis," published in *19<sup>th</sup>-Century Music* in 1980, provides an invaluable introduction to formulations of organicism in the nineteenth century and applications thereof in the theories of Schenker and Réti.<sup>9</sup> Indeed, in my own research this article has proven to be the most oft-cited source treating the topic of organicism. Solie's most significant contributions in the article lie in her documentation of idealist components of the organic concept and in her illustration of idealist thought at work in the theorizing of Schenker and Réti. What I wish to emphasize here is the introductory nature of this publication. Ten pages, however densely packed and skillfully argued as hers are, can only begin to acquaint us with the central issues concerning organicism. Solie's exclusive focus on the writings of Schenker and Réti, moreover, shows organicism only at a very late stage of its history as a model and metaphor for music analysts. Finally, Solie's attention primarily

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<sup>7</sup> The quotation from Goethe that Webern gives is one I cited in Chapter 3, p. 148. German original appears in n. 41.

<sup>8</sup> Anton Webern, *The Path to the New Music*, ed. Willi Reich, trans. Leo Black (Vienna: Universal Edition, 1963): 11, 12.

<sup>9</sup> Ruth Solie, "The Living Work: Organicism and Musical Analysis," *19<sup>th</sup>-Century Music* 4 (1980): 147-156. Solie's article appeared in the same year as Kerman's "How We Got Into Analysis." Neither author refers to the other, and Solie's work is in no sense a response to Kerman.

to idealist philosophy omits other philosophical strains—among them Goethe’s mix of idealism and empiricism, Kant’s and Schopenhauer’s transcendentalism, and Comte’s positivism—that proved formative for treatments of organicism throughout the nineteenth century and into the twentieth.

In his article “Organic Form and the Binary Repeat,”<sup>10</sup> Michael Broyles considers the notion of the organic nature of musical structure as a shaping factor in the change observed in the second half of the eighteenth century from binary forms in which both halves were repeated to those in which repeat indications appear only for the first half. Based on a survey of 347 pieces, Broyles concludes that, prior to 1780, both halves of a binary structure were almost always repeated. By the 1780s he notes the pattern beginning to change: sometimes the score indicates that both halves be repeated, other times only the first half. By 1800, Broyles concludes, the use of second-half repeat signs appears archaic. He then speculates as to what factors motivated such a change. He concludes that the dramatic intellectual reorientation from the eighteenth to the nineteenth centuries—a central component of which involved the organism supplanting the mechanism as the predominant model for science, literature and philosophy—contributed to composers doing away with the repeat sign for the second half of the binary structure. He believes that the repeat of both sections fit well with the desire for balance and symmetry demanded by the galant model, but that such repeats proved less compatible with the teleological demands of the organic model. In fact, argues Broyles, the second-half repeats are in direct conflict with the organic model because they delay the on-going progress that characterizes organic structures. Interestingly, Broyles does

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<sup>10</sup> Michael Broyles, “Organic Form and the Binary Repeat,” *The Musical Quarterly* 66 (1980): 339-360.

not consider the effect of the first-half repeat on the overall dynamic process of the organic musical work. Does the repeat of the exposition not also count as a delay? One suspects that it does.<sup>11</sup>

Robert Pascall's short "Organicist Meditations" appears in *Music Analysis* in 1982.<sup>12</sup> His intent in the article is to comment on then recently published work that brings "renewed attention to the term *organic*, together with its related words and concepts" (p. 112). The articles by Solie and Broyles (discussed here) take first place in the discussion. To his summary of these writers he adds commentary on an article by Ian Bent, "Analytical Thinking in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century," on Raymond Williams's *Keywords*, and on various writings of Schoenberg, especially his *Fundamentals of Musical Composition*.<sup>13</sup> In my view, Pascall's most important contribution lies with his consideration of what organicism offers to more recent music-analytic models. My own study is concerned primarily with selected moments in the history of organicism; Pascall shows how the model can enrich language-analogue analysis and semiotics.

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<sup>11</sup> Grétry's remark from Volume III of his 1797 *Mémoires* is also important. Concerning the practice of repeating both halves of a binary movement, he writes: "A sonata is an oration [discours]. What are we to think of a man who, dividing his discourse in half, repeats each half? 'I was at your house this morning; yes, I was at your house this morning to talk to you about something; to talk with you about something'. . . . I speak above all of the long reprises that constitute the halves of an oration. Reprises may have been good at the birth of music, at a time when the listener did not comprehend everything until the second time around. I know that an oration is often divided into two section; but without a doubt, one does not present each twice." Cited in Mark Evan Bonds, *Wordless Rhetoric: Musical Form and the Metaphor of the Oration* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991): 130, 131. Notably, Grétry argues for omitting repeats because he believes the music constitutes (metaphorically) not an organism but an oration.

<sup>12</sup> Robert Pascall, "Organicist Meditations," *Music Analysis* 1 (1982): 112-116.

