Beethoven

Michael Spitzer

The Early Romantic Composers

Beethoven

The Early Romantic Composers
Series Editor: Michael Spitzer

Titles in the Series:

Schubert
Julian Horton

Schumann
Roe Min-Kok

Chopin
John Rink

Beethoven
Michael Spitzer

Mendelssohn
Benedict Taylor

Beethoven

Edited by

Michael Spitzer

University of Liverpool, UK

ROUTLEDGE
Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group
LONDON AND NEW YORK

First published 2015 by Ashgate Publishing

Published 2016 by Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN
711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017, USA

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

Copyright © Michael Spitzer 2015. For copyright of individual articles please refer to the Acknowledgements.

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reprinted or reproduced or utilised in any form or by any electronic, mechanical, or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publishers.

Notice:
Product or corporate names may be trademarks or registered trademarks, and are used only for identification and explanation without intent to infringe.

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

The Library of Congress has cataloged the printed edition as follows: 2015932188

ISBN 13: 978-1-4724-4030-3 (hbk)

Contents

Acknowledgements *vii*
Series Preface *ix*
Introduction *xi*

PART I HISTORY AND HISTORIOGRAPHY

1 Carl Dahlhaus (1991), 'The Biographical Method', in *Ludwig van Beethoven: Approaches to his Music*, trans. Mary Whittall, Oxford: Clarendon Press, pp. 1–10. 3
2 Scott Burnham (1995), 'Beethoven's Hero', in *Beethoven Hero*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp. 3–28. 13
3 K.M. Knittel (2006), '"Late", Last, and Least: On being Beethoven's Quartet in F Major, Op. 135', *Music & Letters*, **87**, pp. 16–51. 45
4 Lewis Lockwood (1994), 'Beethoven before 1800: The Mozart Legacy', *Beethoven Forum*, **3**, pp. 39–52. 81
5 Alexander L. Ringer (1970), 'Beethoven and the London Pianoforte School', *Musical Quarterly*, **56**, pp. 742–58. 95
6 Warren Kirkendale (1971), 'New Roads to Old Ideas in Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis*', in Paul Henry Lang (ed.), *The Creative World of Beethoven*, New York: Norton, pp. 163–99. 113

PART II DOCUMENTS AND SKETCHES

7 Maynard Solomon (1998), 'Beethoven's Birth Year', in *Beethoven Essays*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, pp. 35–42. 153
8 Hans-Werner Küthen (2001), 'Das "Heiligenstädter Testament" im Licht der Freimaurerei. Beethovens "letzter Wille" als ein Beweis für seine Zugehörigkeit zur Logenbruderschaft?', *Hudební veda*, **38**, pp. 376–96. 165
9 Maynard Solomon (1972), 'New Light on Beethoven's Letter to an Unknown Woman', *Musical Quarterly*, **58**, pp. 572–87. 187
10 Alan Tyson (1970), 'Conversations with Beethoven', *Musical Times*, **111**, pp. 25–28. 203
11 William Drabkin (1991), 'Beethoven's Understanding of "Sonata Form": The Evidence of the Sketchbooks', in William Kinderman (ed.), *Beethoven's Compositional Process*, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, pp. 14–19. 207
12 Philip Gossett (1974), 'Beethoven's Sixth Symphony: Sketches for the First Movement', *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, **27**, pp. 248–84. 213

13 Robert Winter (1977), 'Plans for the Structure of the String Quartet in C Sharp Minor Op. 131', in Alan Tyson (ed.), *Beethoven Studies 2*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 106–37. 251

PART III ANALYSIS

14 Joseph Kerman (1994), 'Tovey's Beethoven', in *Write all these Down: Essays on Music*, Berkeley: University of California Press, pp. 155–72. 285

15 Robert S. Hatten (1994), 'A Case Study for Interpretation: The Third Movement of Op. 106 (*Hammerklavier*)', in *Musical Meaning in Beethoven: Markedness, Correlation, and Interpretation*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, pp. 9–28. 303

16 Janet Schmalfeldt (1995), 'Form as the Process of Becoming: The Beethoven-Hegelian Tradition and the "Tempest" Sonata', *Beethoven Forum*, **4**, pp. 37–71. 327

17 Michael Spitzer (1996), 'The Significance of Recapitulation in Beethoven's "Waldstein" Sonata', *Beethoven Forum*, **5**, pp. 103–17. 363

18 Edward T. Cone (1989), 'Beethoven's Experiments in Composition: The Late Bagatelles', in Robert Morgan (ed.), *Music: A View from Delft. Selected Essays*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pp. 179–200. 379

PART IV AESTHETICS AND HERMENEUTICS

19 Rose Rosengard Subotnik (1976), 'Adorno's Diagnosis of Beethoven's Late Style: Early Symptom of a Fatal Condition', *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, **29**, pp. 242–75. 403

20 Rey M. Longyear (1970), 'Beethoven and Romantic Irony', *Musical Quarterly*, **56**, pp. 647–64. 437

21 Owen Jander (1985), 'Beethoven's "Orpheus in Hades": The *Andante con moto* of the Fourth Piano Concerto', *19th-Century Music*, **8**, pp. 195–212. 455

22 Sanna Pederson (2000), 'Beethoven and Masculinity', in Scott Burnham and Michael P. Steinberg (eds), *Beethoven and his World*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp. 313–31. 473

23 Richard Taruskin (1989), 'Resisting the Ninth', *19th-Century Music*, **12**, pp. 241–56. 493

24 Holly Rogers (2006), 'Beethoven's Myth Sympathy: Hollywood's Re-Construction', *British Postgraduate Musicology*, **8**, at http://britishpost-graduatemusicology.org/bpm8/Rogers.html 509

Name Index *523*

Acknowledgements

Ashgate would like to thank our researchers and the contributing authors who provided copies, along with the following for their permission to reprint copyright material.

Harvard University Press for the essay: Maynard Solomon (1998), 'Beethoven's Birth Year', in *Beethoven Essays*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, pp. 35–42. Copyright © 1998 by the President and Fellows of Harvard College.

Indiana University Press for the essay: Robert S. Hatten (1994), 'A Case Study for Interpretation: The Third Movement of Op. 106 (*Hammerklavier*)', in *Musical Meaning in Beethoven: Markedness, Correlation, and Interpretation*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, pp. 9–28. Copyright © 1994 Robert S. Hatten. All rights reserved.

Institute of Ethnology of the Czech Academy of Sciences, Department of Music History for the essay: Hans-Werner Küthen (2001), 'Das "Heiligenstädter Testament" im Licht der Freimaurerei. Beethovens "letzter Wille" als ein Beweis für seine Zugehörigkeit zur Logenbruderschaft?', *Hudební veda*, **38**, pp. 376–96. Copyright © 2001 Academia, Praha.

Laaber-Verlag GmbH for the essay: Carl Dahlhaus (1991), 'The Biographical Method', in *Ludwig van Beethoven: Approaches to his Music*, trans. Mary Whittall, Oxford: Clarendon Press, pp. 1–10. Copyright © 1991 Oxford University Press.

The Musical Times Publications Ltd for the essay: Alan Tyson (1970), 'Conversations with Beethoven', *Musical Times*, **111**, pp. 25–8.

Oxford University Press for the essays: K.M. Knittel (2006), '"Late", Last, and Least: On being Beethoven's Quartet in F Major, Op. 135', *Music & Letters*, **87**, pp. 16–51. Copyright © 2006 The author. Published by Oxford University Press. All rights reserved; Alexander L. Ringer (1970), 'Beethoven and the London Pianoforte School', *Musical Quarterly*, **56**, pp. 742–58. Reprinted by permission of Oxford University Press; Warren Kirkendale (1971), 'New Roads to Old Ideas in Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis*', in Paul Henry Lang (ed.), *The Creative World of Beethoven*, New York: Norton, pp. 163–99. Copyright © 1970 by G. Schirmer, Inc. Reprinted by permission of Oxford University Press; Maynard Solomon (1972), 'New Light on Beethoven's Letter to an Unknown Woman', *Musical Quarterly*, **58**, pp. 572–87. Reprinted by permission of Oxford University Press; Robert Winter (1977), 'Plans for the Structure of the String Quartet in C Sharp Minor Op. 131', in Alan Tyson (ed.), *Beethoven Studies 2*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 106–37. Copyright © 1977 Oxford University Press; Edward T. Cone (1989), 'Beethoven's Experiments in Composition: The Late Bagatelles', in Robert Morgan (ed.), *Music: A View from Delft. Selected Essays*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pp. 179–200. Copyright © 1989 by the University of Chicago. Reprinted by permission of Oxford University Press; Rey M. Longyear (1970), 'Beethoven and Romantic Irony', *Musical Quarterly*, **56**, pp. 647–64. Copyright © 1970 Oxford University Press.

Princeton University Press for the essays: Scott Burnham (1995), 'Beethoven's Hero', in *Beethoven Hero*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp. 3–28. Copyright © 1995 Princeton University Press. Reprinted by permission of Princeton University Press; Sanna Pederson (2000), 'Beethoven and Masculinity', in Scott Burnham and Michael P. Steinberg (eds), *Beethoven and his World*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp. 313–31. Copyright © 2000 Princeton University Press. Reprinted by permission of Princeton University Press.

University of California Press for the essays: Philip Gossett (1974), 'Beethoven's Sixth Symphony: Sketches for the First Movement', *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, **27**, pp. 248–84. Copyright © 1974 The American Musicological Society; Joseph Kerman (1994), 'Tovey's Beethoven', in *Write all these Down: Essays on Music*, Berkeley: University of California Press, pp. 155–72. Copyright © 1994 The Regents of the University of California; Rose Rosengard Subotnik (1976), 'Adorno's Diagnosis of Beethoven's Late Style: Early Symptom of a Fatal Condition', *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, **29**, pp. 242–75. Copyright © 1976 The American Musicological Society; Owen Jander (1985), 'Beethoven's "Orpheus in Hades": The *Andante con moto* of the Fourth Piano Concerto', *19th-Century Music*, **8**, pp. 195–212. Copyright © 1985 by the Regents of the University of California; Richard Taruskin (1989), 'Resisting the Ninth', *19th-Century Music*, **12**, pp. 241–56. Copyright © 1989 by the Regents of the University of California.

