

FORMALISM, EXPRESSIVISM, AND THE VISCERAL IN MUSIC

FORMALISM, EXPRESSIVISM,
AND
THE VISCERAL IN MUSIC

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Abstract

This thesis is a critique of formalist and expressivist theories of presented by Eduard Hanslick and Susanne Langer. It concentrates on the relation between the structure of the musical work and musical experience, particularly with respect to externalizing features in music and the understanding of musical structure as musical form. It culminates in an argument in favour of incorporating the visceral element of music in our evaluations of music's artistic value, such that musical experience is considered in both its cognitive and visceral modalities.

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Introduction

This thesis is an investigation of music that revolves around three themes: musical experience, musical structure and form, and the meaning or import of music. All three themes are interconnected, and no one of them is considered in isolation from the others. In particular I intend to redress an error in philosophy of music and musical evaluation, namely the widespread prejudice in favour of idealized formal sophistication as the sole criterion of artistic value. Because this formalist prejudice rests, in part, upon a particular view of musical works, a perspective which entails that musical works ought to be understood as independent objects and analyzed structurally, and therefore are best evaluated in isolation from their larger context, I shall first examine the characteristics of musical works as we experience them and provide a sketch of a bare-bones analytic approach. Then I shall determine how this analytic approach does or does not challenge its own conception of the musical object (*i.e.*, whether it can deal with its own presuppositions and limitations). This engagement with analytic methodology will become important later as I examine certain features of musical experience, features which are, according to my account, musical and not merely concomitant with the music. That enquiry will set the stage for a consideration of the contextualized features of musical works, such as words and musical scales, eventually arguing for their inclusion within a richer model of musical experience.

Why is a richer model necessary? Simply because the richness of musical experience overflows the conceptual capacity of the dominant, formalist model. I am far from the only one to have noticed the shortcomings of our traditional philosophy of music. Others have also criticized the limiting tendencies of formalist theories of musical evaluation. In her book *The Music of Our Lives* Kathleen Higgins re-evaluates these approaches and argues for a new understanding of music with an eye towards capturing its ethical dimension.¹

“Conservatism, ethnocentrism, and divorce from experience,” Higgins tells us, “characterize the now established philosophical approach to music.”² Like Higgins, I think that aspects of musical experience which hitherto have been ignored must be opened for examination. The political role of music, for instance, is of great concern and import in much of the world’s music, yet traditional analyses of musical works do not come to terms with this facet of musical experience; instead, radical music that engages in social commentary or which attempts to persuade the audience to take social action is denigrated as having irrational or rhetorical impurities that detract from the listener’s experience of the “pure music.” A similar denigration is

¹ “I aim to defend the desirability of conceiving of music much more broadly than philosophical aesthetics typically has done, and of recognizing that the significance of music depends on the context in which it is experienced.” “Music’s capacity to engage our intellectual, emotional, and physical natures simultaneously, its suitability for promoting social cohesion, its reflection of practical and ideal modes of human social interaction, its ability to stimulate reflections regarding our basic values . . . all these are basic features of musical experience. Yet these are lost to philosophical attention when ‘music’ is defined as ‘a musical score’ and aesthetics becomes a technical enterprise.” (Higgins, Kathleen Marie. 1991. *The Music of Our Lives*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press. P. 3-4.)

Others have also noted the ethical implications of music. William Malm states that “there are moments in both Western and Oriental music when the ethical value of a given musical event quite outweighs its musical considerations.” (Malm, William P. 1969. “On the nature and function of symbolism in Western and Oriental music.” *Philosophy East and West* 19:235-250. P. 238. Hereafter referred to as “On the nature and function of symbolism in Western and Oriental music.”)

² *Music of Our Lives*, p. 3.

incurred by musical styles that deliberately manipulate the audience by using particular frequencies and sufficient amplification to physically “move” them, thus engendering not only a cognitive appreciation of the work’s formal qualities but a visceral awareness of it, a kind of musical experience which does not tidily fit into approaches whose anti-causal bias demands that the listener maintain a contemplative attitude and ignore “pathological” aspects of the musical experience. More often considered, but just as unsatisfactorily dealt with, is the use of words in musical works. Music and language, it is said, are different, and because they are different they must be considered separately; but however different music and language may be, it is still the case that much music incorporates words, and it would be wiser to develop a model that can encompass the linguistic elements of music rather than to continue to enforce a dichotomy that is ignored by many practicing composers and musicians. Yet another difficulty results when the prejudice in favour of formal sophistication is combined with a certain kind of idealism, thus producing a theoretical approach which is incapable of coming to terms with musical styles that do not prioritize formal sophistication above other musical possibilities.

If a truly universal philosophy of music is to be developed, and not just a philosophy of Western art music,³ then our model for understanding musical experience must be expanded. With the exception of the political significance of music, which is beyond the scope of this thesis and for a full consideration demands a sociology of music, all of these issues will be

³ I somewhat hesitantly use the term ‘Western art music,’—for which suggestion I am indebted to Justin Busch—but some generic label is necessary. I mean to refer to what is commonly (though not entirely accurately) called “classical music,” such as Beethoven’s symphonies or Chopin’s *études*, and opera. I do not mean to include, however, atonal music or, obviously, popular music such as rock-and-roll. Later we shall see that Western art music has a particular subset, what Geoffrey Payzant calls the “Great Tradition, from Mozart to Brahms,” which is a particular (and perhaps exclusive) area of concern for Eduard Hanslick.

addressed as my project develops. Taken together, they present clear reasons for recognizing the inadequacies of idealized formalism.

I shall not, however, explicate a new and comprehensive model. Rather, my work is intended to be a propaedeutic that demonstrates its desirability. This does not mean, however, that I propose to abandon the useful features of traditional formalist and expressivist accounts of music. Rather, I shall show how they can be modified so as to complement each other, thus bringing to bear on musical experience the merits of both approaches, all the while helping to keep their respective weaknesses from unduly colouring our understanding of music. While the path I recommend is in large part based on traditional philosophy of music, it may allow us to move beyond traditional approaches at those points where they no longer function adequately.

If part of the job of the philosopher is to uncover and test all presuppositions, then it is fair to say that in philosophy of music we have inherited a job which is only partially complete and a model for understanding musical experience that is capable of fully engaging only a small fraction of the world's music. "Preoccupation with formal beauty," notes Bruce Baugh, "is appropriate to only a very small fragment of the world's music."⁴ My critique, however, is not meant to belittle the contributions of those philosophers who have brought us to our present philosophical understanding of music. Their understanding has been key in illuminating the fact that music and musical experience is a complex phenomenon, and the work that has been done to secure a model suitable for the understanding of our experience of a particular kind of music—the Great

⁴ Baugh, Bruce. 1993. "Prolegomena to Any Aesthetics of Rock Music." *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* (51):23-29. P. 28. Hereafter referred to as "Prolegomena."

Tradition in Western art music—is, for the most part, valuable and insightful. I hope to strengthen, not weaken, that understanding. Perhaps it is only the concerns of the latest age, an epoch in which national boundaries, cultural identities, and artistic standards have all undergone rapid and very visible change, that makes the inadequacy of our previous approaches to music so very clear. I may not be able to render the phenomenon of music transparent, but by critically approaching our present understanding and suggesting how a new one might be developed, I hope at least to open the door to a more generous and encompassing approach to some of the varieties of music that deserve our attention and yet have largely been ignored until now. This means that a portion of the material I use to support my thesis comes from outside the regular philosophical literature. I have taken pains to include only sound and well-reasoned analyses, however, and I trust that the reader will recognize good philosophical conclusions even when they emerge from the mouths and pens of those who do not think of themselves as philosophers.

In order to clearly show the need for a more comprehensive philosophical account of musical experience I shall examine the work of two influential philosophers of music: Eduard Hanslick and Susanne Langer. Hanslick is important because he set the tone for philosophical critique of music from the mid-nineteenth century until the present day. His emphasis on musical structure has always been controversial, but so far as I know its weakest feature—*i.e.*, its inability to provide a good explanation for the perceived value of musics which do not emphasize, or necessarily even exhibit, formal sophistication—has never been subjected to criticism. Susanne Langer's work is important because it is both historically and logically a

further development from Hanslick's idealist formalism. Moreover, Langer provides useful insights into the connection between music and the emotions, or between music and feeling.⁵ Her explanation not only corrects a weakness in Hanslick's analysis but also demonstrates a more inclusive concern for the humanistic elements of musical experience.

"There are two prevalent opinions," writes Paul Stern,

apparently quite opposite, on the nature of art: according to the one, the ultimate function of art is to express convincingly some process or condition of inner life; according to the other, its function is to create images which, by clarity and harmony of form, fulfill the need for vividly comprehensible appearance, which is rarely satisfied by reality.⁶

Stern goes on to say that

neither clear representation of external form, nor the expression of an inner life or experience, however achieved, is in itself sufficient to create art; rather, each depends on the other. In the living work of art the two concepts can be separated only by means of an abstractive process, and hence neither one by itself can be judged aesthetically. Form and content are unequivocally coordinated, and any change in one necessarily entails a change in the other.⁷

In keeping with Stern's admirably concise and clear presentation of the situation, I propose to use equally clear and concise definitions of 'formalist' and 'expressivist.' Formalist accounts of music, such as Hanslick's, maintain that musical value is "strictly musical" and accrues only from the relation of notes to each other within the larger structure of the musical work.⁸ These accounts deny any connection between the (re)presentational properties of musical works and their artistic value. Expressivist accounts, on the other

⁵ Later we shall see that the terms 'emotion' and 'feeling' are not interchangeable.

⁶ Langer, Susanne K., ed. 1958. *Reflections on Art: A Source Book of Writings by Artists, Critics, and Philosophers*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press. P. 71. Hereafter referred to as *Reflections on Art*.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ "[The nature of the beautiful in music] is a specifically musical kind of beauty. By this we understand a beauty that is self-contained and in no need of content from outside itself, that consists simply and solely of tones and their artistic combination." (Hanslick, Eduard. 1986. *On the Musically Beautiful: A Contribution towards the Revision of the Aesthetics of Music*. Translated by Geoffrey Payzant. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company. p. 28. Hereafter referred to as *On the Musically Beautiful*.)

hand, expand their attribution of value to include the *significance* or *import* of musical structures, hence they allow for a kind of value which follows from meaningful presentation of emotions, or feelings, or, as Stern puts it, “some process or condition of inner life.” Thus the expressivist accounts go beyond the relation of notes to each other in order to include the relation of the entire work, or portions of it, to already existent psychic phenomena such as human feelings. It should be kept in mind that formalist features are often incorporated into expressivist accounts, hence my reason for calling Susanne Langer’s theory a kind of formalist expressivism.

While he may overstate his case, the essence of what Stern says is true: neither the formalist nor the expressivist account of musical value is sufficient on its own to explain why it is that musical works as different from each other as can be—baroque chamber music and modern dub music,⁹ for

⁹ The reader is probably already familiar with what I refer to as baroque chamber music, but the mention of “dub music” requires some elucidation. The bold investigator might turn to Lee Perry’s description of dub (Unknown. 1995. “Grand Royal Interview: Lee ‘Scratch’ Perry.” *Grand Royal*, p. 70), but a more lucid account is given by Kerry Doole, who writes, “Analyzing dub ain’t easy. It’s a style that needs to be heard and felt to be fully understood. Besides, the term ‘dub’ possesses multiple meanings. It originated in Jamaica in the late ‘60s as a word describing an instrumental vinyl version of a reggae song. Since then, however, it’s evolved into a description of both a production and mixing technique and a specific sound in which the bass and drums foundation of reggae is pushed to the fore of the music, then screwed around with. Other instruments, like guitar, keyboards, horns, even melodica (a ‘novelty’ instrument strangely suited to the dub style), are dropped in and out of the mix. Fade and reverb are applied freely, while throbbing basslines and repetitive drum patterns keep everything from falling apart. Space between the sounds becomes a sonic weapon in itself, and the result is an intoxicating style that is somehow physical and rhythmic, yet cerebral.” (Doole, Kerry. 1996. “A Whole Heap A Noise.” *Impact*, April, 23-27., p. 23). See also Hawkins, Erin. 1996. “The Secret History of Dub: Reggae historians delve into the echo chamber.” *Eye*, April 18, 15. The reader who is interested in an introduction to dub music will not go wrong by seeking out most anything on the Blood & Fire label, especially two sample collections: “Heavyweight Sound” (1995) and “2 Heavyweight” (1997). A useful introduction to the creation of dub “versions”—instrumental dub remixes of reggae songs—can be attained by listening “Living Dub, Volume 2” and its source album “Hail H.I.M.,” both by Winston Rodney (Burning Spear) and released on the Heartbeat label in the early 90s. Dub music also owes its origins to dub poetry, a rhythmic spoken-word art which has gained increasing recognition in the eyes of critics. (See the works of Linton Kwesi Johnson.) Throughout this thesis I shall mention particular examples of dub music as a useful contrast to the Great Tradition in Western art music. In the final section I shall explicate the notion of a music that is “physical and rhythmic, yet cerebral” in such a way as to show how the palpable characteristics of

example—are vehemently defended as inherently valuable by those who listen to them.¹⁰

If it were the case that musical partisans were only prone to a staunch defence of their favoured musical styles, then there would be no need to argue for an expanded understanding of musical experience. Such an understanding would follow quite quickly once it became clear to one and all that other musical styles were as well thought of as their own, and for equally important reasons. But musical partisanship develops more than just defensive tactics; it goes on the offensive, leading to entrenched positions wherein advocates of both sides use their own account of musical value to engage in polemical artillery duels, as it were, in order to deny the value of the other side's position.

Given the level of polemical intensity, the military metaphor is entirely appropriate. Allan Bloom, for example, maintains that rock-'n'-roll music is nothing less than a destructive force in modern society, a crass and corrosive appeal to sexual urges which can undermine social mores and lead youth astray.¹¹ For Bloom, the popularity of rock-'n'-roll is indicative of an attack on morality by manipulative and self-serving businessmen. There is some truth to Bloom's assertions: music is a business as well as an art form, and profit motivates some artists (though more often it motivates their

musical structure address both the physiological and cognitive modes of musical appreciation.

¹⁰ Note that I said "inherently valuable." My concern is with the value perceived in and through works themselves, not with their instrumental value. Thus I am not arguing for the ethical role of music, although I think that Kathleen Higgins is entirely right to do so. My goal in this thesis is to demonstrate the necessity of an expanded conception of musical value, not to defend the use of music for political or social ends. Of course, I shall make reference, where appropriate, to the effect that such applications of music have on our experience of the works themselves. Many of my examples of Jamaican music are drawn from what might be called the "Truth & Rights" tradition, an explicitly political subset of the reggae style.

¹¹ See Bloom, Allan. 1987. *The Closing of the American Mind*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

record companies) more so than does artistic integrity.¹² Interestingly, a similar critique, though this time of classical European music, is raised by the religious defenders of reggae music. For their part, the Rastafarians claim that symphonic music reflects the ongoing injustices meted out to common people, particularly people of colour. For the Rastas, the work of the “great masters” like Beethoven represents the musical siren song of Babylon, the commercial and amoral world of the ruling elites who seek to regulate and control, thus to “downpress” the less powerful members of society. From their point of view, the music of Babylon is the audible and sensuous embodiment of mental colonization, just as the European ideas of religion and civilization were in part the conceptual rationalizations of the inhumanity of Europe’s extension of political power through colonization.

The extreme positions espoused by platonic defenders of Western civilization like Allan Bloom and by transgressive rebels such as reggae musician Peter Tosh are, like most extreme positions, neither wholly true nor wholly false. Yet my concern is not for determining which side has the greater claim to an accurate account of our present political and cultural situation. Rather, my concern is with music, which, while it is undoubtedly reflective of political and cultural disputes, is also perhaps the most universal and humanistic of the art forms, and hence the most capable of overcoming our differences without rendering them irrelevant or preventing their expression. If any art can act to strengthen the bonds of the infinite human family, or, for that matter, weaken those same bonds, it is the musical art. The beauty and power—two terms that may refer to the same phenomenon—of

¹² There are exceptions to this, some quite striking. The popular musical artist George Michaels endured several years of self-enforced anonymity because he felt that Sony Records, with whom he had signed an exclusive contract, was interfering with his artistic decisions. Only after many years of legal battles, and having lost a great deal of both real and potential income, was Michaels able to free himself from the contract.

music should not be underestimated, and philosophers of music ought not to pretend that they can deal with questions such as artistic value without at least being aware of the larger issues that surround and give rise to musical works. The area surveyed in this introduction is broader than the focus of the thesis, but is relevant nonetheless. The points I have made represent my reasons for producing this critique of formalism and expressivism and, while my conclusions will necessarily be of relatively narrow scope, these larger issues are always present, even if only in the background.

The goal of this introduction is essentially that of the classical preamble: to render the reader attentive, ready to learn, and well-disposed. I trust that I have done so. However, the well-disposed reader's willingness to learn and attentive sentiment does not constitute agreement. That is the goal of the rest of this thesis.

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Chapter I: Prelude to Analysis

"Ring the alarm, another sound is dying!" — Tenor Saw¹

Overview

The goal of this section is to present and explain some terms that are necessary for the analysis of musical experience. I shall introduce the following terms: temporal presentation, historical internalization, and internal, self-referential, referential, and externalizing features. This terminology follows from an analysis of musical experience which is more phenomenological than ontological, although I make one especially important ontological claim, namely that musical works do not exist as such unless they are heard.

The inherent subjectivity of musical experience creates a challenge for analysis and in particular for the application of labels to characteristics that in some sense can be found "in" the musical work. (This will be clear when I discuss the notion of the musical work as an "object," a concept which connotes a kind of external or objective existence apart from the subject, even though, strictly speaking, an object is merely that which is opposed to a subject in consciousness.) In another sense, however, these features are identifiable only because musical works come to be as a result of listener's musical experience, which requires that the sensuous manifestation of the

¹ Cf. "Ring the Alarm," produced by Winston Riley (1985), re-released on *Tougher Than Tough: The Story of Jamaican Music*, 1993. Original rhythm attributed to the instrumental song "Stalag 17" and subsequently modified by Max Romeo in an unreleased vocal version (1972).

work be appropriated by an attentive consciousness. Human subjectivity makes relational concepts like “internal” and “external” into slippery creatures indeed, especially when it comes to art. In particular, my proposed term ‘externalizing feature’ is perhaps more widely applicable than would be ideal. While a full explanation is to follow, right now I want to give a brief inventory of possible “externalizing features” in order to prevent undue confusion and make my focus clearer. A full elaboration, of course, will follow towards the end of this chapter.

Simply put, an externalizing feature of a musical work is a musical pattern that is both integral to the work and which also directs the listener’s attention to something “outside” of the musical work. There are (at least) five things which externalizing elements in music may make reference to: (1) entities or states of affairs in the physical world, which may be actually present or remembered (such as other musical works), or merely a possible entity (such as the storm in Beethoven’s Pastoral Symphony), (2) the theoretical background of the musical style of the work, (3) emotions or other features of psychical life, (4) the discursive meaning of words, and (5) the listener’s awareness of embodiment.² The astute reader will note two characteristics of this inventory: First, some of the categories may be

² There is another phenomenon which could be included in my list but which I hesitate to add at this point. We might consider the pleasurable emotion present in the activity of musical enjoyment to be a kind of external feature since it does not exist “in” the work yet nonetheless it follows from the process of contemplating it. Likewise we could add the pleasant feeling that musicians get when they perform as being an emotion connected to but not inherent in the piece they are playing. We could even, though somewhat tenuously, extend that classification to include the pleasant feeling that follows from being the owner of a musical catalogue and thus the recipient of royalty payments. It is no wonder that aestheticians are reluctant to allow for contextual considerations in their analyses, since it is apparent that the scope of inquiry could readily be expanded beyond any possibility of resolution! Of the three possible additions mentioned, I am willing to include only the first one, and I shall do so only in the final section where its inclusion may be more clearly dealt with through a contrastive example.

subsumed by others (*i.e.*, if we abide by a materialist view of the universe then it makes sense to speak of emotions in the first category, since they are ultimately physically instantiated). Second, everything that falls into the categories is contextual. That is to say, the things being referred to by externalizing features exist, as it were, within a context that is not encompassed by but rather referred to by the musical work—they rest outside of the boundaries of the work itself.

Do not despair if all this is not yet entirely clear. The idea of externalizing feature, of context, and of the categorical distinctions will be elaborated. The first category will be discussed in the subsection below, entitled “Referential Elements” and will be summarized in the section called “Elemental Terminology.” The second category comes to bear in the final section of the second chapter, and plays an important role in demonstrating the difficulty of avoiding cultural bias in a hanslickian analysis of music. The most controversial externalizing reference is that of the third type, and discussions of emotional representation and expression will occur in both the second and third chapters when I deal with Eduard Hanslick’s apparent denial of emotional representation in music and with Susanne Langer’s theory of musical expressivism. This category of externalizing feature most clearly brings out the relation between the objective form of the musical work and the structure of emotion. Finally, my argument in the last section of the thesis (§ 6) relies upon the fifth type of externalizing feature and will make some reference to the fourth type in order to contrast the unique nature of this type of feature with that of linguistic features.

§ 1 — The Primacy of Experience

Paul Stern's description of the two prevalent opinions regarding the function of art is not merely a description of the philosopher's personal preferences with respect to how they view art. The two opinions are in fact coincident with two distinct, though not necessarily separate, analytical methodologies. On the one hand, those who hold that the point of art is to express inner life determine to examine art works as expressive entities whose value accrues from the fullness and vividness of their expressiveness. On the other hand, those who hold that the point of art is to "fulfill the need for vividly comprehensible appearance" approach art works as objects whose value follows from their "clarity and harmony of form."³ In both approaches the art work is understood as a kind of object, separate from those who create and apprehend it.

The same two analytic approaches are widely used in philosophical enquiries into the nature and value of musical works. Eduard Hanslick is a prototypical formalist. According to the usual reading of Hanslick,⁴ the ability of music to express man's inner life is, for him, debatable or at the very least of negligible artistic value. Susanne Langer is likewise typical of the expressivist analyst. The structure of music, for her, is primarily a vehicle for the transmission of meaning or the portrayal of "vital import." Of course, there are other ways to examine music, but the expressivist and formalist methodologies are predominant.

There is good reason, however, to exercise some caution and

³ *Op. cit.*

⁴ We shall see, at the end of the next chapter, that a more inclusive interpretation of Hanslick is possible through the work of Robert Hall.

carefully take up the two methodologies only after we have taken note of the primary means by which a series of sounds become recognized as music, and thus become a musical work. The point of this chapter is not to deny the possibility of applying either analytical methodology; rather, it is to secure our understanding of the most important result of a listener's auditory relationship to a musical work. Prior to any analysis or understanding of the musical work comes a *musical experience*. This is true not only for the musical analyst, but also for listeners in general. Musical experience is what results from a successful performance of a musical work. It is the condition of the possibility of dealing with the sounds *as* a musical work. This being the case, it becomes clear that the experience of the listener is central to a proper understanding of music. Allow me to begin with a simple definition of musical experience:

A musical experience occurs when a listener hears a series of sounds which he understands to be a structured series of sounds deliberately related together.

In order for there to be a musical experience, then, two conditions must be fulfilled: (1) there must be a series of sounds, and (2) these sounds must be understood by a listener to be a series of deliberately related structural elements. This provisional definition will serve to bring forth the necessary characteristics of a musical experience: *temporal presentation & historical internalization, audibility, and structured sounds*. I shall deal with (2) first, then turn to (1).

My definition is deliberately minimal. It can be refined and narrowed or expanded as circumstances dictate. In any case, the complicated relationship between the sounds that we call music and human subjectivity precludes a single definition that is both precise and suitably encompassing.

Temporal Presentation and Historical Internalization

Insisting that the sounds be understood by the listener to be a deliberately structured series of sounds before a musical experience can be said to have occurred makes us take account of the inherently subjective, temporal, and thus transient nature of musical works. At no given moment can a musical work exist in total, only in part. Music is, to quote Hanslick, “the most ethereal of the arts.”⁵ Being an auditory phenomenon which relies on sequences of sounds related together, *music is essentially temporal*. Rhythm, melody, and harmony—the central components of musical structure— only appear when sounds follow each other in succession. The musical work as a whole does not appear all at once, but unfolds itself over time as it is played (whether by musicians or a machine). Without temporal duration, there is no musical work. *Temporal presentation* is thus a necessary condition for the manifestation of musical works.

Temporal presentation is not all that is necessary for the musical work to come to be; it is only a necessary condition of its sensuous manifestation. There is another aspect of the essential temporality of music which must be taken account of in any model of musical experience: *the temporality or historicity of the listener*. For a musical work to manifest itself, a listener must hear its sounds and internalize them, taking each one as it comes, becoming aware of the connections between each sound and the ones preceding it, and anticipating what is to follow.