<sup>13</sup> Ian Bent, "Analytical Thinking in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century," in *Modern Musical Scholarship*, ed. Edward Olleson (Stockfield: Oriel, 1980).

In his dissertation, “Ursatz: The Musical Philosophy of Heinrich Schenker,” William Pastille takes a giant step forward in providing a detailed and comprehensive study of organicism in the writings of Schenker.<sup>14</sup> As indicated by the title, philosophy is central to Pastille’s inquiry. His work is especially important for its unprecedentedly detailed explication of Goethe’s thought as it applies to the later theory of Heinrich Schenker, specifically, Schenker’s formulation of the *Ursatz*. Pastille’s elegant presentation includes discussions of idealism, organicism, morphology, Goethe’s influence on Schenker’s thought and, finally, the *Ursatz*.

David Montgomery’s interest, in his article “The Myth of Organicism: From Bad Science to Great Art,” lies with scientific formulations of organicism in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Montgomery begins with Johann Gottfried von Herder’s “organic” vision of history (1774) and demonstrates how Herder’s protégé, Goethe, applied organicism to his (Goethe’s) own views of history, philosophy, and art, as well as to his specific view of the natural world.<sup>15</sup> Montgomery’s study is valuable on many counts. For one, he provides an important eighteenth-century context for formulations of organicism. Second, he argues that a model other than Goethe’s, that set forth by Jean Baptiste Robinet, relates more closely to early nineteenth-century musical practice than does Goethe’s. Finally, to correct what he sees as a lopsided emphasis on theorists (Schenker and Réti) and composers (Schoenberg) of the twentieth century, Montgomery seeks “to reintroduce the metaphor to the nineteenth-century music it first served and to examine the effectiveness of that service without the aid of an intervening

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<sup>14</sup> Pastille, “Ursatz: The Musical Philosophy of Heinrich Schenker,” Ph. D. Diss., Cornell University, 1985.

<sup>15</sup> David Montgomery, “The Myth of Organicism: From Bad Science to Great Art,” *The Musical Quarterly* 76 (1992): 17.

system” (p. 24). My own study is indebted to Montgomery for his attention to Herder and Goethe and for his interest in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century formulations of organic thought.

Lotte Thaler’s *Organische Form in der Musiktheorie des 19. und beginnenden 20. Jahrhunderts* has as its focus form.<sup>16</sup> Thaler’s primary interest lies with applying Goethe’s proposed process of plant metamorphosis to Marx’s theory of formal evolution, though she considers Hegelian input to Marx’s thought as well. This first organic model, comprising the centerpiece of the book, she terms the morphological (a topic also taken up by Pastille). Later in her study she gives an account of what she calls the energetic organic model. This she applies to the writings of both August Halm and Heinrich Schenker. Thaler’s book addresses materials that in many respects are beyond the scope of my own study. For example, I treat form not as a centerpiece of the discussion but only as it arises in conjunction with other aspects of the organic. Furthermore, while I consider Goethe’s writings on the development of plants, my greater interest lies with writings that give a broader view of organicism and its terms.

In her article “Covert and Casual Values in Recent Writings about Music,” Janet Levy draws attention to the value judgments implicit in organic language as used by many of its practitioners. Her intent is to expose not just casual values “but also, and more insidiously, covert ones.” She characterizes the valuation implicit in organic

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<sup>16</sup> Lotte Thaler, *Organische Form in der Musiktheorie des 19. und beginnenden 20. Jahrhunderts* (Munich: Musikverlag E. Katzschler, 1984). Scott Burnham addresses some of Thaler’s arguments in “The Role of Sonata Form in A.B. Marx’s Theory of Form,” *Journal of Music Theory* 33 (1989): 247-269. See especially pages 262-267.

language as “suspect,” and she locates such implicit valuation in the camp of all “covert or undercover operations.”<sup>17</sup>

In the main body of the article, Levy presents a detailed catalogue of organic terminology, demonstrating in each case the ways in which individual writers employ the terminology to account for what is valuable in the music under discussion. Central terms that she documents include: (1) “the core metaphor of organicism, that of a seed germinating and developing into a full-blown plant (p. 5)”; (2) “economy,” both of thematic material and of orchestration (pp. 7-11); (3) the tendency to value late works over earlier ones (pp. 15-17). One of the key points of her article appears in the context of economy. Here she writes:

At issue here is that economy as a value arose in and was dependent on particular cultural/ideological contexts. But as it tends to be used in writings about music it is an ascription of praise (usually covert) that is seldom made with explicit regard to a particular context. That is, the value, which was in its origins context-dependent, has been made absolute; it has been reified in a general way and without regard to context or precise meaning (p. 11).

For this author, Levy’s point is well taken. When language becomes divorced from its original context(s), writers and readers both lose foundational components of its meanings. Restoring organic language to some of its original contexts has been one of my over-arching concerns for this project. While Levy focuses on the covert use of organic language to express value, my own focus has been on the philosophical content of organicism and, more specifically, the ways in which that content changes at particular historical moments in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

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<sup>17</sup> Levy, “Covert and Casual Values in Recent Writings About Music” *Journal of Musicology* 5 (1987): 3. Additional page number references appear in parentheses in the main body of the text.