University of Nebraska Press for the essays: Lewis Lockwood (1994), 'Beethoven before 1800: The Mozart Legacy', *Beethoven Forum*, **3**, pp. 39–52. Copyright © 1994 by the University of Nebraska Press. Reprinted by permission of the University of Nebraska Press; William Drabkin (1991), 'Beethoven's Understanding of "Sonata Form": The Evidence of the Sketchbooks', in William Kinderman (ed.), *Beethoven's Compositional Process*, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, pp. 14–19. Copyright © 1991 University of Nebraska Press. Reprinted by permission of Nebraska University Press; Janet Schmalfeldt (1995), 'Form as the Process of Becoming: The Beethoven-Hegelian Tradition and the "Tempest" Sonata', *Beethoven Forum*, **4**, pp. 37–71. Copyright © 1995 by the University of Nebraska Press. Reprinted by permission of Nebraska University Press; Michael Spitzer (1996), 'The Significance of Recapitulation in Beethoven's "Waldstein" Sonata', *Beethoven Forum*, **5**, pp. 103–17. Copyright © 1996 by the University of Nebraska Press. Reprinted by permission of Nebraska University Press.

For the images reprinted in this volume, acknowledgement goes to: San José State University (Ch. 3, Plate 1); Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munich (Ch. 6, Plate 1); and Houghton Library, Harvard University (Ch. 21, Plate 3).

Every effort has been made to trace all the copyright holders, but if any have been inadvertently overlooked the publishers will be pleased to make the necessary arrangement at the first opportunity.

Publisher's Note

The material in this volume has been reproduced using the facsimile method. This means we can retain the original pagination to facilitate easy and correct citation of the original essays. It also explains the variety of typefaces, page layouts and numbering.

Series Preface

Much of the world's most popular music was composed in the first half of the nineteenth century. The five composers represented in this series sit at the core of the Western art-music tradition, and have received an enormous amount of critical and scholarly attention. Beethoven and Schubert worked at the cusp between the Classical style and Romanticism; Schumann, Mendelssohn and Chopin formed part of what Charles Rosen called 'The Romantic Generation', a group of composers born around 1810 who could be said to have invented musical modernity. Of these five titanic figures, none needs much introduction or apology, with Mendelssohn being the exception of a once-neglected composer whose time has come again. Nevertheless, these early nineteenth-century composers do collectively elicit a kind of cultural re-affirmation on our part: against postmodernity's challenge towards this tradition and against the blithe assumption – after Musicology's respective analytical, critical and (now) digital turns – that earlier writers have nothing to teach us about this tradition.

And this is why the five editors of the books in this series have been tasked to throw their nets as widely as possible, in order to capture not just the latest scholarly perspectives on this music, but also older, perhaps less fashionable, but arguably still invaluable literature. Priority has been given to items in English, but a few seminal contributions appear either in a foreign language or in new, previously unpublished translations. Extended introductions also situate the contents of individual volumes in broad scholarly contexts. 'The Early Romantic Composers' intends both to increase access to the published literature and to provide scholars, students and general music lovers alike with a reliable reference source. It is hoped that reading and re-reading essays in the series will not only enhance appreciation of Beethoven, Schubert, Schumann, Mendelssohn and Chopin, the environments in which they worked, and the musical cultures in which they flourished, but also stimulate further engagement with the large secondary literature on these five great musicians.

MICHAEL SPITZER
Series Editor

Taylor & Francis
Taylor & Francis Group
http://taylorandfrancis.com

Introduction

'Milwaukee conference is surprisingly short on classics'.[1] It may seem dubious to dignify a bit of journalistic froth to introduce a set of Beethoven readings. Yet Arthur Kaptainis's maverick polemic against the joint Society of Music Theory/American Musicology Society meeting at Milwaukee in 2014 is a telling bellwether of the current state of Beethoven scholarship. Leery of a conference programme ranging 'from the specific ('Beneventan Notated Fragments in Abruzzo: Exchange and the Domestication of Plainchant in Southern Italy') to the general ('On Musical Objects') to the political ('Music and the Ambient Politics of Feminist New Materialism') to the abstract ('Contextualized Musical Transformations and Inconsistent Multiplicity') to the trivial ('Dolly Parton's Kindertotenlieder')', Kaptainis is incredulous that 'only three papers refer in their titles to Beethoven, and none of these make the music of this master the focus of the talk'. Kaptainis's article provoked a lot of knee-jerk defensiveness on the blogosphere in the wake of the conference, with the standard reaction being that delegates loved Beethoven's music, but simply didn't choose to present on it. That gap – between valuing a repertoire and researching it – is surely the issue here, and not the dispute whether 'Dolly Parton's Kindertotenlieder' (*sic*) really is more 'trivial' than Beethoven's Ninth. There can be no question that Beethoven is the central figure in Western classical music. Why, then, has he become peripheral to music scholarship? That situation is a fairly recent development, because no Western composer has hitherto received more scholarly attention than Beethoven. So why, and when, did Beethoven drop out of scholarship?

This collection of essays in no way seeks to answer such a difficult question. Arguably the stand-out book excerpted here is Scott Burnham's reception history of the 'Eroica' in his *Beethoven Hero* (1995) – not so much on its own merits (elegant as they are) but because it is the clearest and most forceful symptom of the wider malaise. One of the lessons of Burnham's book may be that – pending the arrival of fresh methodologies or truly surprising information about Beethoven's life and works – current Beethoven scholarship is essentially a backwards-facing activity of historiographical stock-taking and self-reflection. Burnham's broader suggestion is that this scholarly exhaustion reflects a crisis in humanism. To the extent that Beethoven's 'heroic' music became identified with a mainstream model not just of music but of humanity itself, then this model is out of kilter with our alienated postmodern age. This is also the classic Adornian argument: that the human spirit in late capitalist society is too degraded to reckon with Enlightenment values. Hence all its crass populism notwithstanding, Kaptainis's broadside is not completely wide of the mark: Beethoven's absence from the conference programme is a judgement on contemporary musicology and music theory.

This verdict is just 'only up to a point', as Lord Copper would say,[2] because a long and sustained revolution in Beethoven studies took place quite late in the day, well into the post-

---

1 See http://montrealgazette.com/entertainment/music/kaptainis-between-theory-and-practice (accessed 8 December 2014).

2 A favourite saying of this character from Evelyn Waugh's 1938 novel *Scoop*.

war period. The present collection brings together strands of Anglo-American Beethoven research over the last fifty years; if the Adorno line were to be followed strictly, none of this ought to be possible 'After Auschwitz'. And yet a succession of scholars and theorists blazed new trails from the 1960s onwards, transforming our image of Beethoven. Six major moments can be identified in this modern reception of Beethoven, in no particular order. First, the translation into English of Carl Dahlhaus's copious writings, bringing to the Anglophone world's attention a complex, 'chewy', indeed dialectical mode of discourse; and through that a rich German intellectual tradition of critical theory and *Receptions-geschichte*. Second, the coming of age of Beethoven sketch study in the pioneering work of Alan Tyson, Douglas Johnson, Robert Winter and many others. Third, the professionalization of music analysis, including the reception of Heinrich Schenker, and the use of Beethoven's 'masterworks' as much as objects of analysis as a means of legitimating an ideology of organic unity. Fourth, the discovery of Adorno's writings on Beethoven, starting with Rose Subotnik's seminal essay on the late style (Chapter 19 in this volume), unleashing an anti-organicist counter-tendency. Fifth, the rise of New Musicology and the perspective on Beethoven from cultural practice. Sixth, where we are now: the role of Beethoven in the film and digital industries. I have packaged these six moments in four sections: History and Historiography, Documents and Sketches, Analysis, and Aesthetics and Hermeneutics.

A 'red thread' runs through all these texts, which I will ponder at the end of this introduction. The common thread uniting these diverse methodologies is one of creativity: even the ostensibly 'driest' philological disciplines of Beethoven research – the 'diplomatic' evaluation of his compositional sketches, say – are not immune from the interpretive and performative spirit animating the more hermeneutic and analytical tool kits. There is no such thing as an objective historical 'fact' in Beethoven studies; all that is solid melts into air. History becomes an act of the composer's self-fashioning as much as a story fictionalized by the aura of the music. The works themselves seem to come alive as *ergon*, activity, to disclose the word's originally dynamic Aristotelian meaning. And the life which flows through all these critical enterprises is nothing less than the mysteriously inextinguishable vitality of Beethoven's music.

***

The alchemical conjunction of music and life is thus the place to start. A.W. Thayer's *The Life of Beethoven* (1921) is still the benchmark life-and-works biography. The most celebrated biography of modern times is Maynard Solomon's 1977 *Beethoven*. While Solomon was not a trained therapist, his psychoanalytical conjectures hit the mark quite persuasively. William Kinderman's compendious *Beethoven* (1995) has its admirers, although its hostility towards music theory has alienated some readers. Two of the best recent efforts are Lewis Lockwood's *Beethoven: The Music and the Life* (2003) and Barry Cooper's *Beethoven* (2008).[3] David Wyn Jones's *The Life of Beethoven* (1998) demonstrates that a short and concise book can still have fresh things to say, particularly about the composer's Bonn period. This collection begins, however, with a German scholar who lays claim to being the most widely read (in both senses) musicologist of modern times. Carl Dahlhaus's *Ludwig van Beethoven: Approaches to his Music* (1991) is not a 'life-and-works' monograph so much as a collection of separate essays, each one staking out an immensely broad intellectual terrain with magisterial authority. In

[3] See also the penetrating review by Marston (2004).