While aesthetic internalization has always been of concern to

⁵ *On the Musically Beautiful*, p. 1.

philosophers of music, Hegel paid especially close and detailed attention to the transient and fleeting character of music, and the relative permanence of its internalization. A short passage from his lectures on aesthetics will help to clarify the way music, unlike most other art forms, exists primarily in the subject and has no separate existence as a physical object:

However much we become absorbed in or penetrate into the object, the situation, the character, the forms of a statue or a picture, admire a work of art, lose ourselves in or possess ourselves with it, the fact still remains that these works of art are and remain objects of independent subsistency, in respect to which it is quite impossible for us to escape the relation of external observation. In music, however, this distinction disappears. Its content is that which is itself essentially a part of our own personal life, and its expression does not result at the same time in an objective mode of spatial persistency, but discloses, in virtue of the continuity and freedom of its flight as it appears and vanishes, that it is a manifestation, which, instead of possessing itself an independent consistency, is dependent for its support on the ideality of conscious life, and only can exist for that inward realm.⁶

In music the distinction between self and other disappears, hence music “is dependent for its support on the ideality of conscious life, and only can exist for that inward realm” because it needs to be internalized over time in order to be comprehended as a related series of moments and sounds. Julian Johnson puts it slightly differently, saying that

music’s external existence is perpetually vanishing, it is preserved within (and only within) the internal subjective consciousness. Thus the negation of sounds in time is itself negated by the subjective consciousness which preserves the music as a sensuous ‘trace’ within its internal life.⁷

The negation of the external object and the preservation of it within the subject is the way musical works come into being. No sooner do the tones come into sensuous existence than they vanish, but only from the physical world, for their “trace” is preserved by the listener’s appropriation and

⁶ Hegel, G. W. F. 1975. *The Philosophy of Fine Art*. Translated by F. P. B. Osmaston. Vol. 1. New York: Hacker Art Books. P. 343. Hereafter referred to *The Philosophy of Fine Art*.

⁷ Johnson, Julian. 1991. “Music in Hegel’s *Aesthetics*.” *British Journal of Aesthetics*. P. 155.

internalization of them.⁸ As the elements of the musical work/object appear in time, they are heard and retained by the listener. Therefore, the musical work, as opposed to individual sounds, only exists through the preservation of prior sounds in the listener's memory, and consists of the whole tracing of those sounds as the work plays itself out and becomes manifest. The importance of temporal presentation and musical internalization has been recognized by many theorists, including William Malm, who notes that the

listener to music cannot stop musical time except when reading a score, while the perceiver of painting or literature has a considerable control over the rate and even to some extent the order in which he receives the information of those arts. Even though the flow of musical time is an illusion, hence the term virtual time, the experience of music within its context makes the need for recall and prediction all the more essential.⁹

Through the listener's activity of recall and prediction, the musical work is thus negated or "eaten-up" by the listener as each choice bit of tonal morsel is presented to his consciousness and then disappears, leaving only the memory of the sensation.

A musical experience is thus an historical experience. It requires a subject who is aware of a present, appropriates a past, and projects a future. The listening subject may not always be aware of everything present at any given moment, nor will he always remember the past correctly. Yet without historical subjectivity, there is no musical work. There is instead only a sound, then another, then another, without any relation between them except the mere fact of their temporal succession. For a musical work to be experienced *as* a musical work it must be presented through time and experienced historically. Unless both of these conditions are met the listener

⁸ Kathleen Higgins puts it another way: "Sense and intellect operate as a unit as soon as one begins to hear music as music." (*Music of Our Lives*, p. 33)

⁹ "On the nature and function of symbolism in Western and Oriental music," p. 245.

does not have a musical experience.

Audibility

Properly speaking, musical experiences result from the listener's perception of sounds. While musical works may be encountered through a variety of objects—there are musical scores, records, tapes, reels of paper (for player-pianos), and a variety of formats for digital encoding—none of these physical objects are themselves musical works. This is not to say that non-audible recordings of music cannot be appreciated, or that they cannot be experienced as art—they can be. Some adept musicians or composers, for example, are quite capable of appreciating musical scores by sight,¹⁰ but a more striking example that demonstrates the possibility for a non-auditory appreciation of musical works can be found in Douglas Hofstadter's book *Gödel, Escher, Bach*,¹¹ where we are presented with an encounter between two characters, a tortoise and a hare, which serves as a humorous reminder of unexpected varieties of experiencing art. The following is a paraphrased version of that encounter.

Upon visiting the home of the Tortoise, Hare notices a phonograph record, unsleeved, hanging on the wall. "Why," asks Hare, "do you have a record hanging on your wall? Shouldn't it be kept in its sleeve until you play it on the record-player?" "Record player?" replies Tortoise, "Why, I don't listen to records—I look at them! Can't you see how beautiful it is? Don't you

¹⁰ This has allowed some theorists to assert that the score *is* the musical work, rather than merely being a kind of musical shorthand. For an illuminating discussion of the debates surrounding the status of the music score, see *The Music of our Lives*, pp. 40-44. See also my discussion of Roman Ingarden's theory of the historical identity of musical works in § 2.

¹¹ Hofstadter, Douglas R. 1980. *Gödel, Escher, Bach: An Eternal Golden Braid*. New York: Vintage Books. I am unable to locate the specific reference to this dialogue.

notice the subtle patterns of the etchings in the side of the groove as it spirals toward the center of the record? Why, I enjoy music very much, whenever I have time to stand and gaze at my records.” Of course, Hare thinks that Tortoise is entirely out of his mind. How can he appreciate music without hearing it? What does that crazy Tortoise think he’s doing, anyway?

The Tortoise is enjoying the recurring patterns and novelties apparent in the visual appearance of the record’s groove. If his eyesight were fine enough, Tortoise could see, when looking at his record, the same number of patterns and variations as the sharp-eared Hare could hear while listening to it. It would not be inaccurate to call such an awareness an experience of art. But only Hare’s auditory experience counts, according to my definition, as musical. It is an arbitrary definition, but one which gives us the freedom to examine musical works without being distracted by other issues.

Music is an auditory art form—that is what makes it distinct from most other art forms, and it is music in this modality that I intend to examine. Thus the audibility criterion functions in part as a means to distinguish musical from non-musical artworks. However, categorizing artworks is always a controversial business. It is unlikely to be absolutely consistent, or to cover all the cases which we encounter. On some accounts, transgression is an artistic virtue. If this is so, then distinctions between art forms cannot always, and perhaps never should be fast and final. This is especially so from the perspective of the transgressive artist who intends to establish new or hybrid art forms, and there is good reason to respect the concentrated attempts by artists to free art from theoretical distinctions. But a piece such as John Cage’s *4’33”*, which masquerades as a musical work but

does not actually include any structured musical sounds as we normally understand them, is not *musical*, however much it may be art. A brief digression into two of the issues surrounding Cage's work—the notion of silent “sounds” and of musical events—will help to show how defining what ‘music’ is cannot help but be somewhat arbitrary.

Those who maintain that 4'33" is a musical art work could object to my refusal to classify it as such by pointing out the audibility of silence. Their claim would be that silence is not merely a lack of sounds, but a kind of sound in itself. Just as we mistake the colour white for an absence of colour, we mistake silence for inaudibility. But, say the Cage enthusiasts, we can hear total silence just as readily as we can see the supposedly colourless colour of pure white. Thus silence is an audible sound, of a sort. The argument may be strengthened by pointing out that all musical works contain moments of silence, intervals within the work during which (however briefly) no sounds are heard. Moreover, there is the old jazz musician's dictum, perhaps most often espoused by bassists and drummers, which holds that “It isn't the notes you play that count, it's the ones you leave out.” On this account, silence does indeed seem to be an integral part of musical works. I shall return to this point momentarily.

Besides the argument from silence, the Cage fan may also claim that the performance of 4:33 is a musical *event*, just as performances of symphonies are musical events. Given that the patrons of this event travel to a performance hall, sit in their seats, and witness the presence of musicians on the stage, it could be said that there is nothing, other than the predominance of absolutely silent sounds, to distinguish a performance of

4'33" from a more traditional musical performance. This line of defence leads us rather prematurely into an argument over what counts as a series of "structured sounds."¹² By pointing to the fact that an audience is assembled and rests within the usual context of musical performances—in a concert hall, with musicians on the stage, &c.—the Cage enthusiast can argue that the presentation of 4'33" is, in fact, a means for structuring sounds by creating the potential for "audience sounds" within the span of the work. The notion of structure which is at work in this argument is quite different, however, from my conception of musical structure. Later it shall become clear that my admittedly restrictive notion of "structured sounds" consists of a deliberate establishment of relationships between a series of notes, rather than a relatively haphazard incitement to cough and squirm in one's seat.

The two lines of defence for the status of 4'33" as a musical art work bring to light the highly debatable nature of categorizing art works according to art forms. Since a full discussion of the true status of 4'33" is not only premature but beyond the chosen scope of this thesis, I shall restrict myself to refuting the notion of silent sounds and musical events in order to draw out my concept of audible structured sounds and musical performance. My refutation rests on a pragmatic desire to have available useful and readily applicable methods for categorizing works as musical works. Anyone who considers such a desire to be inappropriate will not abide by my refutation, but they will equally be unable to swallow any attempt to distinguish between art forms at all. There is an *a fortiori* objection: since the very idea of art forms is invidious, any attempt to do so, or to object to those who refuse to do so, is

¹² Prematurely in the context of this thesis, that is, in the sense that I have yet to define what musical structure is.

mistaken. Hence there is a necessary propædeutic which is left out of this thesis, that of determining whether art forms really do exist or are desirable tools within the philosopher of art's toolbox. I stand on the side of those who do see a benefit accruing from the idea of distinguishable art forms, though I hasten to add that distinguishability need not entail absolute separateness.

That being said, my refutation of the idea of silent sounds and of musical events must be seen within the context of a theory that admits of the existence of distinguishable art forms. In the next section I shall confront, then, not those who deny that possibility, but those who affirm it and see Cage's *4'33"* as a work which deserves to be classified in particular as a musical work.

Structured Sounds

First of all, let us take up the idea of a work which consists entirely of silent "sounds," as *4'33"* does. Cage, the composer, has written no score for the work. Or, rather, the score which is placed in front of each musician is more of a prop than an actual score. It does not give the performers instructions for playing particular notes, nor does it give instructions as to when they ought not to stop playing notes and allow silence to reign. There are essentially no instructions for the musicians at all—they merely sit on stage and turn the pages of the prop score. The lack of score does not, however, entail the nonexistence of a musical work. Many musical performances are improvisational, relying upon the ability of the musicians to follow one another's lead and to "jam." Improvisational works are almost universally accepted as musical, as well they ought to be.

Rather than the lack of a score, it is the absolute dominance of silence which necessitates the undesirability of classifying 4'33" as a musical work. There are two good reasons for refusing to classify 4'33" and its silent sounds as musical: (1) it is an invariant monotone, and (2) to do so would be to necessitate the classification of other works of art, generally considered to be non-musical, as musical.

I shall take up the second point first. If it is the case that silence falls within the category of musical sound, then any performance of a play must not only be considered a dramatic work but also a musical one. After all, it is not the case that in a play there is someone talking all the time—there are pauses and breaks. Even if we were to imagine a play in which someone was always talking, a play where all the monologues overlapped or where the respondent in a dialogue began her response before the first person has finished speaking, there is a necessity for pauses and breaks to occur between words, at the very least. Plays have pauses, and thus silences, within them. But if silence is a musical sound, then plays must be infused with music. Hence all dramas would be musical performances. If I wished to deny the distinction between spoken drama and music, then this conclusion would not be a problem. But, as I said earlier, art forms are distinguishable and some value can be found in making such distinctions. Just in case my *argumentum ad absurdum* needs to be more explicitly stated, consider the case of mime performances. If absolute silence is a kind of musical sound, then mime is a musical art.

We should be careful, however, not to lose sight of the musical use of silence. Dramatic moments in music are often coincident with deliberate

silences. Consider the gradual fade of the last notes of Richard Strauss' *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. As the final note disappears from the audible terrain, there is a transitional period during which the listener is still very much engaged in the activity of listening to the work. It is only some time after the last sound that musical silence is replaced by a perception of the work's having ended, and simple non-musical silence replaces it. Consider also the musical product of the jazz player's dictum mentioned earlier. A sparse jazz rhythm section, perhaps one in which the bassist is playing only occasional notes and where the drummer very lightly and only occasionally strikes the rims of the drums with brushes, produces a jazz song riddled with silences. Minimalist rhythmical works of this type may well contain far more seconds of silence than of bass or percussive notes. We would be wrong to claim that silence cannot be found in musical works and made use of musically.

Nonetheless, the jazz example leads us to the best reason for refusing to call 4'33" a musical work. The essential nature of 4'33" is that of an *invariant monotone*. Its lack of musicality does not follow from the fact that there are lots of silences in the piece, just as there are in the minimalist jazz rhythm, but rather because there is nothing but silence—there are no notes juxtaposed against the silence. Cage has not produced a work in which he has decided to leave most of the notes "out," rather, he has produced a work in which there are no notes at all, and thus no relationship between the silence and the non-silence. One cannot say of 4'33" that there are many silences in it, as one can for the minimalist jazz piece, rather there is nothing but one long silence, an absolute silence. It is a monotone of silence.

If 4'33" is a musical work, then a composition consisting of only

one invariable sustained note, and nothing else, would also be a musical work, however long or short it was. Yet none but the most radical theorist would consider monotonal sound to be a musical work. True, monotones may be used *within* a piece of music. One can envision a composition in which an instrument plays a uniform note for some length of time, but only in the context of a larger piece in which tones are also produced by other instruments, or in which the monotone exhibits interesting variations (perhaps dynamic ones) within itself. A pure, absolute monotone cannot constitute a musical work, *for there is no structure in such a work*. Or, to put it more accurately, such a structure is not sophisticated enough to display the minimal level of complexity that we associate with musical structure.¹³

Summary of § 1

Musical experiences are the necessary condition for the existence of music, and in order for musical experiences to occur there must be a listener who hears a series of sounds and, upon taking them into his awareness, recognizes them as an ordered series of elements which appear to have been deliberately structured. Musical works are recognized, then, as a result of the listener's experience of an apparently structured series of sounds. If we hear nothing, or if there is no one to hear the sounds that are there, then there is

¹³ Allow me to end this brief section on a note more charitable to those who find artistic value in John Cage's compositions, and to prevent the tenor of my own writing from being strictly monotonal in a critical sense. I should like to add that, in the interests of compromise, and in recognition of my own affinity for the value of transgressive art, I would be willing to call a performance of Cage's *Imaginary Landscape no. 4* a musical work. In that work a set of radios is paired with a set of musicians, and the musicians "play" the radios. There are certainly non-silent sounds and, although the instruments are radios, and the sounds are truly structured, though it is primarily the performers and not the composer who determines the structure. *Imaginary Landscape no. 4* may be an improvisational work, but it could well count as a musical one.

no musical work; only after the musical experience has occurred does it make sense to speak of the musical work proper.

I have defined what a musical experience is, and I have stressed that it is the *a priori* condition for the being of a musical work, but I have yet to say what "music" is. Because I am arguing for an expanded understanding of music, one which goes beyond the purist formalism that predominates traditional understandings, I prefer a definition that errs on the side of inclusion than exclusion. "A strict definition of music," warns Kathleen Higgins, "can be maintained only at the price of excluding many phenomena that one could and might want to call 'music.'"¹⁴ She is right, and so, given what I have already set out thus far, it is appropriate to define music as *structured sounds that provide listeners with musical experiences*.

Music, then, has its beginnings in the form of a complex of sounds. But only once it is experienced by a listener *as* music can it really be said to exist. Prior to that it is only a series of sounds, and not the recognizably structured phenomena which, due to its temporal and transient character, is utterly dependent upon human subjectivity and historicity for its instantiation. In dry but logical form, we might say that music is the set of recognized musical works, and that a musical work is the totality of a series of sounds which provide listeners with a musical experience.¹⁵

¹⁴ *Music of Our Lives*, p. 16.

¹⁵ Here I run afoul of Kathleen Higgins' distrust of characterizing music in terms of musical works. (See *Music of Our Lives*, p. 13.) Like Higgins, I want to "emphasize the auditory character of music" and "take as primary the perspective of the 'understanding listener'" (p. 20). I think that my position does this, although it may not be sufficiently radical to serve for the ambitious project that Higgins promotes.

§ 2 — Analyzing the Musical Work

Because they are essentially temporal, one must be careful when referring to musical works as static, atemporal, permanent objects. Musical scores and the compact disks are not, on my account, properly referred to as musical works.¹⁶ Musical works do not exist except until they have been performed, and thus temporally and audibly presented to and subsequently internalized by a listener or listeners.¹⁷

Nonetheless, it is not uncommon to speak as if musical works do exist apart from our subjective internalization of a structured series of sounds, and there are two ways in which we do this. First, we often refer to a musical score or recording as a musical work by pointing to it and saying, “There’s the symphony you were looking for.” But the score is not really a musical work—it is a set of symbols which provide a convenient means of giving instructions for the production of one—nor is the compact disc a proper musical work, though it readily gives us one if we put it into the compact disc player and listen to the sounds that result. This way of using the term ‘musical work’ is just a result of our modern dependence on musical recordings for most of our experiences of musical works, since we most often have musical experiences when someone is playing from a score or when a record, tape, or compact disc is being played. In casual conversation, of course, we know exactly what is meant, even though we are not speaking accurately.

The second way in which we refer to musical works as if they were

¹⁶ I shall discuss the status of the score below, where I examine Roman Ingarden’s account of the relationship between musical work’s score and its performance.

¹⁷ Of course, the composer or performer is quite capable of playing the role of listener. I do not mean to say that musical works only come to be when presented to an audience which is independent of the performer or composer.

permanent, static objects—medium- or small-sized dry goods, as it were—arises when we analyze music. When a music critic or theorist claims that the best way to compare two symphonies is to place them side by side, and see which has the more harmonious and unified structure, she is speaking as if each symphony were present all at once and it thus can be compared just by “looking” at the musical objects in order to see their structure.

When we speak of the musical work as if it were an independent, sensuous object fully manifest at any given point in time, we are making a *conceptual abstraction* from the actual phenomena of musical experience. The first way of referring to musical works as if they were permanent objects occurs in informal conversation, and presents no great impediment to our understanding of music, since we are well aware that the compact disc is just a recording of a musical work, and not the work itself. The second way, which arises primarily in analytical discussion and allows us to talk about musical works as if they are works of architecture rather than sounds in time, is problematic, for it can cause us to forget that the necessary manifestation of musical works is audible, temporal, and reliant upon subjective internalization.

The controversy that rages over the role of the musical score is a particularly good example of the difference between the first and second ways of referring to musical works. Some theorists claim that the musical score, rather than the sensuous presentation of the tones and structures noted in the score, *is* the musical work. This view makes use of the first type of objective reference to the degree that the destruction of the score is equivalent to the destruction of the musical work. From this perspective, one can point

at the physical object that is the score and say, “*There* is the work.” While this position has not been entirely rejected, it would not be unfair to call it a naive view which does little to explain the connection between our experience of a musical work and its objective status.

More sophisticated views give a primary role to the score yet balance its importance with the necessity of the work’s sensuous presentation in performance. Roman Ingarden’s investigation into the identity of musical works is just such a balanced view, and I want to briefly consider here since it raises a question that we shall have to tackle later, namely how we are to treat musical works that do not readily lend themselves to being captured in score format, or which come out of performance traditions that reject the advantages that accrue from the codification of musical works in favour of greater room for performative interpretation.

In chapter eight of his book, *The Work of Music and the Problem of Its Identity*,¹⁸ Ingarden concerns himself with the enduring identity of musical works over historical time. Musical works, he notes, undergo significant performative and stylistic changes as they are performed in different places at different times. He stresses the need to distinguish between “(a) the musical work as an artistic product taken in exactly the way it is intentionally determined by the musical score; (b) the musical work as an ideal aesthetic object; and (c) the musical work as a concrete aesthetic product.”¹⁹ He notes that

[i]n the first instance we have a schematic product, but it is salutary to remind ourselves what, in such circumstances, is fully determined in it and where there

¹⁸ Ingarden, Roman. 1986. *The Work of Music and the Problem of Its Identity*. Translated by Adam Czerniawski. Berkeley: University of California Press.. Hereafter referred to as *Identity*.

¹⁹ *Identity*, p. 138.

are areas of indeterminacy.²⁰

Indeterminacy arises because of the inability of any notational system to fully describe the manner in which the work is to be performed, and this leaves room for a reinterpretation of the work over historical time without denying the persistent existence of the work as a schema. One type of indeterminacy is that which is “purely technical and that the composer can neither foresee nor precisely formulate,”²¹ such as the development of musical instruments and techniques of performance:

If, for example, we take into account how both piano construction and playing techniques have changed in the past hundred years, it becomes clear that Chopin could not have foreseen how his works performed on today’s instruments would sound. He naturally “heard” them within those qualities of sound coloring in which he performed them himself, qualities then possible in the prevailing state of piano manufacture. But even this coloring he had no way of indicating in his scores, nor can we be sure whether he would regard the present-day sound of his works as appropriate. Thus, these specific colorings of sounds and their clusters do not belong to the work itself as a schematic product, intentionally designated by the score, but rather as an aesthetic object, be it concrete or ideal.²²

In addition to changes in musical instruments, individual musicians (and, presumably, conductors) have a significant degree of leeway in “fleshing out” the schema designated by the score, so that different performances based upon the same score may be quite different. By holding to the notion of the score as representative of an ideal aesthetic object, Ingarden notes, one can argue that there can be, through performance, a “fully qualified aesthetic object . . . [which] is the most perfect musical product that we can possibly imagine arising out of the schema.”²³ Those performance works that meet this ideal may be considered to properly fulfill the potential of the score—Ingarden calls

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 140.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 142.

them “profiles” of the work. Only the performance of the work, on this account, can achieve such a perfect status—the score itself is too indeterminate to manifest its full potential. Thus the musical work as ideal aesthetic object moves beyond the intentional object indicated by the score through the performative interpretation of the score, although Ingarden asserts that performances of the work are *not* musical works, but “concrete profiles” of them.

Ingarden considers the objection which denies the possibility of realizing an ideal performance, and goes on to make the more subtle observation that

[p]ractically speaking, we have no idea which of the performances we ought to accept as ideal. And we do not know this because, strictly speaking, we never come to know a musical work as an ideal aesthetic object. . . . We can, however, by making a comparison with the work’s score, exclude a certain range of performances that appear to us faulty. With regard to the remainder we do not, strictly speaking, know which of them come close to the work as an ideal aesthetic object or which, to some degree and in some manner, diverge from it.²⁴

Ingarden goes on to note that “in particular epochs musical works are normally performed in a specific manner imposed by outstanding, highly individualistic performers and also dependent upon the general aesthetic taste of the epoch,”²⁵ and notes the radical shift in his own lifetime of performative styles in the performance of Chopin, such that more recent and less emotional interpretations reveal aspects of his work not previously made manifest.

Because “we are not acquainted with that original”²⁶ performance of the work by Chopin, and because, even if we were so acquainted there is nothing to say that Chopin’s performance of his work was the most perfect

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 143.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 143-144.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 145.

realization of the score, we must deal with the fact that in music, unlike painting, “we have many realizations of the same work in many performances including those by the composer.”²⁷ Reference to an ideal aesthetic object is simply impractical when we are examining performance works. We have only concrete aesthetic objects in the form of a multitude of performances, each of which may be close enough to the schema described by the score to be considered a realization of that intentional work, but which nonetheless may differ from each other in significant ways. Thus,

[a]s long as we maintain the position that a musical work (say, Chopin’s B Minor Sonata) has as its aesthetic object a unique, wholly determined, univocal profile—the “ideal aesthetic object the composer undoubtedly wishes to realize—so long does the quest for the “most faithful” performance, were it to exist, remain futile.²⁸

Ingarden’s solution to the problem of the identity of musical works over time relies on a particular understanding of the role of the score and its relation to performances based on the score. “A musical work,” writes Ingarden,

understood as an artistic product of its composer, is first a schema designated by the score, second a determined multiplicity of possibilities designated by the areas of indeterminacy of the schematic product—each providing in realization one of the work’s profiles. And each such profile may be realized within a certain class of identical, or at least similar, correct performances. . . . The actual performances of a work need not exhaust all the possibilities defined by the work in the sense of a schema designated by the score. They may not even realize the “best” possible profiles of the work. But as long as the sound base revealed in the performance is in accord with what the score designates and if, moreover, all the remaining qualities of work revealed in performance do not extend beyond the possibilities of the work as a schema, then every performance fulfilling those conditions is “proper,” even though not all these performances reveal equally valuable profiles of the work and even though they reveal profiles such as the composer himself had not envisaged. Naturally, the concrete profiles of the work regarded as legitimately belonging to the one schema constitute a multiplicity of *mutually exclusive* products; nevertheless, the whole group is bound together by the schema designated by the score.²⁹

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 146.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 149.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 150-151.

Hence the musical work exists as a singular schematic object,³⁰ produced by the composer and designated in score form, and is realized in a multiplicity of performances that realize concrete aesthetic objects which fulfill the schema without going beyond the boundaries set by it.³¹ Note, though, that for Ingarden only the score is the musical work—the realizations of it are interpretations of the schema described by the score. The multiplicity of aesthetic objects leads, also, to a multiplicity of aesthetic experiences, since individual audience members may take in the performances differently because of physiological differences or variances in sensibility and attention.