One final publication must be included in this discussion: Ian Bent's two-volume *Music Analysis in the Nineteenth Century*.<sup>18</sup> These volumes make available in translation a veritable trove of source documents in music analysis from the nineteenth century. Bent's focus in his project is not one particular analytic model. He does include, however, valuable information about organicism and its concomitant terms. In his introduction to the first volume, he provides detailed accounts of biological models for music analysis and of important terms related to those models: *Zergliederung* (dissection), *zerlegen* (to take apart), *Probe* (experiment), all terms taken from eighteenth-century natural sciences and applied by Mattheson to "the living forms of music" (p. 7). In the same introduction Bent includes sections on "Music as Organism" (p. 11) and "Musical Organism and the Tools of Description (p. 14)." The former presents a valuable discussion of "unity" in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The latter details technical vocabulary for characterizing and describing musical structures in organic terms from Marpurg through to Wagner, Schenker and Schoenberg.

## II. Ideology and Philosophy

In conjunction with liberating suppressed or forgotten meanings of organicism, the case studies have served another purpose: emphasizing philosophical content over ideological. But how does philosophical content differ from ideological? In the first chapter, I cite this definition of ideology from the *Oxford Companion to Philosophy*:  
 "... a collection of beliefs and values held by an individual or group for other than purely

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<sup>18</sup> Ian Bent, *Music Analysis in the Nineteenth Century*, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

epistemic reasons, e.g. bourgeois ideology, nationalist ideology, or gender ideology.”<sup>19</sup>

For the present discussion, emphasis lies with the phrase “for other than purely epistemic reasons.” According to this qualification, ideology centers on ideas that do not further knowledge but instead further beliefs, values, and interests held by the group or individual in question.

Two definitions from the *Oxford Companion to Philosophy* show how philosophy differs from ideology:

- (a) . . . philosophy is thinking about thinking.
- (b) . . . philosophy is rationally critical thinking, of a more or less systematic kind about the general nature of the world (metaphysics or theory of existence), the justification of belief (epistemology or theory of knowledge), and the conduct of life (ethics or theory of value).<sup>20</sup>

Philosophical inquiry, then, typically falls into three broad categories: metaphysics, epistemology, and ethics. In my case studies I have attempted to deduce from selected writers epistemological and ontological frameworks. For present purposes, I adopt the following definition of epistemology: “the study or a theory of the nature and grounds of knowledge especially with reference to its limits and validity.”<sup>21</sup> Ontology is “the science of being in general, embracing such issues as the nature of existence and the categorical structure of reality.”<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> This is a shortened version of the definition I cited in Chapter 1, p. 11.

<sup>20</sup> The Right Hon. Lord Quinton, “Philosophy,” in *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy*: 666. William Rothstein has pointed out to me that a kind of quadrivium of philosophy existed in the nineteenth century. This included aesthetics as its fourth category.

<sup>21</sup> “epistemology,” *Merriam-Webster Dictionary Online* (Accessed 19 October 2002) [http://dictionary.oed.com/cgi/entry\\_main/](http://dictionary.oed.com/cgi/entry_main/)

<sup>22</sup> E.J. Lowe, “Ontology,” in *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy*: 634.

How do these definitions relate to the figures of the three case studies?

Nottebohm, for one, struggled toward a definition of a term that figured centrally to his contemporary cultural conversation. Like other writers before him, Nottebohm was committed to the belief that Beethoven's music, in its completed form, was organic and, furthermore, that it came into being in an organic way. He found the evidence of the sketches disturbing, however. They did not yield the kind of data that he hoped for: a single, predictable manner of creation whose laws could be observed and clearly formulated. He thus adopted a definition of the organic that, in sharp contrast to Goethe, was removed from the world of plants and other growing things. He located the organic instead in the realm of metaphysics, effectively severing its ties with the real world of growing things. Even so, he never felt entirely comfortable with his appraisal, as evident by his conflicting perspectives in the essay on the *Eroica* symphony as compared to the introductions to the *Beethoveniana* publications.<sup>23</sup>

Although the organic concept in various of its nineteenth-century incarnations had been in circulation for some fifty years by the time Nottebohm was writing, he did not view its application as clear-cut and obvious. Neither did he accept it without interrogating its terms. Furthermore, while he felt compelled to introduce the concept, he could not satisfactorily describe its relation to his own work with the sketches. Had he adopted organic language merely as an ideology, I believe he would have applied it unthinkingly to his work with the sketches. He was already committed to the notion that organic works come into being via organic means. What better way to validate Beethoven's compositional method than to declare that the sketches revealed this valued

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<sup>23</sup> See discussion above, Chapter 3, pp. 174-178.

organic process? And yet, this is precisely the ideological route that Nottebohm did not take.