some ways, Dahlhaus's book deconstructs the genre established by Thayer (and perpetuated by Kinderman *et al.*), including the received assumption that the life and work of a composer can sit side-by-side unproblematically. Moreover, the very fragmentary nature of this book reflects a modernist aesthetic imbibed from Adorno (and ultimately from Nietzsche), suspicious of system as much as closure. For Beethoven, more than any other composer, the quasi-organic unity and idealist rhetoric of his music invites system and closure, as well as an unreflecting identification between the man and his music. It is such elisions and identifications that Dahlhaus's book smashes from a series of angles, none more acute than its first chapter. 'The Biographical Method' (Chapter 1) tackles head-on the fraught question of how the composer's music relates to his life. If the image of Beethoven is a compilation drawn from biographical anecdotes (such as his refusal to acknowledge royalty when he met Goethe at Teplitz), then their truth may be aesthetic rather than properly historical. With his penchant for provocative paradox, Dahlhaus contends that work and life lie widest apart from each other when the facts are historically true. He deconstructs the opposition between the biographical (Beethoven the historical agent) and the aesthetic subject (the persona expressed by his 'heroic' works) in favour of a compound he terms the 'active expressive subject' (p. 7) – a persona which is different in every work, and which partakes of aesthetic experience, rather than being extrinsic to the music. This has become a commonplace in recent pop scholarship, for instance the way hip-hop artists such as Marshal Mathers/Eminem counterpoint their biographical and artistic identities (Krims, 2000). Yet Dahlhaus reaches such conclusions through a German hermeneutic tradition which Beethoven is deemed to have shared, suggestive of a hermeneutic circle between the composer and his critics, or, in the philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer's terms, a 'fusion of horizons' (2004, p. 317). Dahlhaus certainly has his faults – for instance, a penchant for generalization and a conservative, motivic-based, analytical method. Yet 'The Biographical Method' packs more into its ten pages than many books manage as a whole. Dahlhaus towers above other Beethovenians of his generation in the density and intellectual ambition of his writing, qualities which reflect those of the music he is writing about. This kind of writing epitomizes the hermeneutic ideal that the 'subject' should be adequate to its 'object'. 'From the mind may it go to the mind', to adjust the famous epigram from the Missa Solemnis.[4] This is a different, more self-critical, kind of identification than the unmediated juxtaposition of biography with analytical vignettes, which is the staple of most 'life and works' studies.

This heady notion that, in some sense, Beethoven's music infuses the terms in which we write about it, that it effectively 'writes itself', is fully realized in Scott Burnham's *Beethoven Hero* (1995). Inspired by the Constance School of reception theory,[5] and the specific example of Eggebrecht's survey of historiographical constants in Beethoven reception (1972), in Chapter 2 Burnham extrapolates a Beethoven heroic myth as much from his personal response to the Third Symphony, as from countless programmatic and analytical engagements with the work, contemporaneous and modern day. Burnham not only demonstrates a continuity between technical and figurative writing; his second major achievement is to persuade us that analysts and critics of the *Eroica* partake of the same 'heroic' spirit of the work, that Beethoven's myth is implicated in its own re-tellings. The 'work' as such thus dissolves into history. That said,

4 Beethoven's inscription is 'From the heart may it go to the heart'.

5 As particularly in the writings of Hans Robert Jauss and Wolfgang Iser.

there remains the fatal flaw that Burnham's image of Beethoven is extracted from a tiny group of works – chiefly, the Third and Fifth Symphonies, and one or two overtures. To speak of the 'Other' (that is, non-heroic) Beethoven, for instance, as Nicholas Cook (2003) tried to do in an article on Wellington's Victory, is to argue with straw men, because Beethoven contains multitudes: it is tautological to refute patently reductive images of his diverse achievements. A similar problem besets Kristin Knittel's Burnhamesque reception history of Beethoven's last string quartet (Chapter 3), a work she thinks strikes 'no one as great' (p. 80). Her own estimation of Op. 135's modest status is the foil for exposing how definitions of Beethoven's late style are written to heroic plots, leading to a humane plea for us to relieve Beethoven of the responsibility of being great all the time; to let him – and the quartet – simply 'be'. One can agree with Knittel that Beethoven can be permitted to be only human. But as soon as the 'lateness' – and 'greatness' – of Op. 135 is theorized on non-heroic grounds, her argument unravels.[6]

In search of this 'other' Beethoven, one need only turn to the incalculable 'legacy' of Mozart, as Lewis Lockwood terms it. In Chapter 4 Lockwood brings out the Mozartian Beethoven's 'smoothness, subtlety, restraint, elegance, and lightness of touch' (p. 92), evinced in countless works based on specific Mozartian models: from the well-known (Op. 18 no. 5 being a parody of K. 464) to the more arcane (his juvenile Piano Quartet in C echoes the Violin Sonata K. 296). Yet Lockwood's typically seamless blend of sketch scholarship, biography, analysis and style history also demonstrates Beethoven's anxiety of influence. Beethoven annotates one of his sketches 'aus Mozart gestohlen' from a symphony in C minor, yet Mozart never wrote a symphony in that key. And as Lockwood tells it, Tomashek reports Beethoven saying 'I do not know them [Mozart's operas] and do not care to hear the music of others lest I forfeit some of my originality' (p. 84).

Alexander Ringer was one of the earliest critics to emphasize that Beethoven's Classical debts extended well beyond Mozart and Haydn, to include foreign-born yet London-based composers such as Clementi, Dussek, Cramer and Field. In Chapter 5 Ringer describes how the London Pianoforte School cultivated a domesticated art with 'short-range emotional effects' (p. 97), anticipating the Romantics by more than a generation. See, for instance, how Op. 110 shares many details of theme and texture with George Frederick Pinto's Sonata in E flat minor. It is salutary to be reminded that Beethoven's musical identity is distributed much further afield than Austro-Germany – for example, given the transmission of Scarlatti's textural devices via Clementi, one can even speak of a Spanish Beethoven.[7]

Going yet deeper into history, Chapter 6, Warren Kirkendale's classic essay on the Missa Solemnis, published originally in the *Musical Quarterly*'s bumper bicentenary issue on Beethoven, shows the composer immersed in ancient rhetorical figures and topoi (see also Lodes, 1998). The topos which opens the Kyrie is present in countless baroque masses, including Biber's Missa Sancti Henrici (1701), and Cavalli's Missa Concertata (1656). If the Kyrie exemplifies the rhetorical figure of *apatheia*, an absence of passion, then the Gloria's rising octave scale expresses *anabasis*. Kirkendale's speculations on musical emotion and

---

[6] For an appreciation of Op. 135 as both late and great, see Spitzer (2006, pp. 249–56).

[7] For the English influence on Beethoven, see also Küthen (2002). For an audacious, if overblown, attempt to establish Clementi and the British Enlightenment as the origin of the Austro-German classical style, see Gerhard (2002).

gesture in Beethoven have become much more central today, especially in the important writings of Robert Hatten (see especially Hatten, 1994, 2004). Yet Kirkendale's richly learned text reminds us that the insights formalized by music theory's semiotic turn have a long pedigree.

The second section of these readings turns to historical documents, including Beethoven's compositional sketches. Three of the most significant documents of Beethoven's life are his birth certificate, the 'Heiligenstadt Testament', and his letter to his 'Immortal Beloved'. Engaging with these records would seem to bring us as close as it is possible to get to Beethoven as a historical actor. Yet there is more to each of them than first meets the eye. Maynard Solomon, whose many writings on the composer have convincingly brought a psychoanalytic dimension to musical biography, shows, in Chapter 7, how creativity pertains even to the interpretation of 'hard' historical evidence. What Solomon terms Beethoven's 'birth-year delusion' (p. 160), his belief that he was born in 1772, irrespective of the baptismal certificate, may be an attempt by the composer to erase from memory a traumatic part of his childhood. Solomon scores a coup in a second text (Chapter 9) when he solves the riddle of the identity of Beethoven's 'Immortal Beloved'. Sifting a mass of evidence, he proves beyond reasonable doubt that the letter written on 6 July 1812 in Teplitz, addressed to a woman in Karlsbad, was to Antonie Brentano, and not, as long conjectured (by Thayer and others), to Therese Brunswik. As Solomon's celebrated biography (1977) emphasized in much greater detail, Beethoven manipulated such documents as part of his process of creative self-fashioning.

In Chapter 8 Hans-Werner Küthen solves another puzzle, pertaining to arguably the most famous document of Beethoven's life. The 'Heiligenstadt Testament' had always been thought to have been addressed to Beethoven's brothers, Karl and Johann. And yet, while Karl's name appears where it should be, it is spelled wrongly as 'Carl' and there are blank spaces where the name of Johann should go. Examining the layers of ink in the original manuscript, Küthen notices that Beethoven has changed the preposition 'An' for the possessive 'Für', and argues that the addressee is really Prince Carl (hence not 'Karl') Lichnowsky, the head of a masonic lodge. The document is thus aimed not at Beethoven's literal brothers, but at a masonic brotherhood. Küthen shows that this fits much better both with the high-flown language of the document (as in 'Gottheit du siehst herab auf mein inneres' and so on), and with other masonic connections in Beethoven's career.

Alan Tyson, a scholar who, unlike Solomon, *did* have a background in psychology (he was lecturer in Psychopathology at Oxford between 1968 and 1970, and editor of Freud's collected writings), was a British pioneer in Mozart and Beethoven source studies. He was also famed for his lapidary prose. The three volumes of *Beethoven Studies* that Tyson edited between 1973 and 1982 stand as probably the best series of collected essays dedicated to the composer, with virtually every contribution being a classic. 'Conversations with Beethoven' (Chapter 10) is a crystalline three-page essay in which Tyson reviews a new effort to transcribe and edit the Beethoven conversation books by a German team led by Karl-Heinz Köhler. This is by no means the most complete overview (see the snapshot by Nicholas Marston in Barry Cooper's *The Beethoven Compendium*, 1991), but it does vividly capture the key issues: how only Archduke Rudolph seems to have been able to make himself understood to the deaf composer; the many incomplete sentences, suggestive of Beethoven's impatience with the writers; the touching conversations with his nephew Karl, including the exceptional occasions when Beethoven's own remarks were recorded, perhaps because there was a servant present.

In the 1970s, the consensus was that Anton Schindler had destroyed the vast majority of the conversation books, and forged many of the entries in the surviving ones. Tyson's essay has been overtaken by attempts to 'de-criminalize' Schindler and thereby rehabilitate the apparent forgeries (see Albrecht, 2009). We may never be in a position to separate the real from the apocryphal, or, in Dahlhaus's terms, the 'historical' from the 'aesthetic'.