Ingarden's solution demonstrates a sensitivity to the intentions of the composer to create a particular work, to the creativity of the performers in presenting a concrete profile of the work, and to the variances in perception and evaluation that individual auditors realize. Indeed, Ingarden attributes the changes undergone by musical works over time as due to a complex relationship between these factors, since

musical works, as specific intersubjective aesthetic objects, exist solely by intentional fiat (or creative acts, instructions within the score, or the listeners' conjectures), that is to say, heteronomously. With regard to their properties they are ultimately dependent upon the opinions we hold of them. These opinions acquire the character of guiding ideas that not only influence listeners in their listening habits (and therefore in their concretions of a given work) but also dictate to the performers how they are to play the work. This is apparent in the influence of musical academies on their pupils, in the pressure of critical opinion upon young performers, and in other ways. Outstanding performers liberate

³⁰ While the notion of a pure intentional object is essential to Ingarden's view, it is an ontological problem which need not be considered here.

³¹ One of the best examples I am aware of, which demonstrates the rich variety of possible profiles of a musical work, is *Jah Love Rockers Dub* (produced by Bunny Lee, mixed by Osbourne "King Tubby" Ruddock, Prince Jammy, Prince Phillip and Scientist, performed by *The Aggroators*, and re-released on *Dub Gone Crazy: The Evolution of Dub at King Tubby's 1975-1979* on the Blood & Fire label). This piece is arranged around Dave Brubek's *Take Five*, but is overlaid upon a distinctive Jamaican rhythm already present in other works. It is still quite clearly a "cover" of the Brubek piece, but is very different nonetheless. One of the top three producers of Jamaican music from the sixties until he was assassinated in 1989, King Tubby's "version" of *Take Five* falls within the wide range of interpretations that still maintain the distinctive character of the original.

themselves to an extent from this influence when, contrary to prevailing opinion, they introduce a new interpretation of the work, and thus, exposing the public to their performances, begin to affect individually the public's guiding idea of a given work.³²

Ingarden also offers an explanation for the importance of musical scores through historical time, noting that

we may consider it no cause for regret that in the historical development of music the dominant system of preserving musical works was the score. For it was precisely the certain imperfection of this system—as it appeared to us initially—namely, the incomplete determination of the work by the score, that has this advantage over preserving the work by recording: that it reveals the essential structure of the work, that is to say, on the one hand the “fixed” relatively invariant schema, and on the other hand, the multiplicity of the possible various profiles through which a work may manifest itself.³³

While I have some hesitation in accepting the notion of musical scores as the ideal means of maintaining musical identity over time,³⁴ Ingarden's position is essentially sound and his explication of the differences between musical works as intentional objects, as ideal aesthetic objects, and as concrete aesthetic objects is illuminating. Moreover, we must respect Ingarden's concern with musical experience (as concretized by listeners) in addition to musical creation. Indeed, in this thesis I wish to emphasize musical experience above all other aspects of human beings' encounter with the art form. Because of this, I cannot accept Ingarden's positing of the score alone as the “musical work,” although his theoretical distinctions are helpful in examining the complex relationship (in certain musical traditions) between

³² *Ibid.*, p. 155.

³³ *Ibid.*, pp. 157-158.

³⁴ In so far as this method is applied to Western art music, I have no objection. But other musics, such as the “oral” (or should that be “aural”?) tradition of blues works, and modern studio-based musics such as reggae music and its variants, exhibit a marked disdain for notational systems, since they enforce a more rigorous identity than these traditions demand, and thus, for them, the score may represent an authoritative source that is inappropriate. My concern with the concretization of musical schema in score form, or, to use Ingarden's term, the musical work as intentional object, stems from the misunderstandings that can arise when we encounter musical styles and traditions which have valid but perhaps “foreign” objections to such a procedure.

the score and the performance of the work. I hold the view that the musical work can only be properly spoken of in terms of its sensuous manifestation, hence musical works, on my account, are performance works.

Structure and Objectivity

An understanding of the “objective” aspect of musical experience—that is, understanding the musical work as an independent object—depends in large part on the idea of musical structure.³⁵ Since it must circumscribe the territory it will examine, whether that be a narrow field incorporating only the work itself or a wider terrain in which elements other than those strictly within the work make an appearance, the model’s scope of analysis will be determined, in part, by the degree of “autonomy” or independence granted to the musical work. A richer model of musical evaluation will either confine its source material to the features of the work solely in relation to each other, or, if given wider scope, will allow for the consideration of externally-referring features, features which, in addition to being part of the work, also draw attention to something outside of the work.

There is great deal of music which makes reference to things in the world, but this is the very type of music whose experience is not sufficiently explained by traditional evaluative models. Political music—as well as music which is meant to be felt rather than cognitively apprehended, and especially music with words—involves experiences which cannot be accounted for by

³⁵ A reminder: When we speak of the “the structure of musical works” we are generally dealing with the abstracted, atemporal view of them. Throughout this chapter a certain tension between this abstract perspective and the inclusion of temporal and subjective concerns will manifest itself. This is unavoidable; our understanding, as it enlarges to encompass music as it is experienced, necessarily moves away from its abstract starting point which posits the musical work as object.

dealing solely with the structure of the musical work. In order to understand these types of music, external factors—social context, “visceral” effects, and linguistic context—must be accounted for. These external factors, however, only become part of the musical experience when the musical work successfully orients the listener towards an awareness of them. The first step towards understanding the relationship between the musical work and external factors will be to develop a model of the work itself that can account for such outward pointing. In addition, the appropriate model must also account for the integrity of the musical work, a unity established by internal relations between musical elements, or what I call self-referentiality.

I shall now present a set of terms with which musical structure can be defined and expressed. Some such vocabulary is necessary if we are to discuss musical structure. Once we understand these terms, we shall be able to approach the formalist account of Eduard Hanslick.

Referential Elements

Referential elements connect the musical work to something else, something external. Most common, perhaps, are duplicated musical phrases or patterns which, when heard, bring to mind another musical piece because of the similarity between the phrase in the heard piece and another version of that phrase in a different work. The musical work which has such phrases in it points beyond its own boundaries and implicitly posits another musical work. In this way it makes reference to a context outside of itself.

Onomatopoetic phrases are another type of referential element. By having the work imitate the song of a bird, the noise of a train engine, or the sound of a

thunderstorm, the composer draws our attention to events outside of the composition. More complicated references may also be attempted: the work may attempt to refer us to an historical event, a season, or even a particular feeling. In all cases, however, referential elements, if successful, connect the work either to something outside of it or make reference to other features of the musical work.

The “thing” which is outside of the work may not be an actual event or object, as it is in the case of a “cover song” which refers to a previously constructed composition.³⁶ The storm in Beethoven’s Pastoral Symphony, for example, does not necessarily refer to a particular storm, and if it did then that storm has long since passed and cannot be said to exist outside of the work in the way that it once might have. Either the storm being referred to is only a remembered event, in which case not all listeners can be expected to have experienced it, or the phrases that make up the storm in the piece refer to the idea of a thunderstorm in general. In the first instance, the entity being referred to is actual, or was once so, while in the second instance the entity being referred to is ideal, much as the painting of a tree may refer to a non-existent object which is still clearly identifiable as a type which falls within the set of objects in the world that we call “trees.”

The entity to which a work refers may not be anything so concrete as a storm or a tree. It may instead be an idea, such as a cultural or religious motif or some other concept. The fact that these concepts do not themselves have a physical instantiation does not prevent them from being referenced, however, any more than the non-existence of a particular storm prevents the

³⁶ *I.e.*, Devo’s cover of the Rolling Stones’ *Satisfaction* refers to that original version of the work.

Pastoral Symphony from drawing our attention to a putative, imaginary weather phenomenon.

My concern here is not to develop an ontology of the objects to which musical works might refer, but rather to illustrate the manner in which referential musical works point beyond themselves to other aspects of the world, including the conceptual world. Referential elements are often *externalizing* characteristics of the musical work—they orient the listener towards something outside of the work rather than acting solely as a part of the work's internal structure.

To be recognized as a link between the work and the "outside" world, and thus as an externalizing element, these features must *successfully* point beyond the composition in which they reside. It is therefore necessary that the listener identify them in two ways: both as an element within the work, such that it clearly belongs to the work and is not merely coincident with it, and also as an element which is meaningfully connected to something outside the work. If the listener is unable either to identify the element as a distinct part of the work, then he cannot posit the externalizing element at all. And, if he fails to be reoriented by the element, then no connection is made between the work and that to which it is referring, and so the putatively referential element remains merely part of the composition's internal structure, with no external connection being drawn. The unsuccessful referential element is indistinguishable from the elements of the work which have no externalizing potential. Hence one instance of the referential element, which occurs when it fails to reorient the listener, shows it to be a regular, non-referential element within the musical work.

Conversely, the successful referential element shows itself in its *dual role*: first, to be one of the musical elements contained by the whole of the work, and second, to be a pointer towards something outside of the work. The second view of the referential element is dependent upon its success in its second role, as a signpost pointing towards something other than its inward-looking compatriots. A true referential element is potentially capable of playing both roles, that of structural piece and that of externalizing pointer, but an actualization of this full potential is dependent upon the listener's "getting the point."

Self-Referentiality

The foregoing discussion is, unfortunately, somewhat misleading, for it implies that only externalizing or "pointing" elements may actively refer. That discussion uses 'refer' in the sense of "pointing outwards," but there is another sense of the word which is applicable to both the externalizing *and* non-externalizing elements of musical art works. In a very important sense, it can be said that all musical works are necessarily *self-referential*. The self-referentiality of a musical composition derives from the manner in which the musical elements that compose its structure connect with each other and manifest the rhythmic, tonal, and temporal progression which constitutes the musical work.³⁷ One individual, audible note does not comprise a musical composition; rather, a musical composition comprises several notes, each made manifest and developed during the progression of the work from its beginning to its end. In so far as this multiplicity of notes

³⁷ Although it must be remembered that the work as a whole only comes into existence through its internalization by a listening subject.

forms a coherent whole and does not appear to be a merely happenstance sequence of unrelated sounds, *the notes refer to each other*.

As an integral whole which consists of parts and their arrangement, a musical work is necessarily self-referential—it must carry the listener back to itself constantly, or else it simply becomes a sequence of unrelated sounds. There are many ways in which the work does this, but all of them may be grouped under the idea of *musical structure*. The structure of the musical work arises from the relationship of its elements and the establishment of a continuity amongst them. The interrelatedness of musical elements results in a variety of musical structures which can be considered theoretically as falling within various schema, such as “stock” rhythms and musical scales.

Philosophy of art has yet to provide a complete explanation of how rhythm and tonal arrangements such as scales actually work, although fruitful analogies have been made between musical structures and other abstract structures. Mathematics, as the Ancients knew, can provide a heuristically useful analogue for musical scales,³⁸ while explanations for the effectiveness of rhythmic ordering generally allude to more embodied and less abstract figures—often a connection is made between the internal rhythms of the body and their abstraction into forms suitable for musical composition, forms which are then readily identified by listeners because of

³⁸ Peter Crossley Holland points out that “certain well-known mathematical laws which are of wide application in physical nature have played a fundamental role in the music theories of all Eastern civilization that have had such theories, as well as in those of Western civilization, during the greater part of its history. Such systems have been based primarily, not upon number symbolism as such, but rather upon the properties of musical sound in itself and through the realization that its musically significant behavior relates to a scheme of simple proportion.” (Crossley-Holland, Peter. 1969. “On William P. Malm’s ‘On the nature and function of symbolism in Western and Oriental music.’” *Philosophy East and West* 19: 253-257. P. 255.)

their awareness of their own embodiment. Because my intention in this section is simply to show how musical works are self-referential, I shall not endeavour to solve the overarching problem of musical structure, rhythmic or tonal. It is enough to note that composers arrange musical notes such that regularities of temporal and tonal intervals provide for the continuity that makes musical works developmental and integral rather than simply a bunch of unrelated sounds.

Relating the notes together according to rhythmical and tonal schemes, the composer produces an identifiably musical work. The elements of the work are the notes themselves, while its structure is determined by the relationship between those elements. In reggae music, for example, the bass guitar may play “on and off the beat” (alternately accentuating and “missing” the beat marked by the kickdrum), and so create a rhythmic tension between bass and drum.³⁹ By making use of this technique—known as a “one-drop” because it produces the semblance of a constant descent⁴⁰—the composer relates the bass and drum notes together such that they create a rhythmic foundation overtop of which more complex tonal patterns may be placed. Even if no other patterns are developed, the one-drop itself is clearly musical. Deliberate use of musical schema such as the one-drop are used to tie together the notes and so provide structure to the musical work. Recurrent phrasings within the work, such as the *leitmotifs* in Wagner’s Ring Cycle, are another

³⁹ In the Jazz style, this is known as “hesitation.”

⁴⁰ William Malm draws our attention to similar technique in Indian music, pointing out that “quite often an accent of one unit of a *tala* [“a cycle of beats marked off into smaller units by accents”] will be felt rather than played so that a silence occurs which is actually filled with forward-moving tension.” (“On the nature and function of symbolism in Western and Oriental music,” pp. 240-241.) An example of a one-drop is the Toots and the Maytals song entitled Pressure Drop (most easily found on the album “The Harder They Come,” produced by Jimmy Cliff, Derrick Harriot, Byron Lee and Leslie Kong, on the Mango label (1973)).

example of self-referential structural elements in music. Although I have emphasized, in this subsection, the self-referentiality of “atomistic” elements in musical structure, it is important to note that self-referentiality in the musical work occurs on this higher level as well. Repetitive themes, rhythmical, melodic, and harmonic, are commonly found in musical works, and these themes are another example of self-referential features. A recurring phrase or *leitmotif* may, through its identifiable similarity to other occurrences of the theme, lend structure and cohesion to the work; these themes may also, by being subtly changed, be used to enhance the richness and variety of the structure.

The development of musical structure through rhythm or tonal arrangements, or through recurrent phrasings such as *leitmotifs*, works by placing notes near each other in such a way as to produce an awareness of a relation between them and results in *a coherent work which is self-referential in so far as its elements do not function alone, but in relation to each other*. This sense of ‘refer’ differs from the “pointing outwards” sense because *self-referentiality* does not depend upon the successful orientation of the listener towards something outside of the musical work, but rather upon the orientation of the listener to the discernible relationships between elements within the work. It is not a “pointing inward” but rather a constant reinforcement of the internal coherence of the piece, its structure, which develops because of a “pointing within and between” on the part of the notes. The listener who successfully internalizes the audible sounds and recognizes them as a musical work is relying upon this characteristic of self-referentiality.

Elemental Terminology

At this point it will be helpful to clarify some of our terms. The word 'refer' is highly ambiguous: it can mean "carry back," "point to something," "hand over," or even "send away." It is also a technical term within linguistics and philosophy of language, and so its present use invites confusion by implicitly contrasting itself with notions such as "denotation" and the like. The two senses of 'refer' which I posit as characteristics attributable to the elements of a musical work demand further clarification, and will be less ambiguous once given their own distinct names.

All musical works comprise an ordered series of musical elements: notes, phrases, rhythmic and tonal structures, &c. The integrity of the entire piece is assured by the deliberate relation of the elements to each other so that by means of these elements tensions and resolutions, formal development, and other musical patterns are instantiated. In this way the elements connect with each other to form the *structure* of the work, and so each element is part of an interrelated whole by virtue of a series of interpolations. This totality constitutes the musical work, and the internal relations developed within it makes the work *self-referential*, or referential in the second sense I defined above—the individual musical elements are not pointing outside of the work itself, even though they point to each other. When describing the musical elements in their role as the building blocks of the entire musical structure I shall henceforth call them either *internal*— 'internal' because they are, from this perspective, only active within the musical work, and do not establish relations external to the work—or *structural* elements.⁴¹

⁴¹ In order to avoid a possible confusion, I want to add that the idea of "inwardly related" which I have sketched does not imply that the relation of internalizing elements is between the notes or phrases and some psychological state of the listener. While

The term *externalizing* element I shall apply to those elements which, in addition to their role as internal elements, also negotiate a relation to something outside of the work, such as the storm in the Pastoral Symphony. The *dual role* of externalizing elements is an especially important characteristic of them, since they function both as structural elements and, if successful, as externalizing elements. As I noted earlier, there is a criterion of success that must be fulfilled before a potential externalizing element becomes an actual one, namely, that the listener make a meaningful connection between the element and something outside of the work. If this meaningful connection, which orients the listener to a larger context, is not made, then the external reference remains only implicit. With regard to externalizing elements, the important points to keep in mind are two: (1) they exist initially as only potential externalizing elements and become actual ones only when they succeed at making a meaningful external connection; and (2) they always already act as internalizing elements first and foremost, otherwise they would not be integral to the piece.

I shall also make one further terminological revision. During the foregoing discussion I have equivocated when using the word 'element,' sometimes referring to an individual musical "atom," such as a musical note, and at other times using the term to refer to a complex of such atoms, such a

the issue of aesthetic internalization is important, and will get due consideration later, at this point the view I set forth is concerned only with the musical work as a concrete object (though a merely auditory one which is only partially present at any given moment). Thus the inward relation between musical elements is wholly within the object itself. However much the notion of a musical work as an independent object may be an abstraction, it will be fruitful to establish definitions in relation to that abstraction. The necessity for the subjective internalization of music—the listener's retention of previous notes as new ones are heard, and his construction of the entire piece "within his mind"—should not be confused with the internal relations of musical notes within the work itself (viewed as an independent object).

musical phrase or rhythmic pattern. The equivocation is not unwarranted—individual phrases can be distinguished as distinct musical entities just as easily as musical notes are—but it is misleading nonetheless. From now on I shall describe both types of elements as musical *features*, since that term is equally applicable to atomic elements such as notes as well as complex elements such as phrases. Meanwhile, the phrase ‘musical feature’ will readily point to the parts of musical works that we are considering.

Summary of § 2

This section has shown how musical experience, which is dependent upon temporal presentation and historical internalization, provides the raw material for an “objective” analysis of musical works. I have noted that we refer to musical works as objects in two ways: (1) by indicating the physical objects that are notational forms of them (*e.g.*, scores or compact discs) when in fact we mean to refer to the work itself, and (2) by speaking as if the work is wholly and sensuously present at any given moment in time. I have cautioned against the indiscriminate use of (2), all the while keeping in mind that it is a conceptual abstraction which is necessary if we are to engage in structural analysis. I have also defined a set of terms that provides a vocabulary with which we can engage in the structural analysis of musical works. Finally, I have noted that the term ‘element’ is best replaced by ‘feature,’ so as to capture the smaller, internal structures that are found within music.

Chapter II: Hanslick

"One good thing about music: when it hits, you feel no pain." -- R. N. Marley⁴²

Overview

In this chapter I intend to set out Hanslick's theory, with particular attention paid to his emphasis on idealized form. I shall also consider the non-representational features of his system. Finally, I shall demonstrate that Hanslick's theory ought to be mediated by a careful awareness of its roots in the Great Tradition of Western art music. We shall see that Hanslick can be interpreted either as an archformalist or as a kind of formalist expressivist, and that the later interpretation is truer to Hanslick's original intent.

§ 3 — Hanslick's Formalism

Science, Objectivism, Idealism, and Polemic

There is a long tradition in philosophy of music which emphasizes the structural features of music and downplays or ignores all other aspects of musical experience. This critical tradition emphasizes the formal structure of musical works at the expense of other characteristics of musical experience. By doing so, it comes to terms with only a portion of musical experience, though it argues that it is this portion which is solely responsible for any value that is strictly musical. Although formalist analyses of music purport to isolate the

⁴² Cf. the song "Trenchtown Rock" by Bob Marley and the Wailers, and released on too many albums to be enumerated here.

“truly musical” value of musical works, it does so only by approaching them from a relatively narrow perspective.

“Historicism,” writes Herbert Schnädelbach, “was not the only distinctive feature of the period between 1831 and 1945 in Germany: it was rather, above all else, a century of science.”⁴³ Eduard Hanslick’s landmark text, *Vom Musikalisch-Schönen* (*On the Musically Beautiful*), which first appeared in 1854, was written during the onset of this period, and Hanslick’s own comments in the introduction reflect his firm belief in the scientific approach.⁴⁴ “The striving for as objective as possible a scientific knowledge of things, of which the effects are being felt in all areas of knowledge in our time,” Hanslick astutely notes, “must necessarily also have an impact upon the investigation of beauty.”⁴⁵ The effect of science on musical aesthetics and its emphasis on narrow and objective research rather than holistic understanding was warmly welcomed by Hanslick, who was of the opinion that “[t]he aesthetics of poetry and of the visual arts are far in advance of that of music”⁴⁶ only because of the effectiveness of the scientific approach and the explanatory potency of the new scientific methodology. Thus Hanslick was to assert that

[t]he servile dependence of the various special aesthetics upon a supreme metaphysical principle of a general aesthetics is steadily yielding ground to the conviction that each particular art demands to be understood only of itself, through a knowledge of its unique technical characteristics. System-building is giving way to research firmly based on the axiom that the laws of beauty proper

⁴³ Schnädelbach, Herbert. 1984. *Philosophy in Germany: 1831–1933*. Translated by Eric Matthews. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. P. 66.

⁴⁴ Hanslick was not, properly speaking, German. Schnädelbach’s statement about the influence of scientific “objectivity,” however, is still applicable. Moreover, even Hanslick’s friend Billroth, in his last letter to Hanslick before dying, writes of Hanslick’s “predominating south-German feeling.” (Deas, Stewart. 1972. *In Defence of Hanslick*. 2nd ed. Westmead: Gregg International Publishers Limited. P. 101.)

⁴⁵ *On the Musically Beautiful*, p. 1.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

to each particular art are inseparable from the distinctive characteristics of its material and its technique.⁴⁷

By restricting its research project to what was strictly musical, the goal of the scientifically-influenced musical aesthetician was to isolate and come to terms with pure, uncorrupted musical value rather than rely upon the notion of music as a modality of art in general, a concept central to systematic and supposedly unscientific aesthetics.⁴⁸ Hence Hanslick's account of musical beauty is premised, in part, on a belief in the distinguishability of disparate art forms.

Rejecting any "supreme metaphysical principle of a general aesthetics"⁴⁹ working within a general theory of art conjoined with a model of human subjectivity, Hanslick instead opts for a narrower, less encompassing, "objective" approach to music, as had been successful in the aesthetic understanding of art forms other than music:

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

⁴⁸ Two clarificatory points are in order. First, I shall refer to Hanslick's objectivist aesthetics as "scientifically-influenced," which it quite obviously is, but I am not making the stronger claim that it aims for scientific objectivity, in the strict sense. The relation between a scientific and an objectivist approach to music is not readily summarized in a footnote, so I merely flag the point here in order to prevent any implication that Hanslick intended to be a scientist rather than a philosopher or aesthetician. The term 'science' came to mean many things in the nineteenth century, some of which meanings are broader than the modern use of the term would allow. Second—and this point is related to the former one—there were already systematic aesthetic theories which purported to be scientific as well, notably Hegel's account of art. It is unclear whether Hanslick believed that a systematic approach could not possibly be a proper objectivist aesthetic theory, or whether he was simply emphasizing the fruitfulness of theoretical divisions which "scientific" research makes especially powerful.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.* Consider, also, Hanslick's direct attack of Hegel's philosophy of art: "Even Hegel, in discussing music, often misled in that he tacitly confused his predominantly art-historical point of view with the purely aesthetical and identified in music certainties which music itself never possessed. Of course there is a connection between the character of every piece of music and that of its author, but for the aesthetician this is not open to view. The idea of necessary connection between all phenomena can in its actual application be exaggerated to the point of caricature. Nowadays it takes real heroism to declare, in opposition to this pleasantly stimulating and ingeniously represented trend, that historical comprehension and aesthetical judgment are two different things." (*Ibid.* pp. 39-40) While Hanslick is wrong to think that Hegel tacitly confounded art-history and aesthetics—rather, it is a necessary connection in his philosophical science.