Did Nottebohm then engage philosophical questions? In fact, epistemological issues form a constant backdrop to Nottebohm's work. His scholarly endeavors involving the production of complete-works editions and thematic catalogues, one of the main foci of his scholarly career, fall into a methodological framework that Kerman has termed positivist.<sup>24</sup> Such a label invokes Collingwood's formulation, which describes positivist historical method as a two-step process: gathering facts and framing laws (see above, p. 182). This was clearly the type of enterprise Nottebohm hoped to adopt for the sketches. The untidy evidence he uncovered, however, injected into the project so profound an uncertainty that Nottebohm was reluctant to advance positive claims concerning the knowledge he might glean from them. His writings give evidence that he drew a distinct boundary between that which he could establish unequivocally (positivist), and that which fell outside of such firmly bounded epistemological categories (idealist or transcendentalist). Though he was more comfortable with the former, he found it impossible to ignore the latter. What he ultimately communicated to his readers was his profound discomfort in accounting for the palpable but indefinable presence of these idealist and transcendentalist realities.

What about Hoffmann and Schenker? Where do they fit into the ideology-philosophy continuum? In "How We Got Into Analysis," Kerman spells out what he believes to be the central component of organicist ideology: "the orthodox belief . . . in

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<sup>24</sup> Leo Treitler's review of Kerman's *Contemplating Music* pointedly challenges the validity of applying the positivist label to the production of complete works editions. See Treitler, "The Power of Positivist Thinking": *passim*.

the overriding aesthetic value of the instrumental music of the great German tradition.”<sup>25</sup> Undoubtedly, this belief figures importantly in both Hoffmann’s and Schenker’s music-theoretical work. At the same time, however, it can hardly be said to account for the breadth or the longevity of ideas propounded by either man. Not only did both writers engage issues other than ideology, but, it is also my contention that these other issues merit consideration in evaluating and accounting for the import and enduring character of their work. Hoffmann’s interest in the powerful and overwhelming effects of Beethoven’s music, for instance, pushed him to employ the philosophical language of Burke and Kant. When describing the “second half” of the first movement of the Fifth Symphony Hoffmann details “sounds at which the breast, pressed and made anxious by presentiments of the monstrous/enormous (*Ungeheuren*), struggles for air.”<sup>26</sup> At one level this counts as an interest in the physiology of listening. At another, it shows Hoffmann’s adoption of the language of the sublime to express in words the dramatic effects of Beethoven’s music.

Furthermore, when Hoffmann employs the image of a tree to describe relationships among the themes of a Beethoven symphony he chooses an image with well-established currency in his cultural and intellectual milieu as a symbol of pantheistic philosophical and religious systems. This symbol also figured centrally in August Schlegel’s critical work on Shakespeare. The crucial question is: does Hoffmann adduce the tree as a mode of explanation which furthers knowledge or one which furthers beliefs? This is a case where the line between the two cannot be clearly drawn. Undoubtedly, Hoffmann hopes to advance interest by garnering positive audience

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<sup>25</sup> Kerman, “How We Got into Analysis”: 15.

<sup>26</sup> Cited in Chapter 2, p. 56. German original appears in n. 22.

responses for Beethoven's music. The story does not end there, however. Hoffmann argues that audiences must deepen their theoretical knowledge of Beethoven's music to better appreciate it. To this end he advances a detailed study of Beethoven's music designed to increase the audience's intellectual grasp of the music. In other words, he seeks to advance knowledge.

Schenker engaged issues of ontology throughout his publishing career. His ongoing efforts to define the nature of counterpoint provide a window into his thinking about music's existence and its categorical structure. Sustained pitches from a contrapuntal exercise, for instance, can exist in multiple ontological frameworks. In *Kontrapunkt II*, Schenker writes of sounding tones, of these same tones sustained in the listener's memory, and of *geistig* tones that supersede the durational quality of both.<sup>27</sup> Sounding tones exist in the real world and in real time. Their sound waves physically impact the eardrum; their duration can be measured with an appropriate device. Tones sustained in memory have an ontological existence somewhere between sounding and *geistig* tones. They do not embody the physical qualities of a sound wave. They do, however, constitute a memory trace of a real phenomenon. The *geistig* tones differ from both of these categories. They have no physical existence. They record no trace of a physical event. To use Schenker's terms, they are "purely *geistig* in nature" (CII: 57).

Is Schenker involved here in furthering an ideology? One could argue that his concern to demonstrate *geistig* qualities of counterpoint constitutes an attempt to further the interests of German idealist philosophy. Indeed, the untranslatability of *Geist* draws attention to it as a distinctively German term. In terms of ontology, moreover, invoking

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<sup>27</sup> Schenker, CII: 57, 58. See discussion above, pp. 205-208.