Chapter 11 by William Drabkin, as much a miracle of compression as Tyson's essay, is the first of three studies of Beethoven's compositional process. This is an area where documentation directly impinges upon creativity – both in the study of the composer's own processes, as well as in the often highly imaginative interpretive process of the scholar. The Beethoven sketch-study industry really took off in the 1980s. As well as grappling with the composer's untidy handwriting, codifying the spectrum of entry-types from pocket sketch to continuity draft and deciphering the chemistry of ink and the provenance of paper, it also opened up a range of exegetic questions. Should the transcription be objectively 'diplomatic' or interpreted in an analytical perspective, according to its capacity to shed light on the dynamic process of invention and the structure of the final work? If so, then Wimsatt's 'intentional fallacy' (Wimsatt and Beardsley, 1954) throws up two direct challenges to the would-be sketch scholar: why should the composer's intentions be relevant, especially his wrong turns, and why should the analyst need any more information than is afforded by the completed score? These questions also depend on whether it is ever practicable to untangle 'interpretation' from 'decipherment'.

Such questions, however, tend to be more worrying in principle than in practice. Drabkin, the author of a much-admired albeit unpublished study of the compositional origins of Op. 111 (1976), cuts through them with some deft and pragmatic observations on how Beethoven's annotations reveal his understanding of sonata form.[8] Drabkin shows that, in articulating his drafts with the terms *prima parte* and *seconda parte*, Beethoven subscribed to the eighteenth-century conception of sonata form as binary, rather than the Romantic ternary model. Philip Gossett's far longer study (Chapter 12) is devoted to the genesis of a single work, the first moment of Beethoven's 'Pastoral' Symphony, and focuses on two passages which the sketches indicate a particularly troubled Beethoven. Gossett reveals the composer experimenting with alternate endings to the retransition. Beethoven's challenge, he argues, was to avoid the development's processive harmonic motion leading to an overly emphatic tonic arrival. Beethoven's problem in composing the coda was ostensibly to make it correspond more closely with the development, confirming the analytical cliché that a coda is a second development. Robert Winter's essay on the Quartet in C sharp minor, Opus 131 (Chapter 13) is one of the most compelling testaments in the field to the power of sketch studies to shape analytical interpretation. Winter discovers that Beethoven had planned a fourth-movement Scherzo in F sharp minor, outlining material of what would become the finale. After cancelling this plan, Beethoven absorbs this F sharp minor inflection into the other movements, including the opening fugue's famous subdominant answer. The overall compositional process outlines a 'tug-of-war' between large-scale design and specific detail, driven by Beethoven's quest for balance. More generally, one can surmise from Winter's and Gossett's work that compositional vacillation preserves a trace in the formal ambiguity

---

[8] For an overview of how our understanding of Beethoven compositional process impacts on sonata theory, see Hepokoski and Darcy (2006, p. 119).

of the finished work. This notion of ambiguity is important in loosening the grip of overly synchronic analytical models. Despite the fearsome coherence of Beethoven's completed works, they remain structurally dynamic in a way which preserves the vitality of their genesis.

Part III of this collection takes us to music analysis, and Joseph Kerman, a seminal American Beethovenian, paying his compliments to the British father of Anglo-American music criticism Donald Francis Tovey. Kerman wrote copiously and influentially on Beethoven; his *The Beethoven* Quartets (1967) is still an unsurpassed overview of these works. In Chapter 14, he identifies Tovey as the most widely read music critic in the Anglophone world, and as the key influence on Charles Rosen, arguably the most important Anglo-American classical scholar of the late twentieth century. It is easy to trace the lineage from Tovey's posthumous *Beethoven* (1944) through Kerman's string-quartet book to the Beethoven section of Rosen's *The Classical Style* (1972). Rosen's rhapsodically free-wheeling essay is not easy to excerpt (and not necessary, since easily available); overflowing with brilliant insights and analytical observations, it is the most conspicuous absence from this collection. What Tovey imparted to Kerman and Rosen (and through them to us) was a mode of informal, non-technical music analysis closer to music criticism in spirit. Beethoven was central to Tovey's essentially dramatic notion of music, and a foreground analytical method oriented to the articulation of time. Tovey's concept of 'dramatic fitness' was mapped to the entire common-practice period by his synoptic method, which blended analysis with aesthetic judgement and disdained 'jelly-mould' formal abstractions as much as thematic motive-spotting. His fidelity, rather, to the 'naive listener', and to the ethos of 'wholeness', left its mark on Beethoven critics from Kerman to Lawrence Kramer. Strip away the postmodern accoutrements of Kramer's work and you will find the same responsibility to communicate to Beethoven's wider audience, in tension with an ambivalent attitude towards the professionalization of music analysis as a specialized discipline. Tovey's *Companion to Beethoven's Piano Sonatas* ([1931] 1999)[9] and Kerman's *Beethoven Quartets* (1967) are at the furthest remove from Schenker's monograph-length analysis of the 'Eroica' (1930).

As Kerman shrewdly notes, vis-à-vis Tovey's allergy towards thematic analysis, there is nothing 'naive listeners' like better than themes and thematic relationships, an approach epitomized in the once fashionable, now discredited, work of Rudolph Réti (1967).[10] Thematic analysis was rehabilitated through the different, somewhat surprising, route of musical semiotics. Robert Hatten's *Musical Meaning in Beethoven* (1994) represented a step-change in semiotics from Jean-Jacques Nattiez's somewhat sterile taxonomic methods to a discipline fully mediated through stylistic analysis, topic theory (after Leonard Ratner and Kofi Agawu) and Leonard Meyer's psychological theory of expectations. Hatten uses Beethoven's music as a platform to expound his original theory of 'markedness', essentially an impressively systematic hermeneutics based on correlations of generic, stylistic and strategic (work-specific) oppositions. In his opening essay on the slow movement of the 'Hammerklavier' Sonata (Chapter 15), Hatten demonstrates that his method can cut to the quick of Beethoven's expressive language, revealing topics of hymn and pastoral, qualities of yielding abnegation,

---

[9] Rosen emulated Tovey's example with his own *Beethoven's Piano Sonatas: A Short Companion* (2002). Both more selective and more opinionated than Tovey's, Rosen's book is similarly oriented to performance practice.

[10] For the tension between holism and 'concatenationism' in Tovey's thought (especially about Beethoven), see my 'Tovey's Evolutionary Metaphors' (2005).

and the 'vision of grace in the midst of tragic grief' (p. 310) within a trajectory from the tragic to the transcendent.

Thematicism of a more logical, dialectical, kind is theorized in Chapter 16, Janet Schmalfeldt's analysis of the first movement of the 'Tempest' Sonata, a highly seminal text that has spawned a small industry.[11] Schmalfeldt aims at a different kind of 'wholeness' from that idealized by Tovey: to bring together analytical branches which have become professionalized in opposite directions. Her tour de force seeks to unite Schenkerian reduction, the New *Formenlehre* of William Caplin and the Schoenbergian theories of developing variation and *Grundgestalt* omitted from Caplin's model. On top of that, Schmalfeldt, building on Dahlhaus's celebrated analysis (1992, pp. 13–15) of how the exposition retrospectively keeps on reinterpreting its starting points, draws in the Hegel-Adorno tradition of musical dialectic. In Chapter 17, Michael Spitzer, whom Schmalfeldt wryly notes 'emerges as Dahlhaus's clearest successor within the pantheon of Beethoven-Hegelians' (2011, p. 279), reverses the dialectical telescope into a negative position, after Adorno. For Spitzer, the 'significance of recapitulation' in the 'Waldstein' sonata is that it bears the seeds of Beethoven's late style. Locating moments of disunity lurking within Beethoven's heroic style, very much *contra* Burnham's reading, Spitzer supplies elusive analytical evidence for Adorno's critique of Beethoven's middle-period rhetoric. Edward Cone's rich analysis of Beethoven's late bagatelles (Chapter 18) remains evergreen partly because it is ideologically so impartial. It is also properly *analytical*, in contrast to the abstractly *theoretical* tendency of much contemporary American writing about music. Cone's close readings match the density, compression and intricacy of Beethoven's own arguments in these miniature works, and indeed helped put them back on the musicological map.[12] In recounting these experiments in harmonic imbalance and formal elision, Cone demonstrates that they are laboratories in which Beethoven rehearses compositional problems solved in his larger pieces. By questioning whether these published miniatures are fully realized 'works', Cone deconstructs the opposition between compositional sketch and finished score. As with the sketch scholars, Cone's enterprise educates us to think of Beethoven in a performative light as a thinker actively wrestling with compositional problems.

The last section, on Aesthetics and Hermeneutics, begins with reception of Adorno's reception of Beethoven. Adorno's 1934 essay 'Spätstil Beethovens', translated as part of the posthumous (uncompleted) monograph *Beethoven: The Philosophy of Music* (1998), is of epoch-making significance for Beethoven studies as a whole, and the reception of his late style in particular. Chapter 19 by Rose Subotnik is the first serious and substantial engagement with Adorno's theory of late Beethoven in the English language. Whereas many critics have been distracted by Adorno's mystical or poetic imagery, Subotnik unflinchingly grapples with his conceptual underpinnings, especially with his audacious, yet increasingly corroborated, claim that Beethoven's musical logic was identical with Hegelian philosophy. Although Subotnik is the first Anglophone writer to articulate the position, following Adorno, that Beethoven's late style has a world-historical importance transcending even that of his oeuvre as a whole, her writing has been somewhat overtaken by musically-informed philosophers who write more

---

[11] Bergé (2010) brings together outcomes from a conference inspired by Schmalfeldt's analysis.

[12] For two other outstanding analytical studies of Beethoven's bagatelles, see Schmalfeldt (1985) and Dunsby (1984).

transparently,[13] and philosophically-informed music theorists who ground Adorno's theories more analytically (see Spitzer, 2006). In short, it is not necessarily the case that obscure music must be written about in an obscure way.