The aesthetics of literature and that of the visual arts are going about the practical side of their business, namely criticism, already adhering to the principle that the primary object of aesthetical investigation is the beautiful object, not the feelings of the subject.⁵⁰

According to the theoretical approach which takes the musical work as an object to which techniques of analysis and dissection could be applied, beauty is predicated on the nature of the object itself—musical works are beautiful, not musical experiences. As I have already noted, the atemporal and static portrayal of musical works is a helpful heuristic strategy, and so, despite my insistence upon the musical work's dependent ontological status—its reliance upon the musical experience of listeners who take in an audible performance and thus apprehend the musical work as such—it is still sometimes appropriate to talk about musical works in this ontologically inaccurate but heuristically necessary manner. I hesitate to criticize Hanslick, or any other theorist, for doing just that, since in order to examine the *structures* of musical works one is forced to consider them abstractly, to pull them out of their temporal and subjective context and refer to them as static, atemporal objects.⁵¹ Indeed, for Hanslick, the musical work which he purported to analyze has the ontological status of being a mental object,⁵²

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

⁵¹ Like most philosophers of music, I speak of musical works as if there actually are such things apart from anyone's experience of them. Without this abstracted idea of musical works we would have much difficulty in understanding the elements, features, and structures that make musical works what they are. But I shall always stress that *musical works only exist as the result of musical experiences—to speak of them as independent objects is to refer to them at one conceptual remove from their original appearance.*

⁵² Geoffrey Payzant writes, "Hanslick's *Formen* are forms of auditory *Vorstellung*, of images or representations in *Phantasie* (the active, productive human imagination). The system of relationships between these auditory images is objective though purely mental; it is a formal artifact of human culture and not a material instantiation of nature." (Payzant, Geoffrey. 1981. "Hanslick, Sams, Gay, and 'Tönend Bewegte Formen'." *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*: 41-48. P. 45. Hereafter referred to as "Tönend Bewegte Formen.")

though he is not unaware of the need for material presentation⁵³ and the subjective internalization of that object.⁵⁴

There are advantages to the formalist approach. Treating the musical work as an architectonic allows us to examine its formal features more readily. It also allows us to understand how the work as a whole is "built-up" as it plays itself out through time, such that, once the whole work has been heard through its performance, we have a sense of it as a cohesive, integral whole which has a kind of internal structural integrity. Considering musical works in this way also makes for ready comparison between different compositions, since many of their different features are more apparent when they are considered in their formal totality rather than examined moment by moment.

The question that needs to be asked, however, is whether the objective approach to musical works accounts for *all* the elements of musical experience which contribute to the value of the musical work. In other words, we must examine whether his analytical methodology can capture the entire scope of potential value, or if instead it should be used in a more limited way to identify those particular aspects of value which are discernible by means of

⁵³ Although it is worth noting that, for Hanslick, the material instantiation of music is not music itself. "That music shares the same material substratum (i.e., sound) with those manifestations in which sounds act so intensely upon the nerves will later be seen to have important consequences for us. Here we are emphasizing an antimaterialistic view, namely, that music begins where those isolated effects leave off." (*On the Musically Beautiful*, p. 52). Hanslick's conception of music begins after its material components (sounds) have faded, and relies upon the ideality of tones or tonal forms, which are mental rather than physical. (See "Tönend Bewegte Formen," pp. 44-47.)

⁵⁴ "Without mental activity, there can be no aesthetical pleasure whatever. But music is characteristically this type of mental activity par excellence, for the reason that its achievements are not static; they do not come into being all at once but spin themselves out sequentially before the hearer, hence they demand from him not an arbitrarily granted, lingering, and intermittent inspection, but an unflagging attendance [*Begleiten*] in keenest vigilance." (*On the Musically Beautiful*, p. 64.)

such a method.

While Hanslick did not explicitly ask this question, the project of *On the Musically Beautiful* is premised upon an analysis of strict or pure musical value. This means, among other things, that Hanslick denies the value of externalizing features in musical structures. Or, more properly speaking, he denies that externalizing features in musical structures have *musical* value; rather, they can only have non-musical value (though he does not rule out the possibility of such value still being part of the musical experience of listeners). Music's symbolic referentiality, while real, is not, for Hanslick, a characteristic that contributes to musical value. Likewise with the sensuous effects of music—these are “pathological” rather than mental, and music, in Hanslick's eyes, begins only after the “material substratum” of sound has faded away, leaving the ideality of the musical work to be contemplated and cognitively appreciated by the cultivated listener.

To understand Hanslick properly we must distinguish between the idea of “structure” and that of “form.” The structure of the musical work is manifest in the material substratum of musical notes, while the form of the work is supervenient upon this substratum and arises cognitively through an apprehension of the work as a mental object. The material substratum consists of the sonorous, and thus sensuous, sounds that the listener hears and, during the process of listening, mentally assembles into a musical work through the process of aesthetic internalization. One may call *either* the entire sensuous presentation of the notes *or* the mental form assembled through aesthetic internalization the structure of the work. Hanslick, however, thinks that the musical work only exists as an ideal mental object, and thus gives

priority to the mental form rather than the physical structure. In this sense he presents an idealist interpretation of music. In the final section of the thesis, I shall argue that this idealist interpretation neglects important physiological characteristics of musical works, features that may be deliberately used in certain performative traditions. Because Hanslick sees the physical elements of music, its sounds, as merely the material from which the mental object is grasped, his theory is a formalist one—it considers musical structure in its mental role alone. A more encompassing structuralist theory can take account of the physical components of music, however, and so not all structuralist accounts are necessarily formal ones.

The reader who is unacquainted with or resistant to hanslickian objectivism in aesthetics may well ask whether the narrow scope formalism gives to “pure” musical value is a beneficial approach to understanding music. It may be noted that this deliberately limited objective analysis leaves out important features of musical experience and their worth. Kathleen Higgins certainly thinks that this is the case, and it is worthwhile to restate her objection once again:

Conservatism, ethnocentrism, and divorce from experience characterize the now established philosophical approach to music. They result from what is seen as a requirement of philosophical procedure: restriction of one’s topic to yield precise results. But such restrictive analysis involves deliberate disregard for the points of connection that one phenomenon may have with another.⁵⁵

On the one hand, Hanslick himself clearly and explicitly limits the scope of his analysis, so he can hardly be accused of overlooking features in musical experience which he has no intention of coming to grips with. His disregard is deliberate and explicit, forming part of his theoretical approach. On the other hand, however, it is by no means inaccurate to claim that the

⁵⁵ *Music of Our Lives*, p. 3.

“conservatism and ethnocentrism” which is, unfortunately, a strong current within philosophy of music (as it is within the world at large) is founded in large part on subsequent interpretations and expositions of *On the Musically Beautiful*. While Hanslick himself may not be an appropriate target for such an accusation, it is worthwhile for us to consider how he may have unwittingly contributed to this state of affairs.

It is fair to say that *On the Musically Beautiful* exhibits a polemical intensity of the first order.⁵⁶ Emboldened by the apparent effectiveness of the scientific-objective approach when applied to other art forms, Hanslick set out to attack those who claim that the purpose of music is to incite emotion in the listener.⁵⁷ Geoffrey Payzant tells us that although

the main text of the book appears to be philosophical in character and intention, Hanslick’s prefaces to later editions admit that his negative doctrine (that to represent feelings is *not* the purpose of music) is polemically intended, and is argued by him in a deliberately provocative and rhapsodic manner, so there is room for debate on the question of whether the book is mainly philosophical or mainly polemical.⁵⁸

The severity of Hanslick’s polemical attack on the claim that emotional representation is the aim of music in part reflects his confidence in the objective approach’s ability to deny that the representation of emotions had anything to do with the proper goal of musical composition. However, along with the quality of emotional affectation, he segregated all other “alien, extra-musical notions” and any “subject introduced from without” as impure,

⁵⁶ Payzant notes that Hanslick’s “interest in writing [*On the Musically Beautiful*] was more polemical than philosophical, although it is because of its philosophical significance that it has survived and become a classic. Throughout his career Hanslick was engaged in cultural politics, particularly with regard to music and theatre, beginning with his first appearance in print.” (*On the Musically Beautiful*, p. xiv (Translator’s Preface).)

⁵⁷ One might wonder at how heated a conversation could develop between Hanslick and Leo Tolstoy, who saw the “infection” with emotion of the reader/listener/viewer of art as a prime feature of artistic purpose.

⁵⁸ Payzant, Geoffrey. 1981. Hanslick, Sams, Gay, and ‘Tönend Bewegte Formen’. *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*:41-48. “Tönend Bewegte Formen,” p. 41.

unmusical, distracting, and generally wrongheaded. Arthur Berndtson succinctly states that "Hanslick's argument is primarily an opposition of two approaches to music: one emotional and disparaged, the other aesthetic and praised,"⁵⁹ and Stewart Deas, a staunch defender of Hanslick, stresses Hanslick's attempt to separate the aesthetic feeling from the compound of feeling with which it is associated.⁶⁰

Conservatism, however, is not necessarily a mark against Hanslick. Even if Hanslick "is now perhaps best remembered," as Geoffrey Payzant states, "as leader of the reactionary party in a famous controversy between Wagnerians and Brahmsians, between New and Old in music,"⁶¹ it may well be the case that his account most accurately represented a small subset of tradition of Western art music as it was in his day. I say "a small subset" because it is clear that Hanslick does not come to terms with important features which, contrary to Hanslick's idealism, are present in that tradition.

While Hanslick falls under heavy criticism by those who equate his account of music to an overly restrictive and objectified understanding of musical experience, and point to Hanslick as the source of all that is narrow in musical aesthetics, I think that there is much of value to be taken from a formalist account such as the one he provides. Hanslick was not, despite the general opinion, entirely opposed to emotional aspects of music, although he did deny it a central role in the art and maintained that proper musical composition did not and could not concern itself with the representation or

⁵⁹ Berndtson, Arthur. 1969. *Art, Expression, and Beauty*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc. P. 129.

⁶⁰ *In Defence of Hanslick*, pp. 28-29.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

affectation of emotion.⁶²

There is good reason to support Hanslick's attack on his contemporaries and their belief that the sole aim of music is to represent the emotions. Hanslick was not entirely unaware of the complexities of music, nor did he completely discount the role of feeling in our judgments regarding musical value.⁶³ Armed with *The Beautiful in Music's* negative proposition—the rejection of “the widespread view that music is supposed to ‘represent feelings.’”⁶⁴—Hanslick wisely fought against the romantic idea that music's specific office is to represent emotion, an assertion that limited the creative potential of the composer. Unfortunately, Hanslick's positive proposition, that the beautiful in music follows entirely and solely from the formal structure of the musical work, reintroduces a replacement doctrine of absolute value, just as limited in its potential to grasp the full power and variety of musical experience, which instead of limiting the creativity of the composer limits the ascription of value by the listener by predetermining what is and is not “proper” musical appreciation.

“Hanslick's theory,” notes Higgins, “represents not so much a denial of any relationship between music and emotion as a shift toward an exclusively structural account of music, which in turn renders the emotion–music connection problematic.”⁶⁵ In this way Hanslick's avowal of the pure

⁶² See Kathleen Higgins' critique of Hanslick in *Music of Our Lives*.

⁶³ “I share completely the view that the ultimate worth of the beautiful is always based on the immediate manifestness of feeling.” (*On the Musically Beautiful*, p. xxii.) Hanslick's ambivalent account of emotional expression in music is also noted by Higgins—“Despite his reputation, Hanslick is remarkably tolerant of claims linking music to emotion.” (*Music of Our Lives*, p. 92), and Geoffrey Payzant (cf. *Music of Our Lives*, p. 92; see also Payzant's introduction to his translation of *Vom Musikalisch-Schönen*).

⁶⁴ *On the Musically Beautiful*, p. xxii.

⁶⁵ *Music of Our Lives*, p. 81. Higgins also agrees with my critical emphasis on Hanslick's scientific approach: “Hanslick's views on music's relation to emotion are, as we have noted, the result of his effort to make musical aesthetics objective and ‘scientific.’ A

aesthetic undermines his own understanding of music's emotional significance.⁶⁶

The give and take of philosophical debate often makes it difficult to achieve a compromise position even when it is the most appropriate one. The prefatory confessions of his polemical intent which Payzant notes make it clear that Hanslick, seeing that music's "objective" value was being overlooked, and being aware that a scientific or theoretical approach to music could provide new insights, set out to attack romanticism and expressionist tendencies in music. Unfortunately, his polemic narrows the scope of his considerations. Instead of arguing for an expanded conception of musical value in which structural and emotional characteristics were both taken into account for the purpose of musical evaluation, Hanslick reverts to Kant's account of pure beauty, holding that "[i]t is not by means of feeling that we have become aware of beauty, but by means of the imagination as the activity of pure contemplation."⁶⁷ Still, even that statement of the aim of art allows

scientific musical aesthetics must be based on necessary laws that link form (understood as structure) to beauty. But no necessary connection between music and definite emotions can be established, since the 'through' that specifies each definite emotion cannot be communicated by music. Thus, associations between music and emotions have no place in musical aesthetics, and they are irrelevant to proper aesthetic appreciation." (*Ibid.*, p. 92)

The inability, on Hanslick's account, of music to communicate particular, definite emotions is an issue that I shall address in the next chapter during my discussion of Susanne Langer's theory of musical expression. Langer thinks that the ambiguity of musical expression is unavoidable, since musical expression is not a form of communication but an opportunity for the listener to gain an insight into the feeling being portrayed by the work.

⁶⁶ Hanslick demonstrates a concern with emotional significance that is often overlooked in the usual interpretations of his aesthetic theory. Robert Hall writes, "Hanslick was *above all* concerned to show that musical beauty referred to the emotions neither of the composer nor the auditor but to the musical work itself and, where relevant, to its expressiveness." (Hall, Robert W. 1995. "Hanslick and Musical Expressiveness." *Journal of Aesthetic Education* 29 (3):85-92. P. 91, emphasis mine.) Geoffrey Payzant, too, recognizes Hanslick's awareness of music's emotional import, noting that Hanslick "by no means claims that music *cannot* arouse, express, or portray feelings; obviously it can do all these things. he merely says that to do so is not the defining purpose of music." (*On the Musically Beautiful*, p. xvi. (Translator's preface).)

⁶⁷ *On the Musically Beautiful*, p. 4.

some room for musical effects, including the resulting emotional effects, to have artistic value, though Hanslick attempted to close off that conceptual space. Hanslick wavers between a kind of absolutism, where *only* musical structure has value, and a position which holds that the cognitive aspects of music are the *primary* aim of the art. The second position would permit music to have more than one aim, and it would have served philosophy of music well, had it been promoted.

It was not promoted, however. Instead, the drive for objectivity took over. All externalizing features were to be purged from considerations of aesthetic value and replaced with an account exclusively consisting of a description of internal, self-referential features in musical works. Even individual phrases in Hanslick's essay show this inexorable progression from rejecting emotional representation as the sole aim of music to establishing the purity of musical structure as the necessary precursor of evaluation.

Consider the definition which Hanslick gives for musical beauty:

So far we have proceeded negatively and have sought merely to refute the erroneous assumption that the beauty of music has its being in the representation of feeling. To that sketch, we now have to fill in the positive content. This we shall do by answering the question: What kind of beauty is the beauty of a musical composition?

It is a specifically musical kind of beauty. By this we understand a beauty that is self-contained and in no need of content from outside itself, that consists simply and solely of tones and their artistic combination. Relationships, fraught with significance, of sounds which are in themselves charming — their congruity and opposition, their separating and combining, their soaring and subsiding — this is what comes in spontaneous forms before our inner contemplation and pleases us as beautiful.⁶⁸

Having determined that an objective, formalist analysis of music was appropriate, and thus that the scope of consideration would be limited to the musical object itself, Hanslick could still have argued that “the beautiful” is

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

not “contingent upon, or in any need of any subject introduced from without.” The autonomy and value of pure music, as beautiful, could then be established—musical beauty could be primarily attributed to musical structure, and so music would be free to be beautiful without having to aim at inciting emotions or engaging in some other affective activity. At the same time, a more explicit recognition of the narrowness of his account could have provided an opening for other aspects of musical beauty to be considered, even though, from the formalist point of view, they may be secondary aspects of musical value. Hanslick himself leaves some room for emotional “content” in music, although he adamantly denies any claim that music can *represent* emotions. The final subsection of this chapter will present Robert Hall’s expressivist interpretation of Hanslick, an interpretation that appropriately widens the scope of Hanslick’s theory, but right now I want to consider the exclusionary tendency of hanslickian formalism.

Musical Structure and Exclusivity

A balanced critique of Hanslick’s theory requires us to consider the negative effects of *On the Musically Beautiful*, and in particular the accusation of ethnocentrism which Higgins levels against Hanslick. I think that there is some truth to this accusation, though it may amount merely to noting that Hanslick, like all of us, is a product of his time. Nonetheless, there is some danger in uncritical appropriations of his project if they are applied to musics other than the Great Tradition in Western art music. A charitable reading of Hanslick can prevent some of these pitfalls by emphasizing his idea of the “cultivated listener,” but it would be unwise of us to remain blind to the

exclusionary potential of hanslickian analysis.⁶⁹

Hanslick's theory allows us to recognize the value of internal, self-referential features and their structure in music⁷⁰—that is, the elements of musical structure that contribute to pure form but do not orient the listener to anything outside of the musical work—without denying the possibility of other aspects of musical value, but one still runs the risk of determining that beauty of musical structure is the *only* valuable aspect of music unless some concept such as *hybrid* musical value—a concept I shall unpack momentarily—is permitted. Music, in its broadest sense, is not structure alone, nor is it the idealized, mentally-apprehended structure we call form; it is that which manifests itself through the experience of musical works. And musical experiences do include the recognition of emotion in the music, and the experience of non-formal, palpable features. It is one thing to want to allow for the possibility of “pure music” and so to free some aspect of musical beauty from contingent or necessary relationships to things outside of the structure of the musical work. It is another thing entirely, however, to deny any possibility of such relationships, and to unduly narrow one's definition of music, such that musical beauty is relegated to the narrow and elitist concept of “pure” musical beauty.

Yet this is just what Hanslick does. Not content with making possible a kind of pure musical beauty (and thus value) that is independent of

⁶⁹ Yet another word of caution: Hanslick himself is quite clear about the deliberately narrow analysis he desires to undertake. The potential for exclusionary analyses that overlook non-pure musical value has become realized by subsequent applications of Hanslick's theory, without due regard or awareness of the deliberate limitations he placed on it.

⁷⁰ Of course, for Hanslick the internal features of music are tones, not sounds or notes proper, but rather the ideal mental consequent of them. My earlier definition of internal features refers to notes as sounds, but I see no difficulty in allowing for Hanslick's second-order concept of tones.

anything besides musical form, he attempts to reduce music in its entirety to the musical object as he sees it—the idealized structure of the musical work—and, because they will not fit his model, disregards many of those experiences which might be considered musical. Admittedly, he does this explicitly and without guile, but his forthrightness does not make his narrow definition the most appropriate one or render it capable of coming to terms with musical experience in general. The exclusionary tendencies of his theory can be noticed in controversial statements such as, “one will always have to grant that the concept “music” does not apply strictly to a piece of music composed to a verbal text.”⁷¹ Thus the tremendous effort put forth by those who make and perform operas fails to increase the world’s store of strictly *musical* value.⁷² Nor do the efforts of natural musicians do so, since “[e]ven the purest phenomenon in the natural auditory realm, namely bird song,” Hanslick asserts, “stands in no relation to human music, inasmuch as it cannot be accommodated to our scales.”⁷³ That statement follows from Hanslick’s belief that “[n]ature’s successive auditory phenomena are lacking in intelligible proportion and evade reduction to our major and minor scales.”⁷⁴

The notion of “reducing sounds to our scales” is, for Hanslick, a necessary condition for the attribution of the label ‘musical’ to sounds, and demonstrates the narrowness of a purist formalism and its tendency, if I may paraphrase William James, to slip, slip, slip into areas it ought not to pass judgment on. Hanslick’s view regarding natural sounds which many people

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

⁷² Hanslick does, however, moderate this position. He recognizes the tension between the opera as a musical work and as a dramatic work, and unsuccessfully attempts to reconcile the sharp distinction between the two that his theory of value demands. See *On the Musically Beautiful*, pp. 22-27.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 71.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 69.

would consider musical is an example of this. Melody, harmony, and rhythm are the three vital threads of (human) music, according to Hanslick, and natural sounds only demonstrate one of these features:

Accordingly, harmony and melody are not to be found in nature. Only a third element in music, this one being supported by the first two, existed prior and external to mankind: rhythm. In the gallop of the horse, the clatter of the mill, the song of blackbird and quail, a unity is displayed into which successive particles of time assemble themselves and construct a perceivable whole.⁷⁵

The intelligible whole of natural rhythm, however, does not qualify as a proper musical structure: "In nature . . . rhythm conveys neither melody nor harmony, but only incommensurable vibrations in the air."⁷⁶ Natural intelligible wholes of sound that demonstrate an organized rhythm cannot be music, then, because they do not have the other structural features that all "real" music has: melody and harmony. These features only come about through deliberate composition within (presumably diatonic) scales.

It should be clear, however, that a definition of music that excludes the work of purely percussive musical groups, such as Japanese drum troupes, oversteps the bounds of a scientific methodology and instead betrays a restriction of musical genres, in part culturally-based, to those with which Hanslick himself was familiar.⁷⁷ Besides opera, Hanslick also claims that so-called primitive music is not music, but merely an imitation of nature. Thus the scale to which the song of songbirds could not be metricated also excludes

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 69.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.* Hanslick's disavowal of the musical aspect of pure rhythm is especially odd given his other statements about its importance. He refers to "*rhythm*, the main artery of the musical organism" (p. 67) and "the more palpable [element] of rhythm" (p. 129).

⁷⁷ I want, however, to stress that this was certainly not a deliberate maneuver on Hanslick's part. In fact, he explicitly hoped to refrain from (unaesthetic) musical partisanship: "The musically beautiful, in the specific meaning we have adopted, is not limited to music in the so-called 'classical' style, nor does it include a preference for the classical over the romantic. It applies to the one as to the other: to Bach as well as Beethoven, to Mozart as well as Schumann. So our thesis contains no hint of partisanship." (*Ibid.*, p. 38.)

some human musical products, as well, since it is the case that

when the South Sea Islander bangs rhythmically with bits of metal and wooden staves and along with it sets up an unintelligible wailing, this is the natural kind of “music,” yet it just is not *music*. But what we hear a Tyrolean peasant singing, into which seemingly no trace of art penetrates, is artistic music through and through. Of course, the peasant thinks he is singing off the top of his head. For that to be possible, however, requires centuries of germination.⁷⁸

Though it is the case that the banging and “unintelligible wailing” of the South Sea Islanders—whose own musical tradition may well predate Tyrolese peasant songs by hundreds of years—can hardly fit into the European melodic and harmonic structures that Hanslick uses as the theoretical foundation for all proper, artificial music,⁷⁹ *they are music nonetheless*. The passage quoted above demonstrates perhaps the only instance in *On the Musically Beautiful* where Hanslick allows himself to overstep the boundaries of his own project and inappropriately judge another musical tradition according to the standards of his own.

Consider the Foreword to the eighth edition of *On the Musically Beautiful*, and its final sentence, concluding with Hanslick’s statement that he is going to look at musical beauty and “how our great masters embodied it.”⁸⁰ Consider also Hanslick’s chapter “The Relation of Music to Nature” and his comparison of natural sounds to “our major and minor scales.”⁸¹ There is even a comment that explains how it is that the Tyrolese peasant, without being aware of it, sings musically instead of imitating nature:

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 69-70.

⁷⁹ What Hanslick shows us with this kind of example is just how much a listener’s appreciation or recognition of music is dependent upon his familiarity with the schema used by the composer-performer. In Western art music, these schema are predominantly melodic and harmonic, while in other cultures they may not be. I shall return to this point in Chapter Three, but it is worthwhile to note that Hanslick’s formalism and his cultural situatedness are almost certainly connected.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. xxiv.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 69.

The most artistically advanced people of antiquity, just like the most learned composers of the early Middle Ages, did not know what our shepherdesses in the remotest Alps know: how to sing in thirds.⁸²

It is obvious that Hanslick's scope of analysis is intended to be limited to what Payzant calls "the Great Tradition, Mozart to Brahms"⁸³ and is not meant to act as a universal musical aesthetic theory. Whether or not Hanslick considers that tradition to be the very best one—and I suspect he does—does not matter, however. What is important is his focus on a small subset of Western art music, whence he derives his examples and exemplars.

Mistakes can occur, however, as is shown by Hanslick's uncharitable assessment of the music of the South Sea Islanders. While Hanslick's misstep in this case is minor, later formalist theorists whose account of musical forms relied upon the diatonic scale overlooked this undue imposition of one musical tradition's structural features onto another. Consider, to use a more contemporary example, the style of music known as the blues. While one may prefer Beethoven to B.B. King, it would be unusually uncharitable to claim that the blues is not, in fact, a musical style, or that it is not music at all. It is, admittedly, often thought of by those who prefer score-based music as an example of sloppy musicianship. Some more benevolently inclined yet diatonically-bound formalist theorists have tried to "correct" this view by positing the existence of a "blues scale," one which explains why blues sounds "sloppy" necessarily. This attribution of a special scale to blues as part of an attempt to gain it respectability, however, may miss the point entirely. Sidney Finkelstein writes,

these deviations from the pitch familiar to concert music are not, of course, the result of an inability to sing or play in tune. They mean that the blues are a non-

⁸² *Ibid.*

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. xvii (Translator's Preface).

diatonic music. . . . Many books on jazz . . . generally describe the blues as a sequence of chords, such as the tonic, subdominant, and dominant seventh. Such a definition, however, is like putting the cart before the horse. There are definite patterns of chords which have been evolved to support the blues, but these do not define the blues, and the blues can exist as a melody perfectly recognizable as the blues without them. Neither are the blues simply a use of the major scale with the "third" and "seventh" slightly blued or flattened. The fact is that both this explanation, and the chord explanation, are attempts to explain one musical system in terms of another; to describe a non-diatonic music in diatonic terms.⁸⁴

I want to be careful here. There is ample evidence to show that Hanslick was neither a snob nor insistent upon artistic themes which transcend everyday life and so rise above common or vulgar concerns. For instance, when writing about a recitation by Wagner of the libretto for "Die Meistersinger," Hanslick relates the thought that "the work as a whole remains a pleasing picture of German town life, sometimes bright, sometimes touching, based on simple relationships and enlivened by the joys and sufferings of simple people."⁸⁵ Although not a comment about a specifically musical piece, this statement demonstrates Hanslick's generous appreciation of quotidian themes in music, and does not exhibit a partisanship in favour of rarefied, highly-conceptual art interpretable only by an educated elite. If the beautiful in music can be appropriated only by the cultivated listener, who eschews pathological responses for a critical and aesthetic awareness, we must keep in mind that the cultivated listeners in other traditions may well be able to point out our own shortcomings in understanding their musical traditions. Indeed, the concept of the cultivated listener demands some degree of contextual considerations in our analysis of musical works, at least in so far as we must consider how and to what degree a listener must become familiar

⁸⁴ Finkelstein, Sidney. 1948. *Jazz: A People's Music*. New York: Citadel. P. 28. Cf. Jones, LeRoi. 1963. *Blues People: Negro Music in White America*. New York: William Morrow and Company. P. 25.