*Geist* is hardly a “pure” choice. Schenker clearly considers *geistig* existence superior to other kinds of existence. His writings involve an interesting paradox, however. The polemical title of his early essay, “Der Geist der musikalischen Technik,” for instance, declares his early intent to challenge received notions of *Geist*. For organicist thinkers of the late nineteenth century, Schenker’s title presents an ontological conundrum: *Technik*, with its foundations in the realm of the real and the concrete, counts as polar opposite to *Geist*.<sup>28</sup> Since it exists on the wrong side of the mechanical/organic opposition, *Technik* could be viewed only as a corruption of a necessarily pure, unmediated process of composition.

Schenker’s article “Geist” is anomalous in terms of its sharp questioning of received organicist doctrine. Nevertheless, Schenker revisits in later publications the challenge set forth in his title, questioning the purity of *Geist* that lies at the heart of much organicist thinking. As I noted in Chapter 4, in the introduction to *Kontrapunkt I* Schenker argues for the centrality of *Technik* in the musical education of the composer. He goes so far as to invoke an organic image to describe *Technik*: “Is not the technique of a work comparable to the health of a body whose organs fulfill all the functions nature demands of them. . . ?”<sup>29</sup> In fact, Schenker’s lifelong preoccupation with counterpoint and its functioning sometimes in real, sometimes in ideal, realms repeatedly challenges the discreteness of the boundaries established by earlier and contemporaneous writers. A central component of this challenge was the time-honored idealist concept of *Geist*.

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<sup>28</sup> See table (p. 189) and discussion above, pp. 254, 261-263.

<sup>29</sup> Schenker, *Counterpoint I*: xxi. Cited above on p. 262 and n. 156.

### III. History

History figures importantly in an understanding of the changing emphases and definitions of organicism. In his article “Schenker’s Organicism Reexamined,” Kevin Korsyn offers an alternative to formal definition, what he calls “inscribing [a] term in history to grasp its nuances and implications.”<sup>30</sup> The advantages I see in Korsyn’s method are twofold: first, the method acknowledges the fluid nature of terms and concepts; and second, it argues for the importance of history in understanding a term or concept. Changing notions about what it means for artists to create in an organic manner, observed in the time span investigated here, provide interesting cases in point. In the early nineteenth century, Hoffmann felt compelled to demonstrate in Beethoven’s music evidence of a compositional process that included *Besonnenheit*. Charges that Beethoven had failed to achieve a productive balance between the irrational forces of *Phantasie* and rational capacities of *Besonnenheit* demanded from Hoffmann a serious and sustained defense. Borrowing ideas from August Schlegel, Hoffmann argued that Beethoven’s organic process of composition included both rational and irrational, conscious and unconscious elements, working in a comprehensible and creative manner.

In his essay on the sketches for the *Eroica* symphony, published in 1880, Nottebohm repeats this formulation of Hoffmann’s, claiming that “it is abundantly clear that Beethoven reflected, and the force he brought to bear was reflective

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<sup>30</sup> Korsyn, “Schenker’s Organicism Reexamined”: 88. Korsyn calls on Nietzsche in establishing his own methodology: “only that which has no history is definable.” Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, ed. Walter Kaufmann, trans. Kaufmann and R.J. Hollingdale (New York: Vintage Books, 1969): 80. Cited in Korsyn: 88.

understanding.”<sup>31</sup> His introductions to the *Beethoveniana* collections, published in 1872 and 1887, respectively, present a markedly different perspective on the matter. Here Nottebohm writes of “the spirit that dictated a work” and “the law by which Beethoven allowed himself to be led.”<sup>32</sup> These descriptions remove Beethoven’s consciousness from the compositional process entirely. Which of these describes most accurately Nottebohm’s beliefs about how Beethoven composed? And which counts as organic? As I noted in Chapter 3, Nottebohm finds it impossible to settle upon a definition of the organic. Here we see that he is also reluctant to choose between the rational and the *geistig*/unconscious and to clarify which of these counts as organic.

Of the opposing faculties included by Hoffmann and Nottebohm—*Besonnenheit* versus *Phantasie*, rational versus *geistig*, and conscious versus unconscious—Schenker gives the greatest importance to the second of each pair. His focus lies with the unconscious and, especially, with the artist’s intuition. The artist Schenker describes in *Harmonielehre* is distinguished by his powers of instinct and intuition and by the power of his unconscious mind.<sup>33</sup> Owing to his instinct and intuition, the artist finds himself especially susceptible to Nature’s hints. Schenker retains these essential features in later descriptions of the artist. In the *Miscellanea*, for instance, he writes: “It is through their instinct that God manifests himself in animals. In human genius God manifests himself no differently.”<sup>34</sup> Here again Schenker praises the artist’s instinct. The most striking

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<sup>31</sup> Nottebohm, *Two Beethoven Sketchbooks*: 97, 98. This quotation, together with the German original, appears in Chapter 3, p. 175, n. 91.