Adorno's impact has been mitigated by two other developments which flow in opposite directions. On the one hand, in a reaction to the abstract quality of some philosophical approaches, there has been a historicist tendency to consider Beethoven in the context of contemporary cultural and political practices, as in the work of younger scholars such as Stephen Rumph (2004) and Nicholas Mathew (2012). On the other hand, scholars such as Evan Bonds (2014) and Daniel Chua (1999) have, in quite different ways, woven Adorno's critique into a much broader intellectual story of the fate of 'absolute music', with Beethoven sitting at the centre of the story. Rey Longyear's essay (Chapter 20), another selected from the bumper 1970 centenary crop, anticipates both these tendencies. Focusing on the second movement of the String Quartet Op. 59 no. 1, with its patchwork of contrasts and sudden juxtapositions, Longyear associates these effects with Schlegel's theory of Romantic Irony, a trope more commonly identified with Schumann (see Daverio, 1987). Whichever cultural authority is relevant to explicate such effects – Adorno, Schlegel or indeed earlier artists linked to Haydn's irony, such as Lawrence Sterne (see Bonds, 1991) – Longyear points up the wider hermeneutic problem of how we understand musical meaning. In Lawrence Kramer's terms, when we choose a 'hermeneutic window' through which to gaze at the musical work, this act of selection can be ill-founded or arbitrary.[14] Is Adorno just another 'window' or 'trope' out of many, or does one perspective (say, a critical-theoretical approach) have more authority than others?

Owen Jander's interpretation of the slow movement of Beethoven's Fourth Piano Concerto is refreshing in that he entirely side-steps all these critical debates, just as Cone's equally compelling analysis of the bagatelles floats above theoretical methodology. Against the venerable tradition of detecting specific plots within Beethoven's pieces,[15] in Chapter 21 Jander interrogates, and ultimately validates, the folk tradition of hearing the piano soloist as Orpheus taming the orchestral Furies. After tracing this tradition to explicit programmes by Liszt and A.B. Marx, Jander argues that Beethoven most likely derived his idiosyncratic version of the story from contemporary opera plots by Naumann and Kanne. Beethoven's plot is idiosyncratic not only because it is far more concise that Gluck's version, but also because he elides the Furies scene directly into the scene where Orpheus meets and then loses Euridice (the two scenes are widely separated in most versions of the story, including Gluck's). Jander claims that this was Beethoven's most concrete and elaborate venture into the realm of programme music and, faced by Jander's virtuosic fusion of hermeneutics, biography and even history of piano manufacture, this reader is persuaded to agree with

[13] See Max Paddison's crystalline, concise and authoritative account of Adorno's writings on Beethoven in his *Adorno's Aesthetics of Music* (1997, pp. 233–41).

[14] Many of Kramer's hermeneutic essays are based on pieces by Beethoven. His interpretive method is consistent: after identifying an unusual feature in the music, he attempts to normalize it in relation to 'cultural practice' in contemporary art and literature. To pick one example out of many, see his chapter on 'expressive doubling' in Beethoven's two-movement piano sonatas (including Op. 111) in his *Music as Cultural Practice* (1990, pp. 21–71). The problem is that many of these apparent anomalies disappear when they are contextualized in a better-informed knowledge of musical style and convention.

[15] Burnham's *Beethoven Hero* (1995) recounts this tradition.

him. Nevertheless, even if we accept that the Orpheus myth may have been in Beethoven's mind when he composed the concerto, does that limit, or even have any authority over, the potentially wide open scope of interpretation? This is a question similar to that as to whether music analysis should necessarily be guided by knowledge of compositional process.

In Chapter 22 Sanna Pederson confronts a related question, as to whether Beethoven's alleged 'masculinity' is inherent to his music or whether these values were inscribed into it by a historical tradition. The sensationalist splash Susan McClary (1987) made with her notorious reading of the Ninth Symphony ('the throttling murderous rage of a rapist') made it urgent for more circumspect critics such as Pederson to rescue Beethoven, and the aesthetic experience of absolute music as a whole, from polemical feminist attack. With the 'heroic' model of Burnham (the volume editor) in the background, Pederson mounts an elegant two-pronged argument based, respectively, on the public sphere of politics and on the musical narrative of struggle. In the first case, she contends that early nineteenth-century music such as Beethoven's was valorized and feminized because it was associated with the non-public sphere of domesticity. In the second case, Pederson argues that the notion of attaining selfhood (through struggle and overcoming) is not intrinsically gendered, even if it became so historically. Pederson's aim is neither to convict nor to exonerate Beethoven. Rather, she seeks to understand the reception of Beethoven's gender as part of this dialectic.

And so we come to the loudest voice in this collection. Richard Taruskin, at the time of writing probably the world's highest-profile musicologist, is not associated with Beethoven studies; however his polemical essay 'Resisting the Ninth' (Chapter 23) is an indispensable provocation to thinking through a huge range of issues relating to this problematic masterwork. If Dahlhaus's dialectical discourse was a match for Beethoven's, then Taruskin – the twists, turns and swerves of whose rhetoric suggest a Dahlhaus-through-a-(distorting)-looking-glass – is every bit as spiky and provocative as he claims Beethoven's work to be. But what does it mean to 'resist' the Ninth? Is Taruskin urging the reader to resist, or simply reporting such a resistance? His clever tactic is to gradually disclose the title's meaning as it travels through the text like a leitmotif. Beginning with a deceptively unreserved (as we shall see) eulogy for Roger Norrington's revisionist recording of the symphony on historical instruments, and following Beethoven's metronome marks, Taruskin seems to be endorsing the conductor's 'resistance' to the Romantic performance history epitomized by Furtwängler's canonic recording. The middle part of the essay shifts ground to consider how the nineteenth century 'resisted' the Ninth's sublimity, and Taruskin portrays the rise of music analysis, with its deflection of attention from meaning to structure, as a coping mechanism for a modern age unable to confront Beethoven's huge act of affirmation. And with an audacious turning of the tables, the final turn of Taruskin's argument associates Norrington's sober reading with this denial of the symphony's true spirit; Furtwängler's Wagnerian performance may not be historically accurate (like all bogus claims to authentic performance practice, says Taruskin), but it is more faithful to Beethoven's spirituality. It is Norrington's exquisitely literal-minded recording, then, that resists the Ninth, and Taruskin urges all of us, living as we do 'in the valley of the Ninth', to 'resist the resistance' (p. 508) and rise to Beethoven's challenge. Whether or not we agree with the claim that the modern age cannot make peace with Beethoven's work on its own terms, what is unsettling about Taruskin's tour de force is the recruitment of Beethoven's energy for dubious rhetorical ends – Taruskin's polemic against Austro-German music and 'formalist' music analysis *tout court*, including Schenker's. In this way, the essay's

rhetoric exemplifies *in nuce* how the 'Ode to Joy' has been hijacked repeatedly as an anthem for questionable political agendas, including, in the present instance, even New Musicology's battle against music theory (see Buch, 2003).

We conclude this collection with a fresher, younger voice. Holly Rogers has emerged as one of the leading film scholars of her generation, and Chapter 24 reproduces her very first published text, an essay on Bernard Rose's film *Immortal Beloved: The Untold Love-Story of Ludwig Van Beethoven* (1994). Drawing far less critical attention than Stanley Kubrick's better-received *A Clockwork Orange*,[16] Rose's film is outwardly a sensationalist piece of kitsch, propounding the ludicrous thesis, *pace* Solomon, that Beethoven's 'Immortal Beloved' was his sister-in-law, Joanna Beethoven.[17] Yet to mock Rose's mangling of history is to miss the point, Rogers argues. Instead, the plot is really a prop for a musical narration saturated by a pool of mythic associations constructed out of Beethoven's works. Rogers seizes upon a striking episode in the film where the aged, deaf composer, conducting the first performance of the Ninth, jumps back in time to the teenage Beethoven floating, arms spread, at night in a black pool of water surrounded by the reflections of a thousand stars. As the 'Ode to Joy' swells to its climax, Beethoven seems to be flying through the cosmos; the memory sequence collapsing time, space, even Beethoven's own identity (he becomes a star-like symbol of the universal), on the wings of the soaring music. Thus, because rather than in spite of the plot's absurdity, by releasing Beethoven's life from historical truth, Rose vindicates Dahlhaus's claim that the essence of Beethoven biography was fictive, indeed imaginary. And that, within certain bounds, has been the performative 'red thread' guiding the most *creative* tradition of Beethoven research in the last fifty years, from Dahlhaus to Taruskin, taking in music analysis and hermeneutics as much as philology and historiography.

So where does that leave Beethoven Studies today? Twenty-five years after Robert Winter's pioneering CD-ROM of Beethoven's Ninth,[18] Beethoven now enjoys a distributed digital presence in myriad websites, blogs, fan-sites, apps and MOOCs.[19] It is telling that José Bowen's TED talk 'Beethoven the Businessman' makes a provocative if tendentious analogy between the composer's scores and Bill Gates' software design.[20] Deutsche Gramophone's 2014 Ninth Symphony iPad app represents a quantum leap in technology, if not in actual scholarship, since Winter's CD-ROM. The trade-off between technological convenience and scholarly stasis may be a permanent feature of Beethoven research to come: there is no new information, just infinitely easier ways of accessing it. Is this the end-game?

Returning to Kaptainis's silly yet possibly true polemic, there does seem to be a crisis in current Beethoven scholarship. Beethoven doesn't fit the current musicological or music-theoretical scene for three reasons. First, his humanism has become not so much unfashionable as untenable and even unthinkable. Faced by the idealism of the odd-numbered symphonies,

---

[16] In its iconic promotion posters, Kubrick's film is billed as 'Being the adventures of a young man whose principal interests are rape, ultra-violence, and Beethoven' (see Höyng, 2011).

[17] Lewis Lockwood (1997) is quite correct to call Rose's film a 'travesty', but for the wrong reasons.

[18] Winter was the lead expert in a title developed in 1989 by the Voyager Company in Apple Computer's HyperCard.

[19] An example of a good MOOC is the Curtis Institute's 'Exploring Beethoven's Piano Sonatas'.