⁸⁵ Cf. *In Defence of Hanslick*, p. 14.

with and habituated to a new tradition before he can pass judgment on it.

Proponents of the objective approach to music, whose dominance in the field is attributable primarily to the impetus provided by Hanslick, must admit responsibility for the inability of traditional philosophy of music to deal with non-Western and non-“art” music, as well as Western art music that falls outside of the Great Tradition. The objective, formalist project is inappropriately applied when music outside of this category of Western art music is judged according to the dominant features of the Great Tradition, hence producing an overly exclusive idea of what music is, such that only a small amount of pure (wordless) Western art music qualifies. We can claim that Hanslick is the foremost defender of the value of formal sophistication in music, and thus a major proponent of one of Western art music’s most successful and developed features. Unfortunately, we must also take note of Hanslick’s (inadvertent) influence as one of the main sources of our present inability to evaluate music on grounds other than formal structure.

Restricting the application of his account to the Great Tradition in Western art music may be a suitable remedy and, in fact, an entirely appropriate one. Since Hanslick concerned himself primarily with that tradition, it is not unreasonable to refuse to apply his theory to musics with which he was not familiar and did not consider in sufficient detail. Geoffrey Payzant summarizes the situation well and is worth quoting at length. He tells us that *On the Musically Beautiful* is

[n]ot, however, a foundation for a scientific musical aesthetics of all music. It will be remembered that in his Foreword to the first edition . . . Hanslick speaks of the “restricted sense” in which he considers an aesthetics of music to be possible. He does not tell us what it is that imposes the restriction, but we have a clue to it in the above quotation from his autobiography. There he says that different times, different peoples, and different schools have different views on what constitutes the musically beautiful. Looking back on his long career as a

writer on music, he says wryly that for him the history of music began with Bach and Handel but that in his heart it began with Mozart and reached its summit in Beethoven, Schumann, and Brahms. It would seem that, for Hanslick, the fundamental principle of music, namely the musically beautiful, while objective (i.e., not determined by our responses to it), is not universal but is culturally and historically conditioned. His book, then, is more accurately described as an essay towards the revision of the aesthetics of music belonging to what we may call the Great Tradition, Mozart to Brahms.⁸⁶

Payzant's awareness of the limited scope of Hanslick's project is helpful in enabling us to remain sensitive to the difficulty of basing a musical aesthetics on only one musical tradition. An expanded or universal musical aesthetics demands something more, though it may be necessary to make more use of psychological or sociological explanations than a strict aesthetic approach would allow for. In any case, however, we can derive from Hanslick's account a good model for understanding the relation between musical form and pure musical value. As Payzant goes on to remark, "Hanslick said that it seemed to him (in the 1890s) 'that a work deserving the title 'Aesthetics of Music' was still a long way from being feasible'—perhaps it still is. When the time comes to attempt such a thing, however, if it is not built upon Hanslick's foundation, at the least it will have to be built around it."⁸⁷ In the next chapter I shall try to add a few more stones to the edifice that Hanslick created. Right now, however, I want to present an account of musical rhythm that illuminates the false dichotomy Hanslick posits between the pathological and cognitive appreciation of music.

Rhythm: Pathological and Cognitive

Hanslick's focus on the melodies and harmonies that function in diatonic music is obviously not meant to be an account of all musics. In fact, it

⁸⁶ *On the Musically Beautiful*, p. xvii (Translator's Preface).

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

ignores what may be the most common structural feature of all musical traditions. “Unlike harmony and melody, which are primarily musical elements,” observe Hans and Shulamith Krietler, “rhythm plays an important role also in other arts and seems to be a universal, perhaps even a cosmic phenomenon,”⁸⁸ perhaps because “rhythm may be viewed as an aspect of most if not all processes and occurrences in the internal and external worlds.”⁸⁹ The Krietlers survey a number of theories that attempt to account for the effectiveness of rhythm in art, including erotic theories of rhythm, both psychoanalytic and evolutionary, as presented by Freud and Darwin,⁹⁰ and theories based on the inherently rhythmical nature of organic life in motion,⁹¹ finally settling on a “more comprehensive and satisfactory hypothesis . . . based on the relation between the perception of external rhythm and the course of internal rhythmical life processes.”⁹² Rhythmical music that strays from the various tempos of internal rhythms, on this account, is able to induce tension or relaxation in the listener.

The notion of “inducing tension or relaxation” does not, however, fit with Hanslick’s formalist account of idealized structural beauty in music. Such inducements produce pathological effects first and foremost, and lend themselves to our cognitive understanding secondly—hence it is not obvious that the full experience of rhythm in music can be evaluated by hanslickian analysis. But there may be a way to see the enjoyment of primarily rhythmical works as truly cognitive *as well as* “merely” pathological. An

⁸⁸ Krietler, Hans and Krietler, Shulamith. 1972. *Psychology of the Arts*. Durham: Duke University Press. P. 145.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 149-150.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 150-151.

⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 151.

explanation of the cognitive aspects of rhythm would allow us to broaden Hanslick's account of musical beauty without ignoring his prioritizing of ideal form.

The Kreitlers provide such an explanation. After settling on a psychological account of rhythm, they go on to ask how it is that rhythmical structures in music can be enjoyed and felt as pleasurable. To do this they utilize a conception of rhythm as a gestalt, noting that the "perception of gestalts plays an important role in the life of organisms, for gestalts introduce order, organization, meaningfulness, economy, and simplicity into the external and internal environments."⁹³ They maintain that

the attainment of orientation is obviously a source of pleasure. For to conceive mentally means to control and thus to regain security. By satisfying orientation—a vitally important need of man on the biological and psychological levels—the appeal of rhythm is greatly enhanced. . . . Rhythm, as a simple, economical, and efficient means of imposing organization on disparate stimuli and sequential processes, must then be an outstanding source of enjoyment. . . . For it is the very act of organizing and conceiving, as such, which is pleasurable.⁹⁴

Although this description of the artistic enjoyment of rhythm uses terms like 'pleasure' in a way that Hanslick would likely object to, it seems that it can still fit quite well with a formalist account of musical beauty. Most importantly, it provides a possible explanation for Hanslick's oversight with respect to the value of the "primitive" music of the South Sea Islanders.

Hanslick quite naturally thought that the pinnacle of musical composition, the works produced by "our great [Western] masters," carried an aesthetic value which other cultures did not possess. It is fair to say that Western art music is far more sophisticated in terms of melody and harmony than is so-called primitive, rhythmical music. Given the familiarity of

⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 152.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 152-153.

Western listeners, and especially Viennese music critics, with this heightened level of formal sophistication, it is not surprising that styles which do not exhibit these features are deemed inferior. However, the cognitive usefulness of rhythm gestalts can be viewed in connection with the cognitive apprehension of formal value in music:

Moreover, without assuming that "the rhythmic sense of primitive people is much more highly developed than our own," which has presumably been dulled by "the simplification of the rhythm of modern folk song and of poetry intended to appeal to popular sense" (Boas, 1955, p. 310), it would not be too difficult to understand why children and so-called primitive peoples tend so markedly to rhythmization in most domains of life. *Maturity and civilization provide us with further means of orientation in complex environment.*⁹⁵

Thus the "easily grasped principle"⁹⁶ of rhythm is one of the gestalts cognitively applied by human beings in their encounter with and attempts to organize the external world. The "further means of orientation" produced by societies whose conceptual tools have been multiplied can lead to a valuative prioritization of the aesthetic qualities of these later, more "advanced" (*i.e.*, more formalized and abstract) reflections of our conceptual approaches to the world. A striking example of this phenomenon can be found in the rhythms of African music. "The reason for the remarkable development of the rhythmic qualities of African music can certainly be traced to the fact," writes LeRoi Jones,

that Africans also used drums for communication; and not, as was once thought, merely by using the drums in a kind of primitive Morse code, but by the phonetic reproduction of the words themselves—the result being that Africans developed an extremely fine and extremely complex rhythmic sense, as well as becoming unusually responsive to timbral subtleties.⁹⁷

If Jones' analysis is correct, then there is a connection between linguistic conceptualization and musical structure which is established through the

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 153. Emphasis added.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 145.

⁹⁷ *Blues People*, p. 26.

imitation of vocalizations with rhythm instruments, hence rhythm in African music represents a cultural gestalt that, due to pragmatic concerns, focuses on rhythm instead of melody and harmony.

Western art music's emphasis on melody and harmony reflects a cultural gestalt, if you will, rather than a complete severance from natural sounds, as Hanslick maintains. Interestingly, Jones argues that African rather than European music is more structurally sophisticated in terms of rhythmic structures, a point which may further reinforce the influence of cultural context on musical evaluation:

The most apparent survivals of African music in Afro-American music are its rhythms: not only the seeming emphasis in the African music on rhythmic, rather than melodic or harmonic, qualities, but also the use of polyphonic, or contrapuntal, rhythmic effects. Because of this seeming neglect of harmony and melody, Westerners thought the music "primitive." It did not occur to them that Africans might have looked askance at a music as vapid rhythmically as the West's.⁹⁸

The rhythmic banging and "unintelligible wailings" of the South Sea Islanders is not, therefore, an imitation of nature, but rather the musical reflection of a different conceptual approach to their environment. This explanation may be extended, through the Kreitlers' theory, to account for cultural preference in the artistic evaluation of rhythmical features:

The basic meter, with its implied scheme of accents, is presented explicitly or implicitly at the beginning of the musical piece and in traditional music usually persists throughout a whole composition, a movement, or its major parts. Though it may hardly appear in the playing itself, or may only be hinted at, it is nevertheless felt. It thus acts as a basic framework which facilitates perception of the music and lends it unity on a certain level. *Though barely present, it is immediately and spontaneously grasped by the listeners, for it is as a rule a part of their general cultural background.* In dance-style music, the basic meter is naturally prominent and frequently or continuously present.⁹⁹

Thus, like other structural schema (e.g., musical scales), rhythms are part of the cultural background of musical works:

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

⁹⁹ *Psychology of the Arts*, pp. 154-155. Emphasis added.

The forms of basic meter are few and tend to vary with cultural areas and sometimes also with historical periods. Chinese, Negro, Arabic, Polynesian, and Western basic rhythms differ from each other, and it is probably no accident that a passion for certain rhythms prevails in certain times. The basic rhythms of a culture are as much created by and characteristic of the culture as they expressive of it.¹⁰⁰

Besides basic meter, the Kreitlers posit the existence of higher-order rhythms, such as "melodic rhythm." Those rhythms "that are superimposed on the basic meter or grow out of it are much less rigid, are less limited in form, and offer more scope for individual creativity than the basic rhythm."¹⁰¹ Thus the more sophisticated structures that Hanslick values and that are predominant in Western art music move beyond basic meter, to the point that in "modern music different rhythms may succeed each other and interpenetrate so irregularly that the composition may seem to have no rhythmical structure."¹⁰² However, there is no conceptual discontinuity in the development of higher-order rhythms from more basic ones, and thus no grounds for asserting that basic rhythms are merely natural imitations of nature while higher-order rhythms are created spontaneously, since the "melodic or higher-level rhythms do not unfold as a rule in a vacuum, but manifest a patterned relation to the basic meter from which they definitely differ."¹⁰³ The Kreitlers even note how the appreciation of modern techniques of rhythmical structuring depend upon some prior familiarity with the style:

Within the framework of the basic rhythm itself, the possibilities for arousing tension are rather limited, unless there is a temporary overall change in meter or an opposition of several different simultaneous meters, as frequently occurs in Beethoven's sonatas. This is so, because the measure is in general grasped as a necessary frame of reference for the composition as a whole; and for the modern listener in particular, it has already turned, as a result of long acquaintance, into

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 155.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

an inherently good gestalt.¹⁰⁴

The Kreitlers' account of rhythm is a plausible explanation which goes far in explaining the complex relationship between our subjective awareness of internal and external processes and our cognitive appreciation of musical structure. It does not try to deny the so-called pathological aspects of rhythm, but instead views the deliberately-produced physiological effects as corresponding to our cognitive, conceptual ordering of the external world.

Music has become as much a part of the external world as anything else. The scientific approach to music, inasmuch as it is an attempt to subsume the musical features of external world under theoretical laws, enforces a distinction between affective or "pathological" musical features and the cognitive apprehension of musical structure. I submit that this distinction should not be a matter of dispute: we experience music both physically and cognitively. However, it is inadvisable to enforce a radical dichotomy between the affective or physiological reactions to music and the cognitive interpretation of it. Those who have a particular interest in cross-cultural or inter-cultural musical appreciation seem particularly sensitive to this fact. Peter Crossley-Holland states that "the work of art results from the marriage of the subjective with the objective, the irrational with the rational, the non-physical with the physical."¹⁰⁵ Additionally, as the Kreitlers' model of rhythm shows, the link between the physiological and the cognitive perception of musical structure is not as clear and distinct as a naive application of the formalist approach to music implies. Thus I would conclude, along with Crossley-Holland, that since "music is neither subjective

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 155-156.

¹⁰⁵ Crossley-Holland, "On William P. Malm's 'On the nature and function of symbolism in Western and Oriental music'". P. 256.

nor objective alone, it must needs be both in fusion."¹⁰⁶ However valuable and effective the formalist account of music may be, the fusion of music's objective, sensuous existence and its dependence upon the subjectivity of the listener, including her background familiarity with the style, must be kept in mind.

Hanslick's Nonrepresentational Expressivism

Robert Hall's defence of Hanslick provides a useful bridge between Hanslick's formalism and Langer's expressivism. Hall takes a different tack on Hanslick, asserting that he "is not the archformalist of traditional musical criticism."¹⁰⁷ Taking Malcolm Budd to task for his critique of Hanslick's argument in *The Beautiful in Music*, Hall notes that

[l]ike other similar analyses of Hanslick's formalism, Budd's does not realize that for Hanslick music can be expressive. "Expressive music" I understand along the lines of [Susanne] Langer's contention that music is an unconsummated symbol of feeling or has vital import. Emotion terms and expressions may apply to expressive music, but without such music having these emotions or referring to or representing real-life emotions.¹⁰⁸

According to Hanslick, music cannot *represent* "a specific feeling or emotional state" because "feelings are not so isolated in the mind that they have made themselves the salient feature of an art to which the representation of the other mental activities is closed."¹⁰⁹ What is meant by "representation of the other mental activities"? Hanslick states that

[o]nly on the basis of a number of ideas and judgments (perhaps unconsciously at moments of strong feeling) can our state of mind congeal into this or that specific

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁷ Hall, Robert W. 1995. Hanslick and Musical Expressiveness. *Journal of Aesthetic Education* 29 (3): 85-92. P. 85.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.* A clarifactory point: Langer describes musical works as an "unconsummated symbol" in her earlier book, *Philosophy in a New Key*, but in the later *Feeling and Form* prefers to say that it has "vital import."

¹⁰⁹ *On the Musically Beautiful*, p. 9.

feeling. The feeling of hope cannot be separated from the representation of a future happy state which we compare with the present; melancholy compares past happiness with the present. These are entirely specific representations or concepts. . . . A specific feeling (passion say, or an affect) never exists as such without an actual historical content, which can only be precisely set forth in concepts.¹¹⁰

Thus, because “the specification of feelings cannot be separated from actual representations and concepts, which latter lie beyond the scope of music,”¹¹¹ music cannot represent the definite ideas (of states of affairs) that are concomitant with emotions.

However, despite music’s inability to represent definite ideas and thus emotions, Hanslick leaves some leeway for presentation within music of the dynamic form of emotions. I am not referring to the act of describing music, in which act emotional terms may be used in a figurative manner.

With respect to this, Robert Hall reminds us that

Hanslick, as is well known, allows the description of a musical theme as graceful, tender, majestic, or as fragrant, hazy, cloudy, and so forth, as long as we realize that such use is figurative and we don’t take such terms to represent or portray emotions.¹¹²

Nonetheless, there is a connection between the emotion terms which are sometimes used in a description of musical works and music’s ability to reproduce the most general features of emotional life. Music, according to Hanslick, is able to represent the dynamic properties of feelings. “It can,” he claims,

reproduce the motion of a physical process according to the prevailing momentum: fast, slow, strong, weak, rising, falling. Motion is just one attribute, however, one moment of feeling, not feeling itself. . . . Motion is the ingredient which music has in common with emotional states and which it is able to shape creatively in a thousand shades and contrasts.¹¹³

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

¹¹² Hall, Robert W. 1995. Hanslick and Musical Expressiveness. *Journal of Aesthetic Education* 29 (3):85-92. “Hanslick and Musical Expressiveness,” p. 88.

¹¹³ *On the Musically Beautiful*, p. 11.

Thus Hanslick identifies a possible correlation between the dynamics of musical works and the dynamics of psychical life, and emphasizes the importance of this ability when he notes that the “concept of motion has up to now been conspicuously neglected in investigations of the nature and effects of music. It seems to us the most important and fruitful concept.”¹¹⁴ “Whatever else in music seems to portray specific states of mind,” however, “is symbolic.”¹¹⁵

Unfortunately, Hanslick’s theory of musical symbolism will not carry us very far towards an explanation of how music expresses or otherwise presents feelings. He discusses symbolism in terms of colour theory first,¹¹⁶ then warns that “[w]e are inclined to interpret these all too industriously,”¹¹⁷ reminding us that “these ingredients (i.e., tones and colours) follow laws entirely different in their artistic application from the laws of their effects as isolated phenomena.”¹¹⁸ It is a matter of one set of laws—those determining the nature of the sympathetic connections between our minds and colours or sounds—conflicting with another, putatively more appropriate set of laws:

At the aesthetical level, all such rudimentary differentiations are neutralized through subordination to higher principles.¹¹⁹

Thus in Hanslick’s eyes symbolic interpretation runs counter to the autonomy of the musical work and its specifically musical laws of structure. In other words, if we see a particular key signature as the basis for

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁶ “Every colour has its own unique character. It is not a mere cipher which has solely just such employment as the artist gives it but is a power which is by nature already in a mysterious connection with certain mental states.” (*Ibid.*)

¹¹⁷ Hanslick immediately goes on to say that “Schubart’s key symbolism is in its way a counterpart to Goethe’s interpretation of colours.” (*Ibid.*, p. 12.)

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.* Later (in § 5) we shall see that I take issue with the notion of pathological effects “as isolated phenomena.”

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

externalizing features, such as tonal progressions that connect with our emotions, then we risk losing sight of their “proper” role as internal structural features that allow for an ideal apprehension of musical form—we would be moving in the wrong direction: from the aesthetic to the pathological. Moreover, according to Hanslick, if we were to interpret key signatures as producing musical features symbolic of emotions, then we would also unduly limit the composer’s sphere of activity and restrict her creativity for the sake of the pathological, rather than cognitive, characteristics of music. Sounds in particular musical keys, according to Hanslick, do not represent definite feelings but instead may correspond to a meaning that is ascribed to those feeling, a second-order relation not given in the musical work itself.¹²⁰ Despite their relation to sympathetic connections established by nature, these features have only an interpreted meaning, and so a significance that is not strictly aesthetic.

The remedy to Hanslick’s narrow formalism, then, or at least to the narrow interpretation of his theory as a formalist one,¹²¹ is to be found in a theory which accounts for musical expressiveness as well as formal structure. However, rather than engaging in an attempt to reform the accepted view of Hanslick, I proposing to consider the more explicitly expressive theory of Susanne Langer. While Langer’s theory may solve some of the problems attributed, perhaps incorrectly, to Hanslick, it also makes some interesting and controversial points of its own. I propose that we introduce the concept of

¹²⁰ “If we see jealousy in yellow, cheerfulness in G major, mourning in cypress, of course these interpretations have a psycho-physiological connection with the definiteness of these feelings — but only in our interpretations, not in the colour, the tone, or the plant in themselves.” (*Ibid.*)

¹²¹ Both Hall and Deas maintain that a proper consideration of the entirety of Hanslick’s writings on music leads to an interpretation of him in which his formalism plays a less dominant role than one would gather from reading only *On the Musically Beautiful*.

“hybrid musical value” into the formalist theory in order to provide for a richer model of musical experience.

Hybrid Musical Value

It is necessary to be careful in our criticism of Hanslick if we wish to treat him fairly. His project was clearly and explicitly delimited: to prove that the aim of music was not to represent emotions, and to demonstrate that specifically musical beauty followed from the structure of its tones, such that the content of music was equivalent to its form.¹²² Hanslick’s conception of the musical work as an ideal mental object composed of tones arranged in appropriate formal patterns is not an unreasonable or naive one. What we might want to take issue with, however, is whether other aspects of value that listeners attribute to their musical experience—including sensuous or pathological effects—ought to be considered to be a type of musical value. Perhaps it would be best, for the time being, to refer to these putatively valuable aspects of musical experience as not having *pure* musical value but instead having *hybrid* musical value. Sensuous effects are, it is fair to say, pathological; thus they are not part of the ideal mental realm of cultivated appreciation from which Hanslick derives pure musical value.

For now, then, it is best to leave the notion of *pure* musical value to Hanslick and leave open the possibility of there being *hybrid* musical value within musical experience. Indeed, Hanslick’s willingness to recognize the emotional and affective power of music on the unaesthetic or pathological

¹²² Once again, it is worthwhile to take note of Hegel’s account of music, in which he asserts that music demonstrates a unity of fusion of form and content that no other art can develop. It is a shame that Hanslick, by emphasizing the historical thread in Hegel’s account of music, failed to recognize Hegel’s careful attention to the relationship between form and content in music.

listener necessitates some notion of “impure” musical characteristics. Perhaps Hanslick would disagree with our use of the adjective ‘musical’ to describe such value, even with the qualifier of ‘impure.’ This is a terminological dispute, though, and not an ontological one. My project, with its emphasis on musical experience in general as opposed to rarefied musical appreciation (which is but one type of musical experience) and its preference for the ideality of pure tones (which is necessarily dependent upon the material of sound), requires this terminological parting of ways. As a result, I am willing to apply the term ‘musical value’ more broadly than is Hanslick.

Hanslick’s project was both polemical and philosophical—his explicitly narrow philosophical or aesthetic analysis of music is further narrowed by the momentum of his polemical verve. A proper estimation of his project requires us to be sympathetic to the difficulty of incorporating sound philosophical arguments within a vehemently polemical text. Moreover, although there are good reasons to expand our use of the term ‘musical value’ to include hybrid musical value, Hanslick’s focus on pure musical value is illuminating and the foundation of the larger part of philosophical approaches to music even up to the present time. Hanslick does, however, as Higgins asserts, render the emotion-music connection problematic, much in the same way as Descartes rendered the mind-body connection problematic. And it is fair to say that Hanslick is a conservative, though perhaps not a reactionary, theorist.

Summary of § 3

In this section I have set out Eduard Hanslick’s scientific aesthetical

approach to music. By keeping in mind the scientific turn of philosophy and its rejection of systemic accounts of art in general, Hanslick's explication of "specifically musical" beauty is placed within a larger trend towards scientific "researches" which posit the objective independence of the matter being examined. This, in turn, entails that a specifically musical aesthetics is possible, though only achievable through a deliberate narrowing of focus. I have posed the question of whether Hanslick's examination of music can encompass aspects of musical value which ought to be accounted for. Answering this question in the negative, I suggest that Hanslick's project presupposes the structural characteristics of Western art music, thus preventing it from even beginning to account for structured sounds that are generally held to be music, yet do not fulfill the three structural characteristics (of melody, harmony, and rhythm) that Hanslick holds to be necessary. I criticize his insistence upon "reducing to sounds to our scale," noting that (1) "our" scale ought to be broader than that of Western art music, and (2) some musics (such as blues) ought not to be seen as partaking of a strictly determined metricated schema. Despite the shortcomings of his account, I suggest that Hanslick ought to be taken sympathetically, especially with respect to his analysis of Western art music. I suggest that an opportunity for incorporating Hanslick's analytical approach into a more encompassing model of music is possible through the expressivist interpretation supplied by Robert Hall.