<sup>32</sup> Nottebohm, *Zweite Beethoveniana*: VIII. A detailed discussion of this aspect of Nottebohm’s writings appears in Chapter 3, pp. 160ff.

<sup>33</sup> See discussion in Chapter 4, p. 224.

<sup>34</sup> Schenker, *Miscellanea*: 69. [“Gott offenbart sich im Tier durch dessen Instinkt. Nicht anders offenbart sich Gott auch im Menschengenie.” Schenker, *Vermischtes*: 105.]

conceptual change is Schenker's recourse to God. Implicit notions of the composer as priest become explicit as Schenker claims that "The genius's inner gaze is directed ever upwards, towards the Creator, and towards those endowed by Him who fashion their works as if in His name."<sup>35</sup> Nature remains central to artistic processes, but at this point Schenker emphasizes the fact of its creation by God. In fact, in his later writings he frequently uses a constellation of terms almost synonymously: God, Nature, truth.

These three writers on the organic process of composition demonstrate changing emphases in the formulation from the early to the late nineteenth century and from there to the early twentieth century. Hoffmann's concern in 1810 lies primarily with the terms *Phantasie* and *Besonnenheit*. Later writers do not use the term *Besonnenheit*. Nottebohm, writing in the 1860's and 70's, states simply that Beethoven reflected. In his introductions, moreover, he focuses on the presence of *geistig* qualities and a *Gesetz des Geistes* as components of the organic. *Phantasie* carries less weight for him. Schenker is most interested in unconscious, intuitive aspects of composing. His description of Haydn composing resembles very powerfully Nottebohm's descriptions of Beethoven: "The *Urlinie* and *Bassbrechung* ruled over him with the power of an instinct, . . ."<sup>36</sup> Finally, as evident from his statements in the *Miscellanea*, we see Schenker's view of the composer as a true high priest of art who receives his artistic knowledge directly from God through the powers of his intuition.

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<sup>35</sup> Schenker, *Miscellanea*: 69. ["Der innere Blick des Genies ist immer aufwärts gerichtet: zum Schöpfer und zu den von Ihm Begnadeten, die gleichsam in Seinem Namen schaffend wirken." Schenker, *Vermischtes*: 105.]

<sup>36</sup> Schenker, "On Organicism in Sonata Form": 24. Cited, together with the German original, in Chapter 4, p. 250, and n. 129.

Returning to Korsyn's method of inscribing terms in history, the potential danger I see in it is relativism: it is possible for the method to emphasize the individuality of a writer's approach to so great an extent that it fails to acknowledge elements constant to the definition or to recognize significant connections that exist across and among users. If I have previously argued that no single definition of organicism is possible, I do believe that certain core meanings can be identified and elucidated. For this reason I have turned many times to the writings of Plato and Aristotle. These writers established seminal components of the organic concept, components so compelling that writers of the early nineteenth century took them up for their own work. Among these ancient Greek tenets are the integral relationships of parts to whole (Plato), the integrity of each part within that whole (Aristotle), and the delineation of the organic by means of its contrast with the mechanical (Plato).<sup>37</sup> Later writers contributed other central and enduring facets to the concept, some of which appear in articles published in the second edition of *The New Grove Dictionary*. From the article on Beethoven, the "Middle-Period Works," Joseph Kerman, Alan Tyson, and Scott Burnham write:

More than any other piece of music, the Fifth Symphony has come to typify the thematic unification, or 'organicism', as the 19<sup>th</sup> century viewed it, that Beethoven developed to such a high degree in these years. The famous opening motif is to be heard in almost every bar of the first movement—and, allowing for modifications, in the other movements.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> These definitions and ideas have been cited and discussed earlier. See Chapter 1, pp. 4, 5, and Chapter 4, pp. 255, 256

<sup>38</sup> Joseph Kerman, Alan Tyson, Scott Burnham, "Beethoven," *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. L. Mace (Accessed 18 October 2002), <<http://www.grovemusic.com>>. This quotation appeared in Chapter 2, p. 88, n. 82.

Two aspects of these writers' implicit definition are important for this discussion: (1) the writers equate organicism with thematic unification; and (2) the writers identify this definition as a product of nineteenth-century thinking.<sup>39</sup>

The motif- and theme-based unity described by Kerman *et al.* constitutes a central component of organicist thinking, especially as articulated by a writer like Hoffmann or Ul'ibishev. Two terms are central to these definitions: motif/theme and unity. *Kern* (kernel) or *Keim* (germ), common German nouns used by music analysts to identify the smallest motivic or thematic element of a musical work, make clear references to the nineteenth century's preoccupation with biology.<sup>40</sup> Ul'ibishev, writing in French, adopts the term "motif." This preoccupation resulted in organicism's being infused with plant-world associations and described with terminology original to that field. The latter term bound up with organicism, unity, intersects with the nineteenth century's renewed interest in unity in settings both cosmic and microcosmic. Pantheists applied concepts of unity in their explanations of the functioning of the universe. A philosopher like Fichte was especially interested in unity as it applied to consciousness. Finally, unity has been integral to the notion of the organic at least since the time of Aristotle. The qualification "theme- and/or motif-based" organic unity thus counts as an identifiably nineteenth-

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<sup>39</sup> In the article "Romanticism," Jim Samson writes: "In technical terms, then, we would trace some of the effects of an expressive aesthetic, notably on harmonic practice, *while recognizing the arguably opposing impulse towards organically unified works, notably in thematic working* [emphasis added]." Jim Samson, "Romanticism," *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. L. Mace (Accessed 18 October 2002), <<http://www.grovemusic.com>>. This definition, like Kerman's, identifies thematic unity as the hallmark of organicism.