[20] Available at http://www.ted.com/talks/jose_bowen_beethoven_the_businessman (accessed 5 January 2014).

our only available attitude seems to be the hermeneutics of suspicion. To be sure, Rumph's and Mathews' uncovering of Beethoven's royalist or reactionary politics is fascinating. But it entirely bypasses the point, championed by Dahlhaus, Adorno and many other philosophers, that music can transcend politics, history and biography. Indeed, that transcending such contexts is part of music's ontological identity. This is not to say that music isn't simultaneously mediated through social and historical materials. Music does both, yet many of Beethoven's recent critics have been philosophically careless in contending that music must exclusively do either one or the other, in a kind of zero-sum game involving straw-man targets.

Beethoven's second mis-fit involves another misprision, in this case that his music is intrinsically teleological. Goal-directed musical process has become associated with Schenkerism, and just as interest in Schenker has been overtaken by the ascendancy of neo-Riemannian approaches, so Beethoven seems to have been eclipsed by Schubert, whose music is permeated with harmonic third-relations. Suzannah Clarke's recent Schubert monograph (2011) is fiercely polemical against Beethovenian 'teleology' (against a putative Schubertian lyrical ethos), albeit misguidedly so.[21] Third, Beethoven bucks a currently ascendant performance theory. Much study of the classical and romantic repertoire focuses not on properties of the music 'itself', but on how it is played; indeed, performance theory disputes the very notion that the music contains any inherent meaning separate from how it is variously played (see Leech-Wilkinson, 2012). Thus performance theory has more to say about composers of contingent diminutions and flexible tempo-patterns such as Chopin and Liszt than about a figure who remains a poster-boy for *Werktreue* and the philosophy of musical content.

Musicology has changed so much in the last twenty years that it would be rash to assert that the book of Beethoven is now closed. One might have said the same of Schubert in the 1990s. I can imagine an SMT conference in 2027 replete with Beethoven presentations, and not just because of the bicentenary. It is possible that the surging Beethoven market in China and the Far East will challenge the beguiling new myth that Beethoven enshrines, and thus only speaks to, Western values and race. The huge receptivity to Beethoven across the planet recuperates the Enlightenment notion that great art transcends culture. Beethoven studies in 2027 will grapple with global and demographic issues well below our present horizon.

References

Adorno, Theodor W. (1998), *Beethoven: The Philosophy of Music*, trans. Edmund Jephcott, ed. Rolf Tiedemann, Oxford: Polity Press.

Albrecht, Theodore (2009), 'Anton Schindler as Destroyer and Forger of Beethoven's Conversation Books: A Case for Decriminalization', in Zdravko Blažeković and Barbara Dobbs Mackenzie (eds), *Music's Intellectual History*, New York: Répertoire International de la Littérature Musicale, pp. 169–81.

Bergé, Pieter (ed.) (2010), *Beethoven's* Tempest *Sonata: Perspectives of Analysis and Performance*, Leuven: Peeters.

Bonds, Mark Evan (1991), 'Haydn, Lawrence Sterne, and the Origins of Musical Irony', *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, **44**, 1, pp. 57–91.

Bonds, Mark Evan (2014), *Absolute Music: The History of an Idea*, New York: Oxford University Press.

[21] For my critique of Clarke's book, see Spitzer (2013).

Buch, Esteban (2003), *Beethoven's Ninth: A Political History*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Burnham, Scott (1995), *Beethoven Hero*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Chua, Daniel (1999), *Absolute Music and the Construction of Meaning*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Clarke, Suzannah (2011), *Analyzing Schubert*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Cook, Nicholas (2003), 'The Other Beethoven: Heroism, the Canon, and the Works of 1813–14', *19th-Century Music*, **27**, 1, pp. 3–24.

Cooper, Barry (2008), *Beethoven*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Dahlhaus, Carl (1991), *Ludwig van Beethoven: Approaches to his Music*, trans. Mary Whittall, Oxford: Clarendon.

Dahlhaus, Carl (1992), *Nineteenth-Century Music*, Berkeley: University of California Press.

Daverio, John (1987), 'Schumann's "Im Legendenton" and Friedrich Schlegel's *Arabeske*', *19th-Century Music*, **11**, 2, pp. 150–63.

Drabkin, William (1976), 'The Sketches for Beethoven's Piano Sonata in C minor, Opus 111', 2 vols, PhD dissertation, Princeton University.

Dunsby, Jonathan (1984), 'A Bagatelle on Beethoven's WoO 60', *Music Analysis*, **3**, 1, pp. 57–68.

Eggebrecht, Hans Heinrich (1972), *Zur Geschichte der Beethoven-Rezeption: Beethoven 1970*, Mainz: Verlag der Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur.

Gadamer, Hans-Georg (2004), *Truth and Method*, London: Continuum.

Gerhard, Anselm (2002), *London und der Klassizismus in der Musik*, Stuttgart: Metzler Verlag.

Hatten, Robert (1994), *Musical Meaning in Beethoven: Markedness, Correlation, and Interpretation*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Hatten, Robert (2004), *Interpreting Musical Gestures, Topics, and Tropes: Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Hepokoski, James and Darcy, Warren (2006), *Elements of Sonata Theory: Norms, Types, and Deformations in the Late-Eighteenth-Century Sonata*, New York: Oxford University Press.

Höyng, Peter (2011), 'Ambiguities of Violence in Beethoven's Ninth through the Eyes of Stanley Kubrick's *A Clockwork Orange*', *German Quarterly*, **84**, 2, pp. 159–76.

Jones, David Wyn (1998), *The Life of Beethoven*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Kerman, Joseph (1967), *The Beethoven Quartets*, London: Oxford University Press.

Kinderman, William (1995), *Beethoven*, New York: Oxford University Press.

Kramer, Lawrence (1990), *Music as Cultural Practice*, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Krims, Adam (2000), *Rap Music and the Poetics of Identity*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Küthen, Hans-Werner (2002), '"Szene am Bach" oder Der Einfluss durch die Hintertür: Die Bach-Rezeption der anderen als Impuls für Beethoven', in Hans-Werner Küthen (ed.), *Beethoven und die Rezeption der Alten Musik*, Bonn: Verlag Beethoven-Haus, pp. 243–80.

Leech-Wilkinson, Daniel (2012), 'Compositions, Scores, Performances, Meanings', *Music Theory Online*, **18**, 1 (April), pp. 1–17.

Lockwood, Lewis (1997), 'Film Biography as Travesty: *Immortal Beloved* and Beethoven', *Musical Quarterly*, **81**, 2, pp. 190–98.

Lockwood, Lewis (2003), *Beethoven: The Music and the Life*, New York: Norton.

Lodes, Birgit (1998), '"When I try, now and then, to give musical form to my turbulent Feelings": The Human and the Divine in the Gloria of Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis*', *Beethoven Forum*, **6**, pp. 143–79.

McClary, Susan (1987), 'Getting Down off the Beanstalk: The Presence of a Woman's Voice in Janik Vandervelde's *Genesis II*', *Minnesota Composer's Forum Newsletter*, February, unpaginated.

Marston, Nicholas (1991), 'The Conversation Books', in Barry Cooper (ed.), *The Beethoven Compendium: A Guide to Beethoven's Life and Music*, London: Thames & Hudson, pp. 164–67.

Marston, Nicholas (2004), 'Whose Beethoven?', *Beethoven Forum*, **11**, 2, pp. 209–24.
Mathew, Nicholas (2012), *Political Beethoven*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Paddison, Max (1997), *Adorno's Aesthetics of Music*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Réti, Rudolph (1967), *Thematic Patterns in Sonatas in Beethoven*, London: Faber and Faber.
Rosen, Charles (1972), 'Beethoven', in *The Classical Style*, London: Faber and Faber, pp. 379–512.
Rosen, Charles (2002), *Beethoven's Piano Sonatas: A Short Companion*, New Haven: Yale University Press.
Rumph, Stephen (2004), *Beethoven after Napoleon: Political Romanticism in the Late Works*, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.
Schenker, Heinrich (1930), 'Beethovens Dritte Sinfonie, in ihrem wahren Inhalt zum erstenmal dargestellt', *Das Meisterwerk in der Musik: Ein Jahrbuch*, vol. 3, Munich: Drei Masken Verlag, pp. 29–101. Reprinted in *The Masterwork in Music: Volume 3*, ed. William Drabkin, trans. Ian Bent, Alfred Clayton and Derrick Puffitt, New York: Dover, 2014.
Schmalfeldt, Janet (1985), 'On the Relation of Analysis to Performance: Beethoven's "Bagatelles" Op. 126, Nos. 2 and 5', *Journal of Music Theory*, **29**, 1, pp. 1–31.
Schmalfeldt, Janet (2011), *In the Process of Becoming: Analytical and Philosophical Perspectives on Form in Early Nineteenth-Century Music*, New York: Oxford University Press.
Solomon, Maynard (1977), *Beethoven*, New York: Schirmer.
Spitzer, Michael (2005), 'Tovey's Evolutionary Metaphors', *Music Analysis*, **24**, iii, pp. 437–69.
Spitzer, Michael (2006), *Music as Philosophy: Adorno and Beethoven's Late Style*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
Spitzer, Michael (2013), 'Of Telescopes and Lenses, Blindness and Insight', *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, **138**, 2, pp. 415–29.
Thayer, Alexander Wheelock (1921), *The Life of Ludwig van Beethoven*, 3 vols, New York: Beethoven Association.
Tovey, Donald Francis (1944), *Beethoven*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Tovey, Donald Francis ([1931] 1999), *A Companion to Beethoven's Piano Sonatas*, London: ABRSM.
Tyson, Alan (ed.) (1973), *Beethoven Studies*, vol. 1, New York: Norton.
Tyson, Alan (ed.) (1977), *Beethoven Studies*, vol. 2, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Tyson, Alan (ed.) (1982), *Beethoven Studies*, vol. 3, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Wimsatt, W.K. Jr., and Beardsley, Monroe C. (1954), *The Verbal Icon: Studies in the Meaning of Poetry*, Lexington: University of Kentucky Press..