Chapter III: One Step Beyond¹²³

*"The abdomen is the reason why man does not easily
take himself for a god." — Friedrich Nietzsche¹²⁴*

Overview

By now it is clear that the formalism presupposed by Hanslick's account of musical beauty renders it unable to encompass the full range of value that results from musical experiences. Its tendency to ignore characteristics of musical works that do not readily fit into his favoured structural metric—the diatonic scale of Western art music—and its difficulty in explaining the music-emotion connection make the need for a richer model obvious. Yet it is equally clear that the formal aspects of musical works posited by the theory identifies an actual component of musical value, perhaps even the one most dominant in Western art music. What is needed is a theory that moves beyond the limitations of Hanslick's approach in order to account for other types of music and for the emotion-music connection. We may want, as well, to support a theory that explains the meaningful side

¹²³ This chapter title is inspired by a song of the same name created by the musical group "Madness." Madness was a British ska band who recognized the historical tradition of their style (which grew up in Jamaica and "went international") yet posited the possibility of moving beyond the style's historical and cultural roots in order to develop a truly unique British type of ska. Just as Hegel wanted to make philosophy speak German, Madness wanted to make ska speak the Queen's English.

¹²⁴ Nietzsche, Friedrich. 1989. *Beyond Good & Evil*. Translated by Walter Kaufmann. New York: Vintage Books. § 141, p. 89.

of musical works in addition to their formal beauty.

Susanne Langer's theory is the logical choice for a successor. Her theory aligns quite closely with Hanslick's on many points, such that Langer's account can be identified as another formalist theory, but one that goes farther and is somewhat richer than the hanslickian variety. Like Hanslick, Langer gives priority to the intellectual or cognitive aspects of musical experience, and thus carries on the idealist and formalist tradition in musical aesthetics. As might be expected, given the previous point, she disparages the pathological or affective components of musical experience. Furthermore, Langer holds the hanslickian line by claiming that musical expression is untranslatable into linguistic expression, yet has enough expressive potential and a certain domain of expressive sovereignty such that musical expression can rival linguistic expression in its fullness and variety.

Langer gives us a richer model than Hanslick in so far as she attempts to come to terms with the emotion-music connection by giving an account of the musical expression of feeling. This is a significant advance, and while Langer's theory of the musical presentation of feelings has some problems, it is insightful and worthy of consideration. Most importantly, perhaps, Langer begins with a broader horizon of musical appreciation than does Hanslick. She gives greater weight to so-called primitive music and has a humanistic approach that, while still running afoul of some of the pitfalls of idealism, nonetheless is a more adequate account of the potency of music and its role in our lives. Her humanist perspective is not only praiseworthy but, I think, a step in the right direction.

In this chapter I shall do three things. First, I shall give a brief

exposition of Langer's theory of music in order to subject it to a critical analysis and inspect its strengths and weaknesses. I shall show that her explanation of the emotion-music connection is useful and an improvement over Hanslick's limited account. Then I shall take Langer to task for neglecting a particular type of externalizing feature which is present in many musical works, namely, the orientation of the listener to his awareness of embodiment. This last critique is perhaps most important, for it will demonstrate that there are "visceral" aspects to musical experience that are part of musical structure but which cannot be fully understood within a formalist theory. First, though, I want to make a few comments about Langer's humanism.

§ 4 — The Presentational Theory of Susanne Langer

Langer's Humanistic Impulse

In my introductory comments I stressed the importance of coming to terms with music's powerful influence on our lives. I warned that our traditional model of musical experience could not account for the referential relationships between musical works and the larger sphere of human activity. By ignoring these features, I argued, we undermine any attempt to fully explicate the power of musical experiences. Music, and art in general, is far too significant to be ignored in this way. Susanne Langer's theory of "presentational symbolism" or "prime symbols" is attractive in large part because of her overarching concern with the role of art in human life.

I concur with Langer's statement that "works of art may be good or

bad, and each must be judged on our experience of its revelations."¹²⁵ Later we shall see that Langer's bias in favour of cognitivism unduly limits her theory's ability to account for a particular type of musical experience which simultaneously reveals the fact of our physical embodiment and allows for a cognitive appreciation of this component of human life, but nonetheless the criterion of beauty which Langer suggests is basically correct. There is a close connection between our identification of the valuable in a musical work and the expressive power of that work, and Langer is right to make the depth and range of expression into the prime criterion of musical value.

Langer not only produces a reasonable argument for the conclusion that "[b]eauty is expressive form,"¹²⁶ but also reveals the importance of that conclusion for our understanding of the human condition. "A work of art," she writes,

is intrinsically expressive; it is designed to abstract and present forms for perception—forms of life and feeling, activity, suffering, selfhood—whereby we conceive these realities, *which otherwise we cannot but blindly undergo*.¹²⁷

Art, in Langer's view, allows us to turn felt experience into perceptible forms, thus allowing for a contemplation of that experience which would not otherwise be possible. By emphasizing the importance of art in expressing, giving shape to, and allowing for the contemplation of inner life, Langer grounds her theory on an essential human activity: the ordering of our world. A quotation from Langer's lecture "The Art Symbol and the Symbol in Art" clarifies her view of abstract expressivism and reinforces its central role in artistic activity. "There are many difficulties," Langer writes,

connected with the thesis that a work of art is primarily an expression of

¹²⁵ *Philosophy in a New Key*, p. 263.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 396.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.* Italics added for emphasis.

feeling—an “expression” in the logical sense, presenting the fabric of sensibility, emotion, and the strains of more concerted cerebration, for our impersonal cognition—that is, *in abstracto*. This sort of symbolization is the prime office of works of art, by virtue of which I call a work of art an *expressive form*.¹²⁸

While I shall attempt to refute Langer’s insistence upon “impersonal cognition”—a demand that arises from her idealist ideology rather than from anything inherent in art works themselves—Langer is right to emphasize the expressive role as the primary office of art.

Because she is able to reconcile most of the formally-bound value of music without ignoring the musical value that follows from its significance or expressive capacity, a value inseparable from beauty itself, Langer gives us a portrait of art and music that is explanatorily more powerful and more human. She does this without overlooking the need for an analytic account of musical form, but rarely does she allow that analysis to go unchallenged when it overrides the fundamentally human concerns of music and our experience of it. It is Langer’s broad concern for human expression and human understanding that gives her theory its strength. “Above all,” she reminds us,

art penetrates deep into personal life because in giving form to the world, it articulates human nature: sensibility, energy, passion, and mortality.¹²⁹

This is clearly a very different view of art, and therefore music, than that espoused by Hanslick. While they both share an idealist’s preference for the conceptual and cognitive over the sensuous and felt aspects of musical experience, Langer gives music much more scope and power with respect to its artistic revelations of human existence. Langer also shows a greater sensitivity for the connection between artistic styles and the larger social

¹²⁸ Langer, Susanne K. 1957. *Problems of Art: Ten Philosophical Lectures*. New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons. P. 126. Hereafter referred to as *Problems of Art*.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 401.

context from which they arise. "Art," she notes,

is a public possession, because the formulation of "felt life" is the heart of any culture, and molds the objective world for the people.¹³⁰

As well as revealing the extent of her idealism, the quotation just cited demonstrates the proper concern for music's cultural importance. And, while that larger issue lies beyond the scope of this thesis, I think it worthwhile to flag this laudable feature of Langer's theory. It is a very humanistic concern, and a powerful impetus for the development of the richest possible model of musical experience.

Langer's Theory in Brief

I have already shown that Langer thinks that art ought, first and foremost, to express vital activity as fully and articulately as possible. We must now ask why she attributes this role to art and how she thinks art can fulfill it. Answering the first of our questions will necessitate a brief diversion into Langer's account of the development of human rationality. Then we shall be well placed to understand her theory of artistic expression.

Throughout this sketch I shall be drawing from *Philosophy in a New Key* and its successor *Feeling and Form*, as well as her lecture "The Art Symbol and the Symbol in Art." Langer is oftentimes vague and frequently equivocates when using technical terms that she herself proposes, only to rename them in response to what she sees as misinterpretations by her critics. Because of her flexible and rapidly-developing vocabulary, it is difficult to avoid a certain amount of confusion. I shall try to remedy this by being as clear and concise as possible, and by interjecting clarifactory comments where appropriate.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 410.

First, let us explore Langer's anthropological or psychological account¹³¹ of the development of human rationality, which forms the basis for her dichotomy between artistic expressivism and discursive, linguistic expression. This portion of her theory will give us the answer to our first question. Art and language both stem, according to Langer, from an activity naturally engaged in by human beings, an activity which "is the beginning of human mentality, 'mind' in a strict sense."¹³² This activity is *symbolic transformation*, "a high form of nervous response, characteristic of man among the animals."¹³³ This symbolizing activity is a basic need and, as the foundation of mentality, is an act prior to human thought.¹³⁴ It is the condition of the possibility of ideation¹³⁵ and, in a "primitive" form, expresses itself in ritual.¹³⁶ It is part of human nature:

The forms of expressive acts—speech and gesture, song and sacrifice—are the symbolic transformations which minds of certain species, at certain stage of their development and communion, naturally produce.¹³⁷

Perhaps most importantly, symbolic transformation is "both an end and an instrument."¹³⁸ It is this duality that ultimately allows Langer to connect beauty, the end of art, with the utility of expressing our inner life in the sensuous forms of art. Later I shall explicate the relationship Langer posits between the degree of expressiveness in an art work and its consequent beauty. We shall see, however, that the degree of expressiveness instantiated

¹³¹ I present Langer's anthro-psychological theory here not to affirm its accuracy, but to allow for a fuller understanding of her theory of art.

¹³² *Ibid.*, p. 131.

¹³³ Langer, Susanne K. 1957. *Philosophy in a New Key*. 3rd ed. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. *New Key*, p. xiv.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 49.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 49.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 51.

within an art work is regulated by relations of structure and unity, such that a work of art that is expressive must also abide by certain artistic standards if its expressive import is to have true artistic value.

As the natural expression of a human need to make the world intelligible and comprehensible in abstract thought, presentational symbolism accounts for the formation of concepts and for their use. Language is one of the products of the innate drive for symbolization which Langer attributes to human beings; art is the other product. We can now answer our first question by noting that, according to Langer, art has an expressive role because it the natural product of a basic human activity, that of symbolic transformation, an activity which uses symbols to enable us to consider the felt processes of life.

But how does art express inner life? The short answer is: through symbols. In order to answer this question more fully, however, we can contrast the methodology of linguistic expression with that of artistic expression, and thus explicate Langer's idea of the symbol. Both language and art serve the same end, but the forms they use to do so, while essentially symbolic, are different. Language allows for a level of descriptive specificity that is lacking in art, and especially in music, while art can articulate facets of subjective life, including feelings, in a way that language cannot. Yet both art and language stem from the same primal activity. "The problems of semantic and of logic," Langer writes,

seem to fit into one frame, those of feeling into another. But somewhere, of course, mentality has arisen from more primitive vital processes. Somehow they belong into one and the same scientific frame. I am scouting the possibility that *rationality arises as an elaboration of feeling*.¹³⁹

¹³⁹ Langer, Susanne K. 1957. *Problems of Art: Ten Philosophical Lectures*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. *Problems of Art*, p. 124.

By looking at how language and art elaborate and articulate feeling differently, we can more easily approach Langer's theory of symbolism in general.

Art works are able to articulate what Langer calls "primitive" feeling. This is not a pejorative term, but refers instead to the more primal, less conceptual features of our inner lives:

Language is the symbolic form of rational thought. . . . The structure of discourse expresses the forms of rational cogitation; that is why we call such thinking "discursive." . . . But discursive symbols offer no apt model of primitive forms of feeling. . . . To express the forms of what might be called "unlogicized" mental life (a term we owe to Professor Henry M. Sheffer of Harvard), or what is usually called the "life of feeling," requires a different symbolic form. This form, I think, is characteristic of art and is, indeed, the essence and measure of art.¹⁴⁰

In this way Langer distinguishes between two different types of inner life suitable for expression: rational thought and "unlogicized" mental life. The latter is primitive in so far as it has not undergone the process of conceptual abstraction. It is feeling as opposed to thought; the felt patterns of sensibility as opposed to the conceptual distinctions of higher-order cogitation. The different types of inner events are both expressed symbolically, according to Langer, but the forms which give shape to these articulations are fundamentally different.

Langer's theory of expression, both linguistic and artistic, includes, at various stages in its elaboration, the terms 'sign,' 'signal,' and 'symbol.' We shall have to understand how Langer distinguishes between these concepts. The first two terms—'sign' and 'signal'—are equivalent. 'Sign' is used in the *New Key*, but is replaced by 'signal' in *Feeling and Form*.¹⁴¹ In any case, neither

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 124-125.

¹⁴¹ Langer writes, "In *Philosophy in a New Key* . . . the major distinction was drawn between "signs" and "symbols"; Charles W. Morris, in *Signs, Language and Behavior*, distinguishes between "signals" and "symbols." This seems to me a better use of words, since it leaves "sign" to cover both "signal" and "symbol," whereas my former usage left me

of the two forms of symbolic expression restricts itself to the simple referential relationship of sign or signal to referent. "A sign," Langer notes, "indicates the existence—past, present, or future—of a thing, event, or condition. Wet streets are a sign that it has rained."¹⁴² Signs merely announce or indicate objects while symbols lead to the conception of the object,¹⁴³ hence Langer speaks of proper names as an example of a simple symbol.¹⁴⁴ Let us turn to the role of symbols in language before considering their use in art.

In language, symbols in the form of words "are taken to signify something else."¹⁴⁵ "A word," Langer asserts,

say a familiar common noun, is a symbol of this sort. I would say that it conveys a concept, and refers to, or denotes, whatever exemplifies that concept. The word "man" conveys what we call the concept of "man," and denotes any being that exemplifies the concept—i.e., any man.¹⁴⁶

Obviously, more sophisticated statements of affairs may also be made using language. Langer elaborates:

Now, words—our most familiar and useful symbols—are habitually used not in isolation, but in complex concepts of states of affairs, rather than isolated things, and refer to facts or possibilities or even impossibilities: these bigger units are descriptions and statements and other forms of *discourse*.¹⁴⁷

The complicated relationships and postulates which can be expressed in discourse permits language to use symbols in a different way: "This further

without any generic term. I have, therefore, adopted his practice, despite the fact that it makes for a discrepancy in the terminology of two books that really belong together." (Langer, Susanne K. 1953. *Feeling and Form: A Theory of Art*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. P. 26n.)

¹⁴² *New Key*, p. 57. Langer goes on to note that natural symbols are "symptoms."

¹⁴³ *New Key*, p. 63.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.* For example, when I say to my friend Martin, "I cannot abide by the so-called aesthetic standards of Justin Busch," Martin does not, upon hearing the word "Justin," think that I am signaling the immediate presence of that individual, but rather is prompted to think of that individual. The name brings to mind the individual, but does not merely indicate his existence.

¹⁴⁵ This is a portion of a larger definition of symbol given by Ernest Nagel and used by Langer. See *Problems of Art*, p. 130.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 130.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 130.

function is the expression of ideas *about* things."¹⁴⁸ Not only can we use words to denote entities in the world, we can also use them according to "the second great office of symbols, which is not to refer to things and communicate facts, but to express ideas."¹⁴⁹ This other function of symbolism "involves a deeper psychological process, the formulation of ideas, or concepts."¹⁵⁰ As will be recalled from my discussion of Langer's humanistic concerns and her anthropological/psychological account of symbolism, art is able to express ideas just as readily as is language. We can now turn to examining how artistic creation engages in the same sort of logical expression as language.

Art expresses inner life only through its form. The word 'form' is ambiguous, however, and Langer is careful to distinguish between two different senses of the word. "The word 'form'," Langer writes,

connotes to many people the idea of a dead, empty shell, a senseless formality, lip-service, and sometimes an imposed rule to which actions, speeches and works must *conform*. . . . This is a legitimate and widespread meaning of "form." But it is not the meaning Bell and Fry had in mind, and which I propose here. When they spoke of "significant form" (or, as now I would say, "expressive form") they meant a visible, individual form produced by the interaction of colors, lines, surfaces, lights and shadows, or whatever entered into a specific work. They used the word in the sense of something *formed*, as sometimes wonderful figures of soft color and melting contours are formed by clouds, or a spiral like a coiled spring is formed by the growth of a fern shoot; as a pot is formed out of clay, and a landscape out of paint spots. It may be a solid material form like the pot, or an illusory object like Hamlet's cloudy weasel. But it is a form for perception. . . . A work of art is such an individual form given directly to perception.¹⁵¹

By portraying art works as a mode of logical expression,¹⁵² Langer reduces them to highly conceptualized, abstract structures. Like language, pure music is a formal symbol system, but since it lacks atomic units of meaning it is absolutely structure-dependent:

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 130.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 130-131.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 131.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 128-129.

¹⁵² "A work of art is expressive in the way a proposition is expressive—as the formulation of an idea for conception" (*Ibid.*, p. 126.)

The meanings given through language are successively understood, and gathered into a whole by the process called discourse; the meanings of all other symbolic elements that compose a larger, articulate symbol are understood only through the meaning of the whole, through their relations within the total structure. Their very functioning as symbols depends on the fact that they are involved in a simultaneous, integral presentation. This kind of semantic may be called "presentational symbolism," to characterize its essential distinction from discursive symbolism, or "language" proper.¹⁵³

As a *presentational symbolism*, a term which Langer later replaces with "expressive form,"¹⁵⁴ a work of pure music is a non-discursive expression based on the composer's abstraction of emotion from his subjective experience and its subsequent "distillation" into an expressive form, a form which has significance in virtue of its whole structure and is aesthetically pleasing only as a unified, organic whole that carefully explicates an implicit logic.

Let us now consider an example of how expressive forms are created. I want to bring to the fore three important features of Langer's theory: (1) artistic expression as an instance of what Arthur Berndtson calls "transitive expression," (2) the importance of organic unity as an aesthetic criterion and as the source of the vitality of art works, and (3) the unidirectional nature of this form of expression.

In his book *Art, Expression and Beauty*, Arthur Berndtson distinguishes between transitive and embodied expression in art. Berndtson tells us that

transitive expression may be defined as the passage of emotion from a primitive to a developed and adequate state through the mediation of form, and embodiment may be defined as the perception of developed or otherwise

¹⁵³ *New Key*, p. 97.

¹⁵⁴ See *Problems of Art*, pp. 126-127, and pp. 133-135. Langer retreats from her earlier claim that art is a kind of presentational symbolism because of the inseparability of artistic elements from the art work and the consequent impossibility of art being a system of symbols with a discursive structure, or grammar.

adequate emotion as incorporated in form.¹⁵⁵

In simpler terms, we might think of transitive expression as the production of art works by the deliberate development of emotion into artistic, embodied form. Transitive expression, then, describes the process of artistic composition, culminating in an art work that somehow embodies emotion in the form of the work. Embodied expression is the perception by an art of the formally developed emotion instantiated by the work. It describes the result of a successful apprehension of the art work, whereby the observer or listener comes to understand the work and its concomitant emotion.

Langer's theory emphasizes transitive rather than embodied expression. This is especially evident in her lengthy description of the process of musical composition. Langer describes three stages in music composition: (1) the process of conception, (2) the development of the musical matrix, and (3) the actual composition of work under the influence of its total "Idea." Understanding how these stages work together will give us a succinct but functional account of transitive expression in Langer's theory.

The initial stage of musical composition, writes Langer,

takes place entirely in the composer's mind (no matter what outside stimuli may start or support it), and issues in a more or less sudden recognition of the total form to be achieved. . . . This form is the "*composition*" which [the composer] feels called upon to develop.¹⁵⁶

The form is as yet indeterminate, however, and needs to be "fleshed-out" in order to be adequately completed. As an indeterminate form, the composition "exhibits its general symbolic possibilities, like a statement imperfectly made or even merely indicated, but understandable in its general intent."¹⁵⁷ The

¹⁵⁵ Berndtson, Arthur. 1969. *Art, Expression, and Beauty*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc. *Art, Expression, and Beauty*, p. 149.

¹⁵⁶ *Feeling and Form*, p. 121.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 122.

further determination of the work begins with the second stage of composition. At this point the composer, already armed with a general idea which he wishes to express, and its form, identifies the thematic progression suitable to the form. This is called the musical *matrix*, "the fundamental movement of melody or harmonic progression, which establishes the greatest rhythm of the piece and dictates its scope."¹⁵⁸ We may think of the musical matrix as the description of the dynamic movement which the musical work will undergo from beginning to end. Even at this stage in the process, however, the work is not yet fully individuated. The final determination of the work is accomplished by the composer "[u]nder the influence of the total 'Idea'"¹⁵⁹ of the work. By "Idea" Langer means both the initial form as it is conceived and the matrix that determines how that form will instantiate itself as a series of tonal movements. These products of the first two stages give enough of an indication of the work's final shape to enable the composer to expand, elaborate, and detail its individual moments. By the time the composer begins to engage in the third stage of composition, most of what remains is what might be called "grunt work," since he is merely concretizing the idea that he feels called upon to develop and already has in mind. The progression from each stage to the next is marked but an increase in the determinateness of the composition, both the idea of it and the structure of it. At the end of the third stage, the initial conception of the musical work has been elucidated both thematically and in all the individual elements of its structure, such that the initially abstract idea that inspires the piece is formed into a fully articulated musical work.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 122-123.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 123.

The completed piece is worthy of being called an “expressive form” because it articulates the initial abstract idea fully and in a form suitable for presentation to listeners, who then can grasp its meaning or significance. Actually, Langer shies away from her initial claims that art works are significant or meaningful in the way that linguistic symbols are, and instead chooses to say that they have a “vital import” instead. The vitality of the art work is what distinguishes it from literal symbols, and we must make ourselves aware of the distinction that Langer draws between connotive or denotive meaning (significance) and artistic import. According to Langer, a genuine symbol (in Nagel’s sense of the term) “is only a sign; in appreciating its meaning our interest reaches beyond it to the concept. The word is just an instrument.”¹⁶⁰ Art works are not genuine symbols in this sense, since ideally they do not draw our attention to something beyond the symbol itself, but rather focus our attention solely on the expressive form. We can think of this in terms of the relative transparency of literal symbols: the literal symbol acts strictly as a medium, drawing our attention to its meaning, which necessarily lies outside of itself, while the art symbol is non-transparent, and draws our attention to the meaning inherent in the work by virtue of its form. Langer notes that

a work of art does not point us to a meaning beyond its own presence. What is expressed cannot be grasped apart from the sensuous or poetic form that expresses it. In a work of art we have the direct presentation of a feeling, not a sign that points to it.¹⁶¹

The expression form of an emotional state of affairs in music, for example, such as the feeling that results from despair or rage, is a symbol which actually has the (musical) form of that pattern of feeling instantiated within

¹⁶⁰ *Problems of Art*, p. 133.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 133-134.

it. That is to say, the emotion is present in the work, in its structure and development, rather than being referred to by the work: "The work seems to be imbued with the emotion or mood or other vital experience that it expresses."¹⁶² Langer makes use of Otto Baensch's notion of "objective emotions" which, unlike "subjective emotions," are embodied in an object. Subjective feelings, Langer notes, "are contained in a self, objective ones in impersonal things."¹⁶³ Hence "art works *contain* feelings, but do not feel them."¹⁶⁴

The musical work that expresses despair, then, does not "mean" or "signify" that emotion the way that the word 'despair' does. The word 'despair' is merely a handy set of sounds that connotes and denotes the concept "despair." The art work, however, is imbued with the felt pattern of that emotion, a pattern that is expressively articulated by the composer and which informs the composition of the entire piece. Hence the "import of art is perceived as something in the work, articulated by it but not further abstracted."¹⁶⁵

The concept of vital import is central to Langer's expressivism. The ability of artistic symbolization to express primitive feelings surpasses that of linguistic symbolization because in some fashion the pattern and dynamic of those feelings inform the art work, especially in the case of music, leading to an isomorphic similarity between the feeling and the form of the work. For Langer, the art work is an organic whole whose meaning (loosely speaking) is not attributable to its component elements but only to its totality. Vital

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 134.

¹⁶³ *Feeling and Form*, p. 21.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

¹⁶⁵ *Problems of Art*, p. 134.

import is what separates art from language:

Language is a *symbolism*, a system of symbols with definable though fairly elastic meanings, and rules of combination whereby larger units—phrases, sentences, whole speeches—may be compounded, expressing similarly built-up ideas, Art, contrariwise, is not a symbolism. The elements in a work are always newly created with the total image, and although it is possible to analyze what they contribute to the image, it is not possible to assign them any of its import apart from the whole. That is characteristic of organic form. The import of a work of art is its “life,” which, like actual life, is an indivisible phenomenon. . . . The Art Symbol is a single symbol, and its import is not compounded of partial symbolic values.¹⁶⁶

Organic unity is, therefore, not only a characteristic of art works but is also the defining characteristic of the art symbol, as opposed to the literal symbol.

Organic unity is also an aesthetic criterion: the art work that is not organically unified has no vital import, cannot express and thus reveal the primitive feelings which it attempts to present, and is therefore a bad work of art.¹⁶⁷

We have seen how the musical art work is developed from its initial to its penultimate form, leaving only its performance necessary for its final instantiation. The musical work is the product of transitive expression because the emotion or psychological event that is its impetus becomes informed by the composer, such that the initial abstract conception of the felt event undergoes a process of transformation into a mediated, structurally complete

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 135.