<sup>40</sup> Nottebohm uses the term *Kern* in a reference to the theme for the second movement of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. Reference appears in Chapter 3, p. 155, n. 53. Lobe uses the term *Keim* to describe the beginning stage of composition: "I shall now indicate to the student the way in which a composition is invented and brought into existence, from the first and tiniest germ [*Keim*] right through to full development and execution. . . ." Reference appears in Chapter 1, p. 36, n. 62.

century contribution.

This definition supplied by Kerman and others contributes central and enduring components of the organic. It falters, however, on a crucial point: he and the other authors of the Beethoven article consider relationships only within the completed work and express no concern for the processes by which the composer produced the work. For E.T.A. Hoffmann and his contemporary August Schlegel these processes were central to the notion of the organic. Had he been unable to demonstrate the valued traces of *hohe Besonnenheit* in the Fifth Symphony, Hoffmann would have been forced to rescind his argument for its being organic. As I noted in Chapter 1, moreover, both Lobe and Ul'ibishev felt it essential, within the context of a textbook and a discussion of a composer's repertoire, respectively, to include an accounting of the process by which works came into being. Lobe, Nottebohm, and Schenker used source documents to buttress and inform their sense of how these processes occurred. For Schenker this process took the form of improvisation. Nottebohm made no explicit arguments as to the precise nature of this procedure. He claimed simply that "If we understand [a piece of music] as an organic formation, we must also assume that it came into being by organic means. . . ." <sup>41</sup>

Essential and lasting components of the organic concept thus include: first, the ancient emphasis on relations of parts to whole; second, the nineteenth-century preoccupation with a theme- or motif-based unity; and third, the nineteenth-century emphasis on an organic process as essential prerequisite to the organic product. Other terms and ideas have also achieved significance as lasting components of the concept.

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<sup>41</sup> Nottebohm, *Ein Skizzenbuch*: 7. Cited, together with the German original, in Chapter 3, p. 174, n. 87.

These include necessity, the import of laws, and the notion of a deep structure that can be uncovered through analysis. Finally, for the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries there is the central figure of the genius, without whom the organic work of art would not be possible. It is this combination of components, both ancient and modern, that constitute the core of organicist critical and analytic method in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

#### IV. Metaphor

A final topic deserves to be revisited here: the importance of the organism as a metaphor. Writings about music depend heavily upon metaphor. This is true not only for the nineteenth century but also for the present.<sup>42</sup> In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, many writers openly proclaimed the value of metaphor (see discussion above, pp. 19, 20). Decoding metaphors adduced by writers studied here thus figures centrally to the larger task of liberating suppressed or forgotten meanings. Morse Peckham, cited in Chapter 1, defines a metaphor as an instance of placing in the same category words that conventionally do not belong together. For Peckham, the metaphor dies when it has become so conventionalized that the reader no longer recognizes the incongruity of the terms placed together.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Arnie Cox, in a paper given at the Music Theory Society of New York State's annual meeting in 2000, demonstrated the pervasiveness of the metaphor "states are locations." Thus, the state of being "in love" becomes a specific location. Applied to music, this takes the form of being "in a key." But what does it mean to be *in* a key? Cox's point is this: even such familiar and seemingly neutral language as identifying keys and modulations relies upon metaphor. Arnie Cox, "Where Musical Places Come From: The Conceptual Metaphor STATES ARE LOCATIONS." Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Music Theory Society of New York State, New York University, April 2000.

<sup>43</sup> See Peckham, "Metaphor": 408, 409.

In the case studies presented here, my intent has been to defamiliarize categorizations that have become so familiar as to be self-evident. In Peckham's terms, my task has been to resuscitate metaphors that have died. Two examples illustrate: first, Hoffmann's comparison of the unity of a symphony with that of a tree; and second, Lobe's and other writers' claim that a musical work begins its life as a seed. In the case of the tree metaphor, the image from nature represents the unity inherent in a pantheistic universe. In applying the image to Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, Hoffmann places in the same category the unity of the symphony and that of the tree. This understanding of organic unity is rather different from the theme- and motif-based organic unity identified by Kerman and Samson in the *New Grove* articles cited in this chapter. While this pantheistic understanding does not discount their definition, it does force us to reconsider our own assumptions about organic unity and what, precisely, we mean when we claim that musical works exhibit organic unity. Whose definition do we draw upon? What attributes of the organic do we apply to the music under consideration?