Part I
History and Historiography

Taylor & Francis
Taylor & Francis Group
http://taylorandfrancis.com

[1]

The Biographical Method

Carl Dahlhaus

The image of Beethoven that survives in the mind of posterity is a diffuse compilation of impressions emanating from the music and biographical fragments that consist to a great extent of legends and anecdotes. Indeed, the relationship between the works and the life appears all the closer if we place our faith in the revelatory power of anecdotes in which the truth is more symbolic than empirical, instead of relying on documentary testimony that stands up to historical criticism. There is very little documentary evidence for the celebrated scene in Teplitz, in which Beethoven assumes the role of the truculent republican, but any attempt to expunge it from the mind of the concert-going public would be wasted, for it is nothing less than the image that complements the musical gesture of the Fifth Symphony. It persists, in spite of the critical battering it has received, because it testifies to an aesthetic, if not historical, truth.

But the possibility of tangibly linking the work and the life dwindles in direct proportion to the extent to which the impressions based on legend and anecdote are corrected by historical criticism. While the significance of an anecdote lies in the—sometimes deceptive—light it throws on the inner connection between life and work, as a general rule the only role for a confirmed historical fact is to serve as one more component in a biographical narrative that runs along beside the interpretation of the work without making any important intervention in it. Scholarly exactitude, in biography on the one hand and analysis of the music on the other, leads to an almost insuperable separation of the two fields. It is a commonplace, on the face of it, that a composer's biography needs to be written in order to shed light on his work, but it is ceasing to be self-evident.

So it is not by mere chance that the craft of scholarly biography has long been neglected—for so long, in fact, that it is difficult to bring to mind the problems to which it was thought to be the solution, in the days when it was regarded as the most demanding form of writing about the creative arts.

2 LIFE AND WORK

Few would question that a biography as such can be interesting and worth writing, regardless of whether the subject is a composer, a politician, or an explorer, and even of whether the life in question is a remarkable one or not, but that consideration is only peripheral to the problem of biographical method in the scholarly study of the arts and artists. The problem does not touch books written out of a simple interest in a poet or a composer as a person, without any ambition to illuminate the works. Even then, however, it is rare for the author not to indulge in the practice of treating literary or musical works as biographical documents, inferring biographical factors from the works, and, vice versa, discovering in the works reflections of biographical elements that can be confirmed from documentary testimony. If a biographer interprets a work of art as a document—that is, draws biographical conclusions from the ideas and expressive traits that he thinks he finds in it—then he is likely, willy-nilly, to reverse the process and use biographical evidence to 'prove' the ideas and expressive traits in the works: that is, to read into them a programme drawn from the composer's biography.

From the truism that a work of art is a document about a composer, in so far as it tells something about his power of imagination, the biographer proceeds to the questionable hypothesis that the expressive elements contained in it are reflections of the life. And the biography that is written as a result of this is made up of an 'exterior' reconstructed from documents, and an 'interior' discovered in the works.

Undeniably, biographical investigation can be useful and even indispensable to the interpretation of works of art. Some details may simply be incomprehensible without reference to biographical information; some aspects of the genesis of a work frequently turn out to be aesthetically part of the subject-matter of the work itself, and therefore need to be known about. And while the principle that comprehension of a work must be from within has become a commonplace of art history, as a matter of historical fact it has very rarely been postulated that the internal functional coherence of a work must be relentlessly consistent and complete, and still more rarely has the postulate been fulfilled. So there is no justification for bringing a charge of aesthetic dereliction in those cases where it proves impossible to avoid the recourse to biography, or the history of the work's genesis, even if the principle of immanence suffers. The idea of a hermetically insulated, entirely self-referential existence for a work is the basis of the arguments against biographical procedures, but it is only a rule with a limited historical authority, not an

immutable natural law of art: the relative legitimacy or illegitimacy of the biographical method depends partly on the nearness or remoteness of a work from classicist aesthetics. Epochs and genres of an 'objective' bent, such as classicism and drama in closed forms, are less accessible to biographical interpretation than those that can be called 'subjective', such as romanticism, and the lyric poetry of personal experience.

The indisputable usefulness that biography can have for casting light on details—such as the title and the dedication of Beethoven's Piano Sonata, Op. 81*a*, 'Les Adieux'—is, however, purely a peripheral factor, and bears only indirectly on the central premisses of a style of biography that can claim to be a scholarly discipline. It is a question of relating the totality of an oeuvre to the totality of a life, not their details alone. The ambitious, monumental style of biography practised in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries—from Spitta's *Bach* to Abert's *Mozart*—was based on no less a principle than that a musical oeuvre had to be interpreted as a 'life's work' if it was to be understood from within: as a work, that is, that expressed the substance of the life out of which it had proceeded.

It is uncertain whether it is possible to speak of the totality of an oeuvre at all without relating it to that of a life. It is difficult to make plausible the idea that an oeuvre exists in itself, as a 'whole', independently of its author. As a rule it is the 'minor' works whose position in the total oeuvre is hard to establish without recourse to biography: Beethoven's dances and song arrangements, as well as a large number of the piano variations, drop out of the oeuvre in the emphatic sense of the word, for the conception of that oeuvre is distilled from the symphonies, the string quartets, and the sonatas.

But if the minor works make recourse to biography necessary, and specifically to its empirically understood socio-historical aspects, the acknowledgement of a canon of major works presents the risk of succumbing to the mythologizing style of biography. If we apostrophize the Third, Fifth, Seventh, and Ninth Symphonies as the 'real' or 'essential' expressions of Beethoven's symphonic style, then—without necessarily asserting that the 'Pastoral' Symphony is inferior to the Fifth—we adumbrate a 'myth' of Beethoven as the representative of a 'heroic' style.

The 'life's work' school of biography had an empirical enthusiasm for comprehensiveness that was inspired aesthetically, by the ambition to elucidate and illuminate the work. While on the one hand there was in it an element of Dilthey's '*Lebensphilosophie*' (the

hypothesis that a work of art is an expression of an element in the artist's life),[1] on the other hand there is no mistaking its connection with historicism—with the proposition that art is 'historical through and through'. As a sub-species of historical method, biographical method proceeds from the premiss that comprehension from within must always be genetic comprehension: in other words, if we are really to grasp the nature of a thing, we must discover the origins from which it issued. The genetic process sets about the task of uncovering the meaning of a text—whether musical or literary—by re-creating the whole process of the genesis of that text. The conceptual premiss behind it is Aristotle's distinction between *ergon* and *energeia*: interpretation of a work, as Dilthey understands it, consists in translating the *ergon*—the completed object—back into the *energeia* that brought it forth. Recognition—including aesthetic recognition—of the essence of the work is sought in the reconstruction of its genesis, and the genesis is subjected to psychological-cum-biographical interpretation.

There is an obvious objection, namely that a distinction must be made between the genesis of a work, which is amenable to biography, and its aesthetic quality, which is amenable to analysis. The conceptual coherence, the 'objectified spirit' of the work, with which analysis is concerned, does not coincide with the process of the work's genesis. It is the matter of phenomenological, rather than psychological, investigation. And the difference between the conceptual coherence of a work of art and its genesis gains in cogency if it is recognized as being reminiscent of the distinction between the context in which scholarly propositions are discovered, and the context in which they are proved. To the extent that the latter is a construction, so too is aesthetic coherence. Admittedly, for the coherence of a work of art to be testable, it can sustain only so much possible falsification by empirical data—the structural analogy is not perfect. The criterion of the validity of an interpretation consists rather in the degree of consistency that it is able to demonstrate between the elements of a musical work.

Distinguishing between the biographical circumstances of a work's genesis and its aesthetic quality diminishes the pre-eminence of the genetic method, but does not destroy it altogether. It is 'saved' by turning from the biographical subject (the composer as an individual) and focusing on an aesthetic 'subject', discovered in the work itself. The processual element is decisive in the genetic approach, which interprets a musical work as a formal process, 'behind' which an

[1] See C. Dahlhaus, *Grundlagen der Musikgeschichte* (Cologne, 1977), 132 f.; *Foundations of Music History*, trans. J. B. Robinson (Cambridge, 1983), 80 f.

active expressive subject is perceived to stand. Imagined as one who sustains the musical process, this 'subject' forms part of the aesthetic experience, not an extraneous addition to it; it takes the place of the empirical individual—the composer—who can be reconstructed from the biographical documents, and it exists in this one work, this one aesthetic object, and nowhere else.

Some of the objections raised against the psychological-cum-biographical method are so trivial that they do not impinge on the process they are intended to destroy. Accusing biography of the psychological naïvety of interpreting musical expressivity merely as a portrayal of the composer's emotions is a polemical feint. Hardly ever has a biographer worth his salt failed to recognize that a work of art is as likely to serve to mask some biographical element as to be its direct expression, or that it may represent the dream with which the artist held reality at bay, rather than the reality as he experienced it.

It is true that the possibility of alternating between the interpretation of art as 'direct portrayal' and as 'shielding dream' hinders every attempt to disprove psychological-cum-biographical explanations. To speak sometimes of the aesthetic 'reflection' of reality, and sometimes of the delineation of an aesthetic 'alternative world', is comparable, as methodology, to 'immunization strategy'. But immunization against the possibility of refutation effectively disallows an interpretation's claims to 'scholarship' or 'scientific method'—according, at least, to the criteria of Karl Popper.[2]

Moreover, there scarcely seems to be any alternative theoretical foundation for the 'reflection' of a life in musical works other than Georg Lukács's theory of a 'mimesis of mimesis'.[3] According to that, the musical work is an expression of feelings that are for their part a mode of appropriating the substance of events in a given milieu. Admittedly, Lukács underestimates the contribution made by musical modes of thought, the philosophical implications of which establish another kind of contemporaneity than the one illustrated in the fact that Beethoven's 'heroic' works are a manifestation of the spirit of the age of revolution that continued into the Napoleonic age.