¹⁶⁷ The idea that a work of pure music must be internally coherent and must unfold according to an implicit logic and in accordance with the restrictions of an overall musical structure is not unique to Langer. Brian K. Etter notes that in Hegel’s system of aesthetics, “coherence is not just a property imposed on a piece by a composer, it is rather a quality that must be acknowledged as inhering in the tonal materials themselves and which helps to shape what the composer may do in a piece of music. The unity of tonality is not merely a natural phenomenon, but the logically necessary condition of tonal coherence. Similarly, the tonal simplicity of consonance is naturally perceptible, and must necessarily introduce an implicit order that is the foundation of any higher order of coherence.” (“The Sounds of the Ideal: Hegel’s Aesthetic of Music” in *The Owl of Minerva* 26(2), Fall 1994: p. 52.)

Hegel’s analysis of music has several features—the composer’s subjective feeling as the content of music, the materiality of music as the sensuous expression of content, and the process of internalization by the listener—which reappear in Langer’s system. Hegel also notes that “the art of music is throughout more occupied in expressing merely the element of feeling and furthermore surrounds the independently expressed ideas of the mind with the melodic chime of emotions.” (*The Philosophy of Fine Art*, p. 346.)

and integral whole. This characteristic of organic unity differentiates the art symbol from the literal symbol, and accounts for its vital import. Because of its indivisible coherence, it has meaning (loosely speaking) only as a whole and only in virtue of itself—it does not have significance because it points beyond itself to the initial felt experience that is its source, but rather its import follows from the comprehensiveness of the work alone. This means that Langer's transitive expression is unidirectional: a particular psychological experience leads to the artistic expression, but the art work that results cannot be related to that *specific* experience even when it is fully apprehended. Only the feeling *as it is presented in the work* is grasped; the feeling as it originally was is not referenced directly. As a result, we can say that Langer denies the ability of art works to act as externalizing features. The work refers only to itself, and expresses only the feeling that it embodies in the abstracted artistic form. It does not point beyond itself or orient the appreciator to particular emotions or states of affairs, even though those feelings are the initial context from whence the work arises.

One last set of distinctions remains to be understood before our sketch of Langer's artistic expressivism is complete. Langer distinguishes between, to use Sister Mary Francis Slattery's words, "three distinct designations of a whole: the design, the semblance, and the image."¹⁶⁸ We have already seen that the work as image is the final product that an appreciator can apprehend and thus grasp its vital import. What, then, is the role of the design and the semblance?

We must hearken back to our earlier discussion of structuralism

¹⁶⁸ Slattery, Sister Mary Francis. 1987. "Looking Again at Susanne Langer's Expressionism." *British Journal of Aesthetics* 27:247-258. P. 248.

and musical analysis. It was noted that musical works can be analyzed structurally, in terms of their elements and the relationship of these elements to each other. It was furthermore noted that only once the work is presented sonorously—that is, only once it has a material existence in the medium of sound—does it truly merit being called a musical work. The structural level of musical analysis actually occurs once the sonorous presentation of the work is heard and internalized by a listener, who can subsequently consider it either as related sounds or more abstractly as a formal system for which the sounds are merely its “material substratum.” Finally, the work can also, on Langer’s account, be apprehended symbolically, such that the work as a whole is an expressive form with vital import. In Langer’s account, the terms ‘design,’ ‘semblance,’ and ‘image’ correspond to the structural, material, and symbolic modalities of the musical work.

A few quotations from Langer will help to make these terms clear. Langer’s paramount concern is with the ideational level of musical works, the imaginal realm which they occupy as symbols. “The true power of an image,” she states, “lies in the fact that it is an abstraction, a symbol, the bearer of an idea.”¹⁶⁹ This imaginal apprehension of the musical work is conceptual or ideational, and thus abstract—it is not the activity of feeling or hearing the sounds, but grasping the total form that these sounds indicate. The physical level of musical listening, the level at which the listener hears sounds and not ideal hanslickian tones, is the apprehension not of the work as image but rather as semblance: semblance is its direct aesthetic quality.¹⁷⁰ Apprehended as an image, the work is not a concrete aesthetic object but rather a symbol, an

¹⁶⁹ *Feeling and Form*, p. 47.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

illusion. Just as music is the illusion of virtual time, or time as lived experience rather than “scientific” time,¹⁷¹ music also allows for the illusory presentation of feelings, such that the structure of felt feeling is virtually present in the musical work. In keeping with her idealism, Langer is careful to emphasize that the physicality of sounds is merely the medium of musical images. “Almost as soon as one proposes to think in strict terms about the phenomenon called ‘music,’” she notes,

the physics of sound presents itself as the natural groundwork for any theory. . . . But sound, and even tone, as such is not music; *music is something made out of sound*, usually of definite intonation.¹⁷²

Like Hanslick, Langer insists that an ontological account of musical works must posit them in their ideal form, as mental objects apprehended through the medium of sound, but not actually being the sounds themselves. (I have already taken issue with this, so I shall say no more about it here. In the final section I shall discuss some musical works whose physical characteristics challenge this idealist ontology.) The design of the musical work, then, is neither the symbolic ideational image nor the physical auditory patterns of the semblance, but rather is the schema that is conceived by the composer as a guide for the performers, who must produce the actual sounds. We can think of the design as the structural description of the piece, or the end result of the process of composition. A musical score, then, is a notational form of the design. With her concepts of design, semblance, and image, Langer provides for different ways of discussing the modalities of the musical work.

We have now arrived at the complete sketch of Langer’s theory of expressivism. We have traced the impetus for symbolic expression from her

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 109-110.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 106.

psychological/anthropological account and noted the difference between linguistic and artistic symbols. The former being a true symbolism composed of genuine, transparent symbols and the latter consisting of the presentation of symbols that are expressive forms because they are objective emotions, or works of embodied expression. By looking at her account of musical composition, we have seen that Langer considers both types of symbolic presentation to be a process of abstraction which presents us with ideas. Artistic symbols, because of their ability to instantiate vital form, are more adequate for expressing primitive feelings and the felt experience of psychical life. Different levels of analysis allow the art work to be seen as a design, a semblance, and an image, and thus as a schematic description, a material substratum, and, most importantly, as a symbol. While the sketch was being developed we saw further evidence of Langer's idealism, and so we can safely call her theory of music a formalist theory in the technical sense I defined earlier. We have also concluded that Langer denies the potential for externalizing features in pure music because of her insistence on the self-enclosed meaning or import of the expressive form.

Embodied Expression and Isomorphism

Earlier I mentioned that Langer concentrates more on explaining transitive expression as opposed to embodied expression. That is, she gives more of an account of the transition from the composer's awareness of an inner psychical event to his production of a musical work which is the abstract expression of that feeling, and less of an account of how the listener apprehends the feeling that is embodied within the work, or "the perception

of developed or otherwise adequate emotion as incorporated in form."¹⁷³ The problem of embodied expression is largely one of apprehending the whole musical work as an externalizing feature: the form of the work, once contemplated, orients the listener to the feeling that is abstractly expressed in the work. What becomes difficult, in Langer's account, is explaining how the work as an externalizing feature points towards a *particular* emotion. Langer herself gives rise to this difficulty by failing to carefully apply her terms 'feeling' and 'emotion,' and often equivocates them. This gives the impression that she believes the musical work expresses a particular emotion when in fact it expresses an inner event of longer duration that is a complex of emotion, mental tensions and resolutions, and other characteristics of sentience. In so far as musical works, as embodied expression, are externalizing features, they can point only towards this larger complex.

When one surveys the literature on Langer, it is clear that her critics have difficulty understanding how embodied expression can work within Langer's theory. Before going on to take up one critic's concern with embodied expression as Langer presents it, we must keep in mind two very important points. First, I want to emphasize that although Langer thinks that musical structures may be expressive of feeling structures, she steadfastly maintains that for a musical work to be aesthetically pleasing it must first and foremost be constructed only through the strict explication of the internal, implicit logic of the musical matrix. The musical work, in other words, is not composed with the aim of *representing* feelings; rather, it happens to be the case that good musical composition produces works that are *isomorphically*

¹⁷³ *Art, Expression, and Beauty*, p. 149.

similar to feeling structures, hence the importance of using organic metaphors to describe musical works. Musical structures, like feelings, grow and develop. Form comes first, then the presentational function may follow.¹⁷⁴ Berndtson summarizes it this way:

The kind of expression that is appropriate to art is what Mrs. Langer calls "logical expression." Emotion is said to be logically expressed when symbols are devised through which the emotion can be conceived, and the emotion is conceived when it is contemplated objectively so that its form becomes apparent. The symbol must itself have a form similar to that of the emotion, and it is through the similarity that the emotive form is made discernible, the work of art becomes a symbol of the emotive form, and the emotion is logically expressed.¹⁷⁵

The second point I wish to emphasize is this: I am not making the simple assertion that Langer, like Hanslick, recognizes the congruence between the tension and dynamics of emotional life and that of music. Langer goes further than that: she claims that the musical work exhibits an overall similarity to feeling structures, a similarity which may be based on a similar dynamic development, but which nonetheless has greater significance than would be possible merely through that dynamic similarity. This should be understood through a comprehension of the isomorphic relationship between musical and feeling structures.

Kathleen Higgins calls Langer's theory an imitation theory "because she argues that music is isomorphic with emotional life,"¹⁷⁶ and considers Langer's insistence upon the logical, abstractly expressive character of music to be problematic. The expressivist formalist picture that is suggested by Langer, Higgins notes, is at odds with the view musicians take of music. "It is not the orientation of musicians," writes Higgins, "but that of Hanslick that

¹⁷⁴ *Feeling and Form*, p. 70.

¹⁷⁵ *Art, Expression, and Beauty*, p. 175.

¹⁷⁶ *Music of Our Lives*, p. 100.

Langer's formalism and cognitivism reflect."¹⁷⁷ Higgins is also uncomfortable with the "open-ended" and "nebulous" qualities that Langer attributes to music—she sees them as vague, and accuses Langer of attempting "to turn her theory's vagueness into a virtue" by relating the dynamic nature of music to the "ambivalent, transient character of feeling."¹⁷⁸

Langer does insist that a musical work is unable to denote and fixate upon particular emotions, since it lacks the "specificity" that discursive language has. She also, as Higgins points out, only allows for a vague connection between a particular musical work and a *particular* emotion. Of course, it may be the case that emotions are too vague and variable within and between individuals to allow for a connection that is not itself vague. In that case, the notion of a vague connection, unexplicated because unexplicable, is a suitable goal for theoretical account. "Langer is right in refusing to specify any such [detailed] connections,"¹⁷⁹ Higgins tells us, not because there is no connection at all, but because it is not specifiable as precisely as a putative isomorphic relationship would at first seem to demand. Langer's project, according to Higgins, fails because it promises too much; it claims to represent emotions isomorphically, but an isomorphic representation demands a close correspondence that could be pointed out precisely.

On Higgins' view, an imitation theory is better when it refuses to move beyond a vague correspondence of musical structure to emotional structure because a precise connection would bind the moments of the

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 101.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 102.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 105.

musical work to particular, determinate emotions. This would not jibe with actual musical experience, which does not move “from emotion to emotion with every new musical figure,” but which instead characterizes “a general feeling color.”¹⁸⁰ “An autonomous work of music that constantly shifted emotional gears at every new figure would probably not strike many of us as emotionally very gripping,”¹⁸¹ but a work which acted to imitate a “feeling color” might successfully present a more general emotional structure.¹⁸²

In fact, I think that this is what Langer has in mind when she claims that “music is not self-expression, but *formulation and representation* of emotions, moods, mental tensions and resolutions.”¹⁸³ (As this passage comes from the *New Key*, we must keep in mind that later Langer moves away from a representational account and emphasizes the abstract, presentational nature of musical expression.) In other words, music does not simply express a particular emotion, but presents the structure of that emotion in the image of the musical work, such that the apprehension of the work’s structure is at the same time an apprehension of the structure of inner experience, including the experience of emotions. What Higgins calls vagueness may be more charitably thought of as an insistence upon generality, or a view which maintains that the connection between a musical work and our emotions cannot be made except at a level above that of a single, isolated emotion. Emotions may be represented in the work, but *that does not entail that they are represented in isolation from the larger structure of mental life in which we experience them*. Langer’s vagueness, I suspect, prevents Higgins from seeing that

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 106.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, pp. 105-106.

¹⁸³ *New Key*, p. 222. Cf. *The Music of Our Lives*, p. 101.

Langer's theory deals with feelings at the level of this broader emotional structure.

Emotions, moods, mental tensions, and resolutions can readily be construed as separate entities and activities, or, if a more general term is more helpful at this point, "states of affairs." Higgins' demand that an imitative theory avoid explaining any definite connection between a particular musical piece and a particular emotion is appropriate only if the state of affairs equatable to an emotion is taken out of its larger context, namely, the other states of affairs that run alongside of any particular emotion—the entire emotional complex. While music may be unable to represent particular emotions, it may yet be able to represent moods, mental tensions, and mental resolutions and the emotions that are encompassed by this larger context; it may even represent emotions in a larger context from which the particular emotion is unabstractable. This, I think, is what Langer means when she is careful and talks about *feelings* rather than emotions.

Langer asserts that artworks, as living forms (or forms with organic unity and vital import), present rather than represent feelings; they exhibit, through sensuous means, "the forms of human feeling: motions, moods, even sensations *in their characteristic passage*."¹⁸⁴ Thus the morphology of the musical work is similar to the morphology of feeling structures, or feeling forms, which consists not only of the patterns of individual emotions, but their ongoing transitions and interconnections *over time*. Langer clearly intends for the term 'feeling' to apply to a complex of psychological phenomena, not in isolation from the flow of feeling or the inner pattern of sentience, but

¹⁸⁴ *Feeling and Form*, p. 82. Italics added for emphasis.

rather in the context of their complex of relations, including and perhaps especially with reference to the temporal axis of their existence: "feeling is a process, and may have not only successive phases, but several simultaneous developments, it is complex and its articulations are elusive."¹⁸⁵ It seems unlikely, given such statements, that Langer is asserting that music can represent individual, determinate emotions.

Our emotional life does not start and stop, but is ongoing. The experience of a particular emotional state may persist for a long time or as nothing but a brief flash of feeling. The *duration* of an emotional experience is variable, depending in part upon the type of emotion. One may be in love for weeks but infuriated for only a moment, or a few hours at best. We talk about "falling into love"—sometimes even "for the rest of our lives"—but never about "falling into rage" for the duration of our existence. Falling in love, unlike a brief moment of rage, is an emotional experience of long duration. It is these sorts of emotional experiences which are suitable for presentation by musical works in the way which Langer suggests, and it is music that is most suitable for portraying *experienced time*:

Musical duration is an image of what might be termed "lived" or "experienced" time—the passage of time that we feel as expectations become "now," and "now" turns into unalterable fact. Such passage is measurable only in terms of sensibilities, tensions, and emotions; and it has not merely a different measure, but an altogether different structure from practical or scientific time.¹⁸⁶

It seems, then, that Langer is especially aware of the necessity for the temporal presentation and historical internalization of music, and recognizes that these features render music a most appropriate means of presenting lived time in artistic form. Music is more capable of reflecting the passage of lived

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 230.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 109.

experience than “the unsuitable and consequently barren structure of the literal symbol.”¹⁸⁷

A musical work which did not attempt to represent long-duration emotions, or, to use Higgins’ terminology, a “feeling color,” would be a musical work that would strike us as emotionally empty—mathematical and formulaic, or mechanical rather than organic. The lay-critic often, and quite correctly, calls such works “music without feeling.” Besides being aimed at formally complex but emotionally unengaging works, that phrase is also applied to pieces which seem to represent a feeling but do so with so little variation and at such length as bore the listener into an attitude of disinterest. The latter type of “music without feeling” does not, then, fail to represent a feeling at all but lacks the lively dynamism that makes music interesting and engaging. That lively dynamism is important for two reasons: (1) its manifestation is necessary if the work is truly organic, thus an indicator of the work’s having achieved the necessary condition of a good work of art, and (2) lively dynamism is also coincident with the “vital import” that Langer thinks art works should have.

While Langer does exhibit a certain amount of vagueness when discussing the role of a musical work as embodied expression (and thus as an externalizing feature), her theory can account for the orientation of the listener by the work to feelings, though not to particular emotions. Furthermore, given the important aesthetic criterion of organic unity, her account adequately combines the requirements of aesthetic unity with the need for explaining how feelings are presented in musical forms. The

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 114.

determinate form that a musically embodied emotion takes is not unique to that emotion, but rather arises from the larger complex of feeling within which the emotion rests. If we keep Langer's distinction between feelings and emotions in mind, we can see that her theory presents a good account of transitive expression and a serviceable, though vague, account of embodied expression.

Is Langer's Account of Emotional Expressivism in Music Practicable?

What conclusions should we draw regarding Langer's theory of formalist emotional expressivism in music? Does it offer an insight into the relationship between music and the emotions, or does it obscure this relationship?

The first conclusion we ought to draw is positional. Langer's expressivism lies somewhere between the "pathological" enjoyment of music so disparaged by Hanslick and the rarefied form of "proper" enjoyment suggested by those who value the aesthetic emotion above all. Because she disdains the emotional effects of music and continues the idealist tradition in philosophy of music, Langer does not premise the value expressive form upon its affective potential. The objective emotion instantiated by the musical work is not valuable because it is cathartic for the composer, nor is it valuable because it can have soothing effects on the listener; rather, it is valuable because it reveals the composer's idea and articulation of some felt process of inner life. Although I do not participate in the hounding of the pathological in music, and will offer an argument in § 5 which affirms the value of certain physiological effects of music, I think that in general Langer's

theory is a step in the right direction. The expressive form that she details does seem like a genuine characteristic of good music. We are able to listen to certain musical works and find within them something analogous to our emotional lives, yet very different because of its sonorous form—when this happens, we do see in the musical work an expression, though not a duplication or necessarily an “infection,” to use Tolstoy’s term, of emotion. In so far as the beautiful in art is to be tied to what art can reveal to us for our imagination and understanding, Langer does a good job of suggesting how music can be beautiful.

At the same time, Langer does not insist upon raising music into a conceptual realm that demands an appreciation only of pure form and the least amount of subjectivity possible, as those in favour of the aesthetic emotion require. To be sure, her idealism causes her to prioritize the universal and objective aims of musical expression, but it does not disallow music its specific domain of expressing feeling, which, I think, is ultimately what makes music so powerful. Langer may perhaps be a bit harsh when she refers to those who want to recognize only the aesthetic emotion as being members of “the cult of the aesthetic attitude,” but I think she can be forgiven this polemical retort which, after all, stems from her broader humanistic concerns. Langer quite rightly anchors the beautiful in music on firm ground: the expression of primitive feelings.

There are problems, however. By insisting upon an idealized content for music she loses sight of some of its most forceful and effective features. Music is able to appeal both to our mental comprehension and our physicality. It can touch us by *moving* us physically, as well as moving us

cognitively by presenting formalized versions of feelings for our contemplation.

§ 5 — Viscerality and Music

Formalism and the Visceral

Anyone who reads the introductions to *New Key* and *Feeling and Form* cannot help but be impressed by the scope of Langer's vision and her heroic attempt to develop as inclusive a model as possible for music and the other arts. The deepfelt concern she exhibits for the potential of human expressiveness is clearly evident. Unfortunately, Langer goes on to overstate her own case by emphasizing expressive form to the exclusion of most everything else, and she subsequently loses sight of the visceral aspects of musical appreciation. Believing that "if music has any significance, it is semantic, not symptomatic,"¹⁸⁸ Langer limits her understanding of the potential of musical artistry by insisting upon a highly conceptualized, rationalistic portrait of the art. There are, however, important and powerful features of music which cannot be situated in the idealized territory she circumscribes for it.

Music requires a physical presence; it depends upon the "materiality" of sound, what Hanslick calls its "material substratum." It is my contention that certain kinds of musical compositions give clear evidence of their composer's and performer's particular attention to their materiality. As a result, there is a category of externalizing feature present in such works which is appreciated and valued by its listeners, not for its pathological effects

¹⁸⁸ *New Key*, p. 218.

alone but also for its ability to orient the listener to a particular aspect of their existence: their physical embodiment. By abstracting music too far from its material basis, Langer gives us something that is more a theory of symbolic rather than musical aesthetics, and so does not account for these features. Her emphasis on and analysis of music's "intellectual value" and "its close relation to concepts"¹⁸⁹ overlooks music's *affective* power, which can be used in certain musical works to point beyond the work itself to its primal context: an audience of human beings. As *embodied* beings, we should not lose sight of the fact that humans *feel* at the same time as they think, especially when they are listening to music. Langer is rightly enamoured of the revelatory function of music, but she fails to take into account the revealing aspects of visceral externalizing features.

A formal structure, no matter how significant, is not *musical* unless it is audible, and the audibility of music depends on its materiality. Musical materiality, the physical instantiation of musical forms, is a medium of auditory transmission, commonly referred to as "sound." The manner in which the musical structure appears in this medium is conceived by the composer and presented by the performer(s), both of whom concern themselves not only with simple notes but also with the dynamics of their presentation (volume, intonation, &c.). Bruce Baugh categorizes these dynamic elements of sound as *matter*: "the way music feels to the listener, or the way that it affects the listener's body."¹⁹⁰ Baugh's definition reveals two important characteristics of musical presentation, both of which are often

¹⁸⁹ *New Key*, p. 238.

¹⁹⁰ "Prolegomena," p. 23.

conflated into the activity of “feeling.”¹⁹¹

Listeners feel music in two ways. In one sense, to feel music means that the listener has a cognitive appreciation of the form that the composer is presenting. This occurs, to use Langer’s terminology, when the listener grasps the expressive form of the piece and apprehends the idea of the inner event which the musical work presents, or the embodied/objective emotion of the work. Some musical works are primarily a complex formal structure and appeal to the listener’s ability to interpret and understand complex patterns—the “play” of our aesthetic understanding and judgment—without having as their primary goal the presentation of objective emotions through expressive form. Consider this the musical equivalent of the “aesthetic dimension” of mathematical or logical constructs which are described as “elegant” or “beautiful.” Other musical works use formal structures instrumentally, as a means to express emotion rather than to appeal to our sense of “play.” The first sense of “feeling music,” then, can be primarily cognitive and playful, or it can be a means to gain insight into our inner life. In either case, the listener’s grasp of the work’s expressive form is the *sine qua non* of being a musical auditor. A musical piece that relies mostly upon this sense of musical appreciation may be termed “form-oriented” or “play-oriented.”

The other sense of “feeling music” arises from the listener’s physiological awareness of and reaction to the material aspects of the musical performance. These reactions range from the simple perception of a difference between tones—being able to distinguish between high and low

¹⁹¹ By *activity* of feeling I mean to distinguish this activity from the sense of feeling as psychical entity, or emotion.

notes, for example, or to distinguish between rhythmic accents that are “on” or “off” the beat—as well as the listener’s *visceral* perceptions, such as those experienced when loud or low-frequency sounds are encountered. The closer the listener is to the drum, for instance, the greater will be the visceral impact of its percussive voice. The second sense of “feeling music” is not the apprehension of expressive form; it is a reaction to the physical manifestation of music as audible, and in some cases palpable, sound, and, furthermore, the resultant orientation of the listener to the fact of his embodiment. Consider the firing of the cannon during Tchaikovsky’s *1812 Overture*: the explosions are part of the whole structure of the work and can be understood in terms of their role within it as percussive notes; they are also audible sounds which the listener hears through the material transmission of vibrations through the air; and they are also (perhaps most predominantly) visceral blows to the body. Musical works that emphasize their palpable features may be called “body-oriented.”

Some styles of musical composition place a great deal of emphasis on the deliberate production of visceral effects through careful attention to music’s materiality. Composers within these musical traditions often set out to deliberately affect the listener viscerally as well as cognitively and emotionally. While form- or play-oriented composers produce works with highly sophisticated formal structures that are beautiful in their abstract presentation of inner life, composers who interest themselves in the more material aspects of musical presentation create a musical experience which may have cognitive, emotional *and* visceral effects, and which can thus reveal yet another feature of inner life, namely our awareness of being physical

entities.¹⁹²

A good composer of reggae music, for example, concerns himself with both the formal structure and the physical presentation of the music. For him, sound is not only the medium through which the formal structure presents itself; it is also the means for affecting the listener such that she has a palpable awareness of the music's presence. While expressive form may be beautiful, or a means for presenting emotions in an abstract form, the visceral effects of amplified sound actually *moves* the listener by deliberately affecting different parts of the body. In this way the reggae composer makes use of both the formal structure of the music and the physical structure of the human listener, directing the music not only to the listener's cognitive capacity and emotional experience, but also to her awareness of her own physical embodiment.¹⁹³ Musical works that can orient the listener in this way have a certain type of externalizing feature, what I call a *visceral feature*. The cannon in the *1812 Overture* is one example of such a musical feature. The "heavy, heavy" sound sought after by reggae bassists who prefer flatwound strings,¹⁹⁴ and who espouse the virtue of the 1960s Fender Precision bass, reflects their belief that without suitable instrumentation the notes they produce will not have the deep, resonant rumble that their musical tradition demands. When

¹⁹² By "visceral effects" I mean physical effects beyond the mere discernment of tones or the simple hearing of the music.