Claiming that a musical work begins its life as a seed depends in some circumstances upon literal beliefs about how composers work: they begin composing with a small motive or theme to which some writers in the nineteenth century assigned the term "seed" [*Keim* or *Kern*]. Lobe's study of a small quantity of Beethoven's sketches, many of which began with a short musical idea, provided tangible evidence to corroborate his use of this image. The metaphor is not limited, however, to such literal imperatives. For other writers, this seed represents metaphorically the mysterious, *geistig* beginning of composition, the moment of creativity inaccessible to human observation and for which there is no trace. About this moment Hanslick concludes: "to the origin of

this grain of seed [*Samenkorn*] we cannot return; we must accept it as a simple fact.”<sup>44</sup>

Hanslick’s approach requires no physical evidence of the sort Lobe found in the sketches. Instead, he takes as a matter of faith the seed-like beginning of a composition in the composer’s mind. What does this contribute to our understanding of organic images used as metaphors? The specific meaning for an image varies according to an individual’s usage. Lobe and Hanslick mean quite different things with their metaphors, though their terminology is the same. When referring to the seed or germ, Lobe has in mind a short musical idea from which the composer (or his student) may “be able technically to form complete pieces. . . .”<sup>45</sup> Emphasis here lies with his use of the term “technically.”

Lobe’s beliefs about compositional process include the composer working out his musical ideas on paper, sketching and experimenting with them before settling on his final versions. (My earlier discussion of such procedures drew attention to Lobe’s understanding of these procedures as mechanical.) Hanslick has in mind a rather different process. The “grain of seed” which he believes serves as the starting point for the composition has no concrete reality. It will never appear in a sketch book where it lies open to the perusal of others. Its existence must be posited; it can never be proved.

When applied to analyses of music without due consideration of accreted nuances and meanings, organic metaphors and images can seem both natural and self-evident. This supposition lies at the heart of Kerman’s charge to the music-analytic community. In addition, it is a claim echoed by Janet Levy, as noted above (pp. 277, 278). Lack of acquaintance with the history of the concept, as demonstrated here, obviates the diverse

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<sup>44</sup> Hanslick, *Vom Musikalisch-Schönen*: 83. Cited, together with the German original, in Chapter 3, p. 186, n. 108.

<sup>45</sup> Lobe, *Lehrbuch*: 333, 334. Cited, together with the German original, in Chapter 1, p. 36, n. 62.

meanings and philosophical content of such terminology. Most seriously, it renders lifeless the very language adduced to impute vitalist qualities to art.

### V. So what?<sup>46</sup>

Kerman's "How We Got Into Analysis" is concerned both with "how" we got into analysis and "what" we got into when we got into analysis. His "how" highlights significant historical moments in which central works of the German instrumental repertory, described in terms of organic analytic models, have been privileged over other music. His "what" is ideology. According to Kerman, what we have gotten into is an ideological preoccupation not only with a privileged repertory but also with an organic model to describe it and to account for features of it that we value.

The present study involves a deliberate shift in perspective in describing the "what." It sets aside for the most part Kerman's ideological focus. In its place it offers historical and philosophical perspectives on the nature and meaning of music analysis that is carried out with organicist models and precepts. The study does not deny the relevance of an ideological critique; instead, it contends that the dynamic and compelling philosophical content of organicism plays too integral a role in its identity as to be ignored in an assessment of its character, longevity, and explanatory force.

Kerman's critique, then, has served as a spring-board for this study. His work is not its *raison d'être*, however. This study has a more comprehensive and far-reaching agenda: namely, to provide historical insight into a concept and a music-analytic practice which has been misunderstood by music theorists and musicologists alike. The

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<sup>46</sup> This was a question posed by W.J.T. Mitchell in his Introduction to *The Politics of Interpretation*. See discussion in Chapter 1, p. 2.

increasingly central role of music analysis in shaping our experience of and conversations about music makes urgent the need to understand its methods and language.<sup>47</sup> If one of the tasks of analysis is to “answer directly the question, ‘How does it work?’,”<sup>48</sup> then the models and terminology employed to answer that question are laden with accreted meanings, nuances, and significance that demand our diligent and studied attention and that amply reward such inquiry. This study has uncovered some of those meanings as they pertain to organicism and, it is hoped, may inspire a search for more.

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<sup>47</sup> In this sense, my inquiry echoes that of Ruth Solie, who observes that “language is not merely reflective but actually constitutive of our awareness, [and] constellations of language like that surrounding the figure of the organism tend to shape and control the observations of the analyst using them.” See Solie, “The Living Work”: 147.

<sup>48</sup> This is the formulation of Ian Bent and Anthony Pople in their article “Analysis,” *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. L. Mace (Accessed 18 October 2002), <<http://www.grovemusic.com>>

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