¹⁹³ In the reggae tradition this expressive trinity is referred to as "Word, Sound, Power." Word refers not (only) to literal symbols, but to the conceptual or ideational aspect of musical expression, Sound refers to the material substratum upon which Word relies, while Power refers to the potency of musical expression that integrates conceptual and material characteristics in such a way as to complement each other, thus providing an experience that is both cognitive and visceral.

¹⁹⁴ Flatwound strings are sought after because they are less "bright" in tone than the roundwound variety. Robbie Shakespeare, one the premier reggae bassists and producers, goes so far as to give his newly-bought strings to others to use until they have lost even more of their brightness.

one considers the bother involved in dragging a cannon onto the stage or finding a thirty-year-old Fender bass on a small Caribbean island, it becomes clear that these activities are not aimed towards the end of mere gimmickry, but rather reflect a deliberate concern with certain aspects of musical performance.

Like many critics, Langer, rejects the possibility that visceral features of music may be valuable, even on her own criterion of musical beauty, whereby a work is more beautiful as it more fully articulates the feelings of our inner lives. The physiological effects of a work's performance are, for her, not musical elements at all. By attacking the possibility of a belief "in the physical power of the art"¹⁹⁵ she sets up a radical dichotomy between a work's musical elements and its visceral effects, portraying the latter as a side-effect of music's actual presentation, a happenstance occurrence which should not enter into our evaluation of music as an art form. "Music," Langer writes,

is known, indeed, to affect pulse-rate and respiration, to facilitate or disturb concentration, to excite or relax the organism, *while the stimulus lasts*; but beyond evoking impulses to sing, tap, adjust one's step to musical rhythm, perhaps to stare, hold one's breath or take a tense attitude, music does not ordinarily influence behavior. Its somatic influences seem to affect unmusical as well as musical persons . . . and to be, therefore, functions of *sound* rather than of *music*.¹⁹⁶

Langer's radical dichotomy between the musical functions and the supposedly non-musical functions of mere sound is a result of her attempt to solve a problem. Although she is wrong, it would be uncharitable not to acknowledge the problem that leads her to such a mistaken conclusion. There exists a real difficulty in the artistic evaluation of sound and its effects, particularly when trying to classify a particular sound or group of sounds as

¹⁹⁵ *New Key*, p. 212.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

being either musical or non-musical. If we were to say that any sound which affected us was musical, then even the blast of an air-horn would qualify as music: if you stand next to an air-horn as it goes off you will certainly experience it viscerally (perhaps by going deaf). Yet loud sounds are not musical simply because they produce a physiological reaction. Since artefacts of sound must present a significant form in order to be considered music, they must be recognizable as elements within an organized, structured work. Any group of sounds can produce a visceral effect upon those who hear them, but *musical sounds* are, according to Langer's account, necessarily conjoined in an organic whole, whether they have visceral effects or not. On this view, sound (or matter) is merely the medium of musical transmission, not a means of emotional affectation.

While it is true that not all sounds are musical, it is presumptuous to move from the need for a criterion with which to distinguish between musical and non-musical sounds to the position that the evaluation of the artistic merit of a musical work should involve *only* its formal, structural elements. There are worthwhile insights to be gained from Langer's presentation of music's quasi-symbolic, communicative function, but she is mistaken when she claims that the physical reactions engendered by music are not functions of music *per se*, and are instead only functions of sound. The one-time-only sounding of an air horn does not constitute a musical work since it has no formal structure, but a chorus of air horns could present a significant musical form. Moreover, such a chorus of musical instruments would affect their auditors (or at least any who were close-by) in an extreme and pronounced fashion, and such effects ought to be considered

in any evaluation of the work's artistic merit. Even 'traditional' instruments—violins, horns, and especially drums, gongs, and other percussives—have been used to deliberately produce visceral effects in the audience. The dichotomy between the aesthetic value of music and its visceral effect is often false and does not correspond to the facts.¹⁹⁷

Despite the readiness of actual composers to make use of physiological effects in their work, musical theorists tend to downplay non-formal musical elements. The critical theorists tend often to defend their preferred musical genre and, since the bulk of musical theory is directed at "classical" or "traditional" Western music, a genre which tends to emphasize formal complexity and (in the eyes of these theorists) disparage physiological effects, the result is a tendency to see non-formal elements in music as secondary or even insignificant. This in spite of the fact that all musical styles, traditional and non-traditional, are ultimately dependent upon both their formal structure and material presentation, however much a particular style may emphasize either structure or presentation by being form-oriented or body-oriented.

In part this problem has already been brought to light and partially worked-out by a prior discussion. Bruce Baugh notes that in "classical aesthetics of music, matter is at the service of form, and is always judged in relation to form."¹⁹⁸ Rock music, on the other hand, has a greater emphasis on non-formal elements such as rhythm, the expressivity of the notes

¹⁹⁷ Consider the impact of the visceral elements of *Wellington's Victory* by Beethoven, Tchaikovsky's *1812 Overture*, and Shostakovich's *Symphony #2* (Factory Horn in F#).

¹⁹⁸ "Prolegomena," p. 24.

themselves, and loudness.¹⁹⁹ James Young, in his critique of Baugh's essay, correctly notes that "classical" music also relies upon physiological effects such as those produced by loudness.²⁰⁰ Baugh and Young are engaged in an irresolvable dispute over whose aesthetic standards should prevail—the standards of the form-oriented classicists or those of the body-oriented rockers—but their disagreement makes it clear that both of these musical styles demand that composers give some consideration to both the formal and material elements of music.²⁰¹

The degree of cognitive, emotional, or visceral effectiveness and the corresponding dependence upon particular techniques of composition varies according to the musical style. A simple but effective means of determining which technique predominates, and thus of classifying (in a rough-and-ready way) a work as either form- or body-oriented, is to play the piece at a low volume. Form-oriented works, such as a fugue by J. S. Bach, lose little of their artistic merit when played at a low volume. Fugues emphasize structure and tonal relationships to the point of nearly transcending the materiality of sound, which is why Bach is often considered to be a "mathematical" composer.²⁰² Conversely, a body-oriented work such as a reggae song is likely to lose a considerable amount of its artistic merit when

¹⁹⁹ "Prolegomena," p. 28.

²⁰⁰ James O. Young, "Between a Rock and a Harp Place," in *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*: p. 80.

²⁰¹ So far as I know, this debate in its entirety comprises Baugh's essay "Prolegomena to Any Aesthetics of Rock Music," Young's critical notice entitled "Between Rock and a Harp Place" (both cited *supra*), and Baugh's rejoinder "Music for the Young at Heart," (*The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*: pp. 81-83). For another consideration of the issue, see Gracyk, Theodore. 1996. *Rhythm and Noise: An Aesthetics of Rock*. Durham and London: Duke University Press.

²⁰² Bach, of course, was a brilliant composer who did not restrict his vision to that of formal structures, however well-known he may be for those. (I am grateful to Professor Ajzenstat for pointing this out to me.) Nonetheless, his more formal works do exhibit the highest degree of structural complexity.

played at a low volume because of the decreased visceral effects. Without sufficient volume, the intended physiological reactions will not occur. Drum and bass will not move the waist, it is said, unless one's whole body feels the rhythm.

There is nothing to prevent us from retaining a preference for formal sophistication and at the same time recognizing the artistic merit of less sophisticated but more palpable musical styles. We may claim that the fugue is cognitively more interesting or "sophisticated" because it allows for more cognitive "play." Conversely, reggae excels in so far as it has the sort of visceral effect that one does not usually get from baroque fugues. Critical disputes arise, such as the one between Baugh and Young, when an overambitious critic denies the excellences of one genre on the basis of its lack of formal sophistication or its lack of physical impact, and takes only one category to be artistically worthwhile. Even though, as Baugh notes, "preoccupation with formal beauty is appropriate to only a very small fragment of the world's music,"²⁰³ form-oriented critics such as Langer often emphasize complexity and purity of form to the exclusion of the other elements of music, and to the detriment of their understanding of both its artistic merit and its communicative power. By recognizing music as having significant form *and* a material existence with corresponding physical effects, we eliminate the false dichotomy between form and effect and remind ourselves that composers who want to produce a work which is recognizable as a music work must present an audible significant form through the medium of sound. This recognition should force us to admit that some of a

²⁰³ "Prolegomena," p. 28.

work's artistic merit may derive from the affective potential of its body-oriented elements. In other words, this recognition implicitly posits hybrid value as well as pure value.

We can now see that musical works are neither purely formal nor merely sounds that have a physiological effect; rather, they are organic compositions which must have both formal and material elements, though they may, depending on which musical tradition they are in, emphasize one side of the spectrum rather than the other. While it excludes musical styles which emphasize the visceral elements, Langer's formalist expressivist theory is capable of accounting for the formal merits of music as well as music's ability to present feelings. Examining musical works as an organic whole, a complex articulation which is significant because of its formal structure, is an appropriate way to evaluate the formal artistic elements of music. Nonetheless, Langer's restriction of artistic merit to formal sophistication and non-visceral expressivism not only creates a false dichotomy between the formal and visceral elements of music, but also prevents an adequate understanding of music as expressive. The problem is not that Langer is all wrong but rather that she is only partly right. Music takes on *additional* aspects of significance when it is felt by the body or when it is heard as a member of an audience.

I want to stress two important points about visceral features in order to prevent any confusion about what I am saying. First of all, I am not claiming that Western art music or Hanslick's "Great Tradition" is lacking for examples of musical works with visceral externalizing features. The *1812 Overture* is but one example of the existence of such features in that tradition.

Bach's *Christmas Oratorio* is another.²⁰⁴ I think that there is much more viscerality in Western art music than is usually acknowledged. I might include the entire catalogue of Mahler's symphonies as further evidence of this.²⁰⁵

Secondly, it is important to keep in mind that visceral externalizing effects do two things. They initially affect the listener physiologically, or somatically, the way that Langer thinks that air horns can. If this is all they did, then my critique would come down to a dispute between cognitive expressivist values and pathological values in music. But the physiological reaction caused by visceral features is not their only effect. They *also* act as externalizing features on an abstract level by reorienting the listener, by turning him away from the circumscribed context of the musical work's formal structure and pointing him towards the physical context of his own embodiment, which I call the "primal context." Visceral features of music ought not to be ignored merely because they have a physiological as well as an ideal component—all musical features have these two components. Unlike Hanslick, Langer is careful to remind us that music creates "a universe of pure sound"²⁰⁶ and that "*music is something made out of sound.*"²⁰⁷ The auditory, physical component of music is necessary for its very existence.

Langer has her own reasons for wanting to draw us away from the

²⁰⁴ I am grateful to Professor Samuel Ajzenstat for giving me this example, and his willingness to defend *Quadrophenia's* need for a loud presentation if it is to be fully appreciated.

²⁰⁵ On a side note, Mahler's predisposition towards large orchestras and his explicit instructions to musicians to do unusual things, like having various instrumental chairs (e.g., horns, clarinets, &c.) aim their instruments over the heads of the audience during a particular phrase, may make him one of the best examples of the resistance against formal sophistication as the exclusive aim of "classical" music. Having seen a performance of his seventh symphony, I can personally testify as to its viscerality.

²⁰⁶ *Feeling and Form*, p. 104.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 106.

primal context of music, reasons that stem from her idealist formalism. The radical dichotomy that she posits between sound and music reflects her belief that it is the conceptual, expressive, and abstract characteristics of musical works which allow them to act as art symbols. She prioritizes the ideal modality of musical works in order to secure their position in the realm of logical expression—giving music this status and thus a kind of intellectual respectability is a central concern in her theory. With respect to visceral externalizing effects, Langer neglects to take them into account not because she has seriously considered them, but rather because she recognizes only their physiological component. Such an error is understandable. The physical effect of visceral features can be so overwhelming as to blind us to their intellectual value. We ought, however, to ask whether the conceptual role of visceral effects is understandable in isolation from their physiological effectiveness.

Is There Room for the Visceral in Langer's Theory?

Can we incorporate visceral features into Langer's theory of presentational expressivism by keeping their intellectual role in mind? I think so. The closest approximation that visceral features have to anything Langer has considered are words. Words in music, Langer claims, can act as independent symbols: symbols within the art symbol. Like visceral externalizing features, words orient the listener to a context beyond the work itself. In order for a musical work to integrate either words or visceral features and remain musical it would have to totally subsume them into the music. The phonemes of words and the tones of visceral features would need to be

elements that fit within the organic totality of the work and serve in a primarily musical role. Their tonal characteristics would have to be considered, and accepted or rejected as appropriate to the work, prior to their being used. But so long as they sound right, so long as they do not detract from the unity of the work but rather enhance it, Langer has no objection to their use.

Even though visceral features might be incorporated into Langer's theory and recognized as acceptable elements in musical composition, it is clear that Langer's formalism makes this difficult and downplays their most interesting characteristic: their dual physiological and intellectual role. Although there is this duality, visceral features seem to be far less transparent than pure tones. An experienced listener can become almost lost in a complex fugue that exhibits great formal sophistication. She can become so removed from the material presence of the music that the work as a whole seems to exist only in her mind as formal elements and their relation. But even experienced listeners of more body-oriented works cannot help but be reminded of the material substratum of the work; they are always called back from ideal contemplation by the forceful push of a particularly low note or a strategically placed cannon shot.

What does this tell us about music and about Langer's theory of presentational expressivism? It tells us first of all that music is capable of being apprehended in two very different ways: as idealized form that allows for a great deal of cognitive play or expressive interpretation, and as sound, palpable and forceful. In certain instances, both types of apprehension may be appropriate, as perhaps is the case with the *1812 Overture*, while in other

instances one type of listening may be more suitable than the other for grasping whatever it is that the work is trying to reveal.

The nature of visceral features tells us something about Langer's theory, as well. It shows that a formalist approach to music, even an expressivist formalist such as Langer's, will necessarily have difficulty dealing with musical structures such as visceral features which tend to resist our attempts to apprehend them purely cognitively. Viscerality is part of music, it is inextricably conjoined with the material substratum of sound that forms the basis of more idealized levels of musical experience. The palpable nature of visceral effects cannot, however, be separated from their function as externalizing elements, features of music that reorient the listener to something outside of the musical work. This makes them very tricky creatures indeed, ones that are perhaps impossible for the philosopher of music to capture in any one theoretical net. Accounting for visceral externalizing features leads to the sort of difficult problem that makes us re-evaluate our theoretical approach to music and musical experience. It is not surprising that Langer's formalist expressivism cannot come to terms with them—perhaps no single theory can.

Concluding Remarks on Langer

As a logical successor to Hanslick's formalist theory, Langer's formalist expressivism is worthy of our support in so far as it offers an account of form in music as well as an account of how musical form can present us with musically articulated ideas about our inner life. Her portrayal of musical works as art symbols which have vital import usefully combines

aesthetic criteria such as organic unity with a ground for their expressiveness. Moreover, Langer's humanistic concerns result in a theory that is applicable to a greater variety of musics than is Hanslick's.

However, it must be noted that Langer offers a clearer account of transitive expression than she does of embodied expression. It is certain that she intends for her account to incorporate both types of expression, as her reference to "objective emotions" indicates, but her less than careful application of terminology results in much confusion with regard to what, exactly, can be objectified in the musical work. My interpretation of Langer's account of embodied expression, which posits an isomorphism between feelings (as long-duration emotions inseparable from their larger emotional context) is an adequate explication of how Langer might think emotional structures are similar to musical structures, and hence of how the abstract presentation of feelings in musical works can be identified, though never precisely, as being similar to features of our inner lives. There are still difficulties, however, and any interpretation of Langer is debatable because of a certain tendency to vagueness on her part.

Nonetheless, Langer's formalist expressivism can serve to explain the emotion-music connection. It does so with a bias in favour of the conceptual, contemplative type of musical appreciation. Langer often reminds us that musical works do not present feelings themselves, but rather the idea of feelings, or the image of feelings in musical form. While her idealist formalism necessitates this bias, that only leads us to question, in some limited way, the adequacy of formalist theories in general. Like Hanslick, Langer does not come to terms with the visceral in music, but rather

discounts visceral effects by emphasizing the dichotomy between the pathological or somatic and the cognitive properties of structured sounds. Hence the explanatory potential of her account is limited, and however much it may be an improvement over hanslickian analysis, it falls short in this regard.

By examining the cognitive role of visceral effects in music, and their function as externalizing features which orient the listener to an awareness of her own embodiment, we can find some room in Langer's theory for the visceral as a kind of symbol within the art symbol. This reconciliation is not as laudatory as a theory which more clearly identifies the inextricable link between the physiological and cognitive facets of such features, but it does allow us to see how a formalist expressivist theory such as Langer's might be extended appropriately.

A final evaluation of Langer's theory, then, arrives at two straightforward conclusions: (1) Langer gives a better account of the emotion-music connection than does Hanslick, yet does so by extending the function of musical form rather than denying the notion of idealized form altogether, (2) Langer's theory, because of its idealist bias, has difficulty in accounting for the dual-role of visceral externalizing elements, and hence cannot come to terms with musical traditions that emphasize these features. It is worthwhile to keep in mind, however, my suspicion that no single theory can avoid a bias in favour of idealism or physicalism, and so this shortcoming may be unavoidable in any case.

Conclusion

At the outset of this thesis I determined to argue for a more encompassing and thus richer model of musical evaluation, one which is capable of coming to grips with more of the world's music than the traditional formal model. Langer's theory of music, I think, succeeds at doing this. It has its own faults, of course. Foremost among them is its stubborn insistence on separating musical sounds from their material effects, a trait which her theory shares with Hanslick's.

It is difficult to explicate Hanslick with an eye towards a more expressivist interpretation of his theory, such as the one proposed by Robert Hall. Hanslick's influence extends widely and in many directions. While he somewhat uncritically took up the task of applying scientific aesthetics to music, subsequent interpretations of him have muddied the waters considerably. I trust that my interpretation, which has attempted to encompass both the original and derivative forms of his theory, is sufficiently clear to contribute to the ongoing project of understanding his astute insights into the nature and value of music. His cultural bias is both clear and potentially corruptive of those insights, but it seems hardly fair to blame him for being a product of his own time—that is a criticism that all of us will have to endure, and proudly.

Once again, I want to restate the importance of developing a philosophical understanding of music which attempts to encompass all of the products of that art. The most exciting aspects of contemporary musical

experience arise from the widespread distribution of musics that are often radically different from Western art music. Perhaps at no other time in history have we had ready access to such a wide variety of musical traditions. The musical works that these variant traditions produce are not only valuable for their variety and, in our eyes, their novelty, but also because they reflect understandings of human existence that are unique and often insightful. The difficulties engendered by the cultural context that surrounds musical works will take a long time to untangle, but we are morally and intellectually bound to attempt to do so. Any other course of action would be unphilosophical in the extreme.

The reader will already have noted that this thesis undergoes a shift in emphasis during its progression. In § 2, I inventory and elucidate on those elements of musical structure which I call externalizing features, but as the thesis progresses I place less emphasis on an analysis of these features within musical structures and more emphasis on their role in musical experience. This is deliberate: analysis of musical structure ought not to be an end in itself, but should also be re-applied to musical experience in order to see how different aspects of musical structure relate to our experience of musical performances, including the apprehension of musical forms. Externalizing features are of particular interest because they transgress the boundaries of the musical work without stepping outside it entirely. A complete analysis of them would require some lengthy tomes, indeed, yet I hope that my more limited explication of them allows the reader to move from an understanding of these components of musical structure to a fuller understanding of musical experience.

In large part this project has examined *how* music means rather than *what* it means. To define the latter would, I think, be presumptuous. The role played by visceral externalizing features in music, however, indicates a central component of what it is to have a musical experience and how this can be meaningful. On the one hand, visceral effects act within the musical work as integral parts of its structure, and so may be appropriated formally. Thus, like the other elements of musical structure, they provide a material basis to the work that allows for its internalization and hence for its contemplation as an idealized form. I hope that my polemical attack against the cognitive bias in music does not mask this role, for it is a very important one indeed. On the other hand, visceral effects provide the listener with a constant reminder of his status as an embodied entity. Some musical works with little emphasis on the visceral exhibit a level of formal sophistication and great cognitive potential such that the work seems to transcend its material basis, and in some fashion takes our consciousness along with it into an ideal realm of contemplation. These musical works are some of our most prized art works, and I would never wish to deny them this status. But body-oriented music can be equally valuable, and the deliberate production of visceral effects in the listener can provide for a very interesting balance of the cognitive and the pathological, a balance which results not from an attempt to transcend sound and carry us into an ideal contemplative state, but which instead reflects a more grounded approach to music. It is "grounded" in so far as it strives to reproduce the tension between intellectually contemplated and palpably felt experience. This tension is inherent in the human condition, and in so far as body-oriented works reveal this tension in an artistic manner

they are beautiful by virtue of their revelation of that condition.

Careful consideration will show that this tension is at work when emotions are presented in music. Susanne Langer argues forcefully for the idea that the presentation of feeling in musical form is abstract and cognitive rather than concrete and palpably felt. I disagree, not because feeling cannot be presented abstractly, but rather because I am certain that embodied expression is dependent on the visceral and does not transcend this relationship very often or very easily. Even if this is not the case, Langer does recognize the tension between the cognitive and the pathological as the main impetus for musical expression. According to Langer, we are unwilling to merely experience feeling—we also are driven to express it in forms suitable for contemplation. Far from being merely cathartic, the expression of feelings in musical form allows us to consider and make sense of them. Music, then, on Langer's account, resolves the tension between the cognitive and the visceral by presenting the structure of the visceral ("the felt pattern of experience") in cognitively-apprehensible forms. Music can certainly work in this way: the feelings we get from music are qualitatively different than those we merely experience pathologically. It is sensible, however, to extend Langer's account to draw within its scope of analysis those musical works which retain that tension and attempt to present it musically through the use of visceral effects. Langer misunderstands the function of these works: far from being simpleminded attempts to somatically affect the listener, this kind of music demands to be considered on both its formal and sensuous levels, much the same way lived experience includes both of these modalities of awareness. If we accept Langer's connection of music's beauty with its revelations of

experience, then we are bound to recognize that some instances of musical beauty reveal both the sensuous and cognitive aspects of life.

Where ought we to go from here? Now that we can see the need for a richer model of musical experience than that presented in formalism or formalist expressivism, should we try to extend these theories or instead develop an entirely new one? It seems to me that a careful expansion of the scope of these theories is not only possible but the best route to take. Although I have vehemently argued for the importance externalizing features and the visceral in music, I am unwilling to reject the formalist tradition altogether. It would be more productive to moderate its disparagement of the pathological by taking note of how "irrational" facets of music contribute, in part, to our conceptual apprehension of them. One possible path of development would have us compare musical aesthetics with rhetorical aesthetics. For a very long time philosophy of rhetoric has concerned itself with both the rational and irrational components in oratory. This has lead some theorists, including Nietzsche, to conclude that good rhetoric exhibits a balance between the rational and the irrational, or between the cognitive presentation and emotional effects. Music, it seems to me, exhibits a tendency to achieve this same balance, although it does so in its own way. In any case, a richer model of musical experience, if combined with sound analysis and careful consideration of all its components, cannot help increase expand the scope and depth of our understanding the art.

Postscript

I have attempted, throughout this thesis, to walk a fine line between the necessity for an analytic approach to musical works and the equally important need for an approach which does not unduly limit the ascription of musical value such that only musics whose tendency towards the type of formal sophistication found in the Great Tradition of Western art music receive their due recognition. While there will always be those who refuse to recognize the value of other musics, it seems to me that anyone who engages with music—any music—personally and with an open mind cannot help but expand their understanding of themselves and their world. That is the true and ultimate value of music.

In the process of researching and writing I have, in particular, come to appreciate the forthrightness and strong advocacy demonstrated by many different philosophers of music. However much I may disagree with some of their conclusions, it remains the case that philosophy of music is a lively and significant area of enquiry—one might even go so far as to call it an art form in itself. In particular I have come to value my ambivalent relationship with Hanslick's *The Musically Beautiful*. While appreciating the strength and impassioned tone of his arguments, it is those very features that have often caused me to throw down the book in disgust or scribble large exclamation marks beside particularly intolerable passages. Still, one cannot help but admire the outpouring of authentic emotion he felt for the musical arts. As for Susanne Langer, her humanism, particularly evident in the foreword to

Philosophy in a New Key, is refreshing and worthy of the highest esteem, and her theory is an ambitious and generally successful account of music that is both analytically detailed and comprehensive.

Most of all, however, my belief in the expressive power of music and the value of that power has been strengthened considerably. Having been forced to reconsider my own opinions about music, I still find myself ready and willing to defend the idea that good music is both beautiful and expressive, and in fact is beautiful especially when it is expressive. Philosophy of music is especially rewarding because of the intensely personal nature of our reactions to our favourite musical works; reconsidering those reactions and those works from a philosophical perspective is both enlightening and frustrating. I hope that this project of mine exhibits the same qualities.

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