The charge of psychological naïvety has been levelled against the entire genre of biography on the strength of a few unsuccessful examples, but it is less powerful as an argument against the biographical-cum-psychological method than the observation that we only start to look for the psychological motivation for a text when direct access to its content of fact and truth is barred—that is, when a passage in the text contradicts the context, the author's supposed

[2] *Logik der Forschung* (Tübingen, [2]1966); *The Logic of Scientific Discovery* (London, [3]1972).
[3] A. Riethmüller, *Die Musik als Abbild der Realität* (Wiesbaden, 1976), 84 ff.

intention, or the reader's unquestioned convictions. The reception of music, too, is affected, though to a somewhat slighter degree, by the everyday experience that it is only when the logic of an argument ceases to be plausible that one feels compelled to search for the psychological reasons why an author expresses himself in an unexpected fashion. August Halm could not understand the reason for the recitative in Beethoven's D minor Sonata, Op. 31 No. 2, and the difficulty made him hesitate in his polemic against Paul Bekker's psychological and programmatic interpretation, lose faith for a moment in his fundamental aesthetic convictions, and experience the temptation to substitute psychology for phenomenology.[4] In other words, psychology is something to fall back on when aesthetic communication fails or is interrupted.

The unexpected—the departure from the customary and the immediately obvious—is, however, precisely an element in the aesthetic substance of techniques that make emphatic aesthetic claims, at any rate in Europe since the Enlightenment and especially in the nineteenth century. To the extent that, as the Russian formalists claim, the function of artistic media is to break down conventions, and 'alienate' and disturb 'automatized perceptions', any irritation in the direct comprehension of a text—any factor, that is, that provokes a search for psychological motives—is adumbrated in the principles of the artistic technique: that is, its motives are in the text and not in the person of the author.

The insertion of a recitative in the recapitulation of the first movement of the D minor Sonata, Op. 31 No. 2, bewildered Halm, and almost drove him to concede something to the 'aesthetics of content', but a formal explanation of the interpolation is perfectly possible if it is accepted that the rupturing of conventions is a structural principle that need not necessarily be motivated by non-musical considerations. The first subject (bar 21) is a variant of the arpeggiated triad, seemingly an introductory flourish, with which the sonata begins (bar 1). The development undergone by the first subject leads, rather uncommonly, to its dissolution: the development (bar 99) reproduces the exposition (bar 21) motivically, but with harmonic changes involving a chromatic sequence; in the recapitulation (bar 159) the chromatic sequence is all that remains of the first subject—the melodic motive has vanished. Logical as the formal process thus appears to be, it is unconventional. But as the first subject dissolves, its precursor, the arpeggiated triad, asserts itself as a theme in its own right; and the problematic recitative (bar 143), which appears to be an

[4] A. Halm. *Von zwei Kulturen der Musik* (Stuttgart, [3]1947), 65.

intruder in the sonata-form structure, is nothing other than an explicit formulation or explication of the fact that the arpeggiated triad represents the first subject in its primary form, and is capable of being 'expressive' in itself, and not merely in the form eventually taken by the 'real' first subject (bar 21). A formal explanation of the recitative does not exclude psychological-cum-biographical exegesis, but it means that it is no longer the only recourse.

One of the justifications for the existence of a biographical literature that addresses itself to the general listening public and aspires to the dissemination of wider musical understanding undoubtedly lies in the impression of foreignness and unapproachability that emanates from esoteric musical works, whether of the present day or of the past. Because the music itself, the coherent organization of pitches, does not yield direct enlightenment, people turn to the composer's biography for information, in the belief that the work contains his 'confession'. Hermeneutical efforts—including the attempt to gain aesthetic access by way of the biographical by-road—begin, as a rule, when what a text expresses is not self-explanatory. (Historians and theorists, unlike the lay public, frequently adopt the sceptical principle that on first acquaintance misunderstanding is what is to be expected, rather than insight, and therefore that even where the layman believes he has grasped something without difficulty there is good reason to suspect that the all too easy assimilation is itself a distortion of meaning.)

Biography transmits a feeling of personal closeness to a creative artist, and that in turn makes an initially recalcitrant work seem more accessible; but the feeling is deceptive. For history as an academic discipline that relies on documented evidence seldom redeems the promise made—explicitly or tacitly—by history as popular literature. A style of writing history that attempts to depict a segment of the past 'as it really was' does not bring people or their works 'closer', as popular literature claims for biography, but quite the reverse: it pushes them further away. In broad terms, the more comprehensive the knowledge of history that one possesses, and the more obstinately one pursues the search for the premisses on which the past rested when it was still the present, the harder to understand, and the more foreign it becomes. So the lost immediacy of aesthetic response to music of the past that seems remote is not to be recovered by means of biographical immediacy, for that proves an illusion as soon as one passes from the naïve re-imagination of the past to the writing of authentic history.

A second premiss of biographical interest lies in the inescapable impression that at the heart of musical works—those of the late

eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries, at all events—there is a 'subject who speaks', someone analogous to the 'narrator' of a novel or the 'lyrical first person' of a poem. Indeed, purist theories of literature regard a narrator or a lyrical first person as a necessary element in the 'objective' aesthetic substance. The word 'objective' is used in the sense of pertaining to the 'object'—colloquially the 'subject'—of the theorist's study. Yet 'he' is an element in the work itself only in so far as 'he' does *not* coincide with the empirical individual who is the creative artist, the object of biographical interest. That it is wrong to identify the aesthetic 'subject who speaks' in a piece of music, whose expression the musical process purports to be, with the composer, the empirical person amenable to reconstruction from the documentary evidence, has been a commonplace of aesthetic theory for several decades, unquestioned even by those who go directly against it in biographical practice.

On the other hand, it is far from supererogatory to trace the tortuous relationships that exist between the aesthetic 'subject who speaks' in musical works, and the empirical individual who is their author. Necessary as the distinction is, it should not be forced further than it will go. The bald assertion that a biography concerns itself with the empirical individual, and nothing else, falls short of the truth, at all events. At the same time, every attempt to abstract an 'inner biography' from the works runs the risk of the kind of speculation that takes off into the realm of fiction: instead of sticking to the empirical individual who can be reconstructed from the documentary evidence, the biographer will argue that this is the way to do justice to the 'intelligible' person who 'speaks' in the work.

The biographical novel, using intuition to make up for the deficiencies of fact, is a hybrid genre, despised by novelists as much as by scholarly biographers. But in order to understand the success that is achieved time and again by this method of constructing a life-story out of the study of an oeuvre, it is necessary to go beyond the mere demonstration of one's contempt for the general public, and understand that the biographical novel represents the distortion of an ambition that, in itself, deserves to be taken seriously. However wide of the mark the solution it provides may be, it addresses a genuine problem.

The problematic genre rests on the foundation of a depressing experience known to every biographer. This is the recognition that the image of, say, Beethoven that can be pieced together from authentic testimonies that stand up to methodical evaluation of the sources does not suffice even to half-explain the genesis of the oeuvre

that has come down to us with Beethoven's name on it. The pale outline of an empirical individual that steps forward from the documents and the 'intelligible speaking subject' that stands 'behind' the musical oeuvre seem to be radically different beings. And as soon as a biographer moves on from the depiction of a man whose life-story and character are outlined in fragmentary testimonies to that of the composer who stands revealed to the listening public as the creator of a monumental oeuvre, he is forced to construct intuitively instead of confining himself to what is transmitted in the attested evidence. It seems, however deceptively, as if the 'essence' will be revealed only in the work of fiction that the scholarly biographer must deny himself.

The reconstruction of a composer from his oeuvre is a fundamentally different business from that of reconstructing John Citizen's life from an archive of documents. Biography that relies on the documentary evidence is subject to laws concerning the evaluation of sources, and those laws are very different from the procedures of interpreting an oeuvre. It is the latter, however, that must govern the reconstruction of an 'inner biography' as soon as it attempts to escape sheer speculation, in which intuitions of the substance and meaning of works transform themselves into fantasies about biographical elements. But aesthetic criticism cannot be regulated as strictly as the historical variety. Instead, in the biography of a composer, the procedure whereby one hopes to reconstruct the 'intelligible speaking subject' is dependent to no small degree on the aesthetic theory the biographer favours. An adherent of the 'aesthetics of content' who regards the works of a composer as 'fragments of a great confession' necessarily inclines towards a different kind of biography from a formalist, whose conception of the genesis of works of art follows the pattern set out in Edgar Allan Poe's *Principles of Criticism*. A formalist scarcely ever comes into conflict with biographical documents, because he starts from the premiss that works of art are generated in a sphere that is psychologically separate from everyday existence. An adherent of the aesthetics of content, on the other hand, is constantly obliged to make biographical interpolations for which there is little support in the purely musical evidence. Yet that should not be allowed to conceal the fact that the former's image of the composer rests every bit as firmly on a construction as the latter's. For one thing, it is impossible as a rule to establish the extent to which elements of real life intrude into the imagination of musical expressive characters. For another thing, the conflict between formalism and the aesthetics of

content is primarily a question of principles, not facts, and specifically whether a biographical factor that may impinge on a composer's musical intuition should or should not be regarded aesthetically as 'essential'.

[2]

BEETHOVEN'S HERO

Scott Burnham

WE BEGIN BY retelling a story that has been told for almost two hundred years: the story many generations of listeners have heard in the first movement of the *Eroica* Symphony. Like a great myth, this story is told in numberless ways, fashioned anew by each generation. Different agents move through its course to similarly appointed ends: we hear of the destiny and self-realization of real heroes, mythical heroes, or even humankind itself. These sorts of programs are still generated today, though much less frequently, and even at the height of the formalist disdain of such interpretations, earlier this century, the old story is preserved—if only in a translated version with new metaphors, telling of the animadversions of a process or a structure, or the development of a theme and its motives. For the trajectory of these stories is always the same, or nearly so: something (someone) not fully formed but full of potential ventures out into complexity and ramification (adversity), reaches a ne plus ultra (a crisis), and then returns renewed and completed (triumphant). The use (whether overt or covert) of such an anthropomorphic scenario is a sign that the stakes are high, the game played close to home.

To expedite the telling of this story, I shall concentrate on those passages that have attracted the most commentary and that are heard as crux points, hinges, turning points, ends, and beginnings. These include the first forty-five bars, the new theme in the development and its climactic exordium, the horn call, and the coda. The interpretive readings of several different generations of critics and analysts—ranging from A. B. Marx and Aléxandre Oulibicheff through Heinrich Schenker and Arnold Schering to Peter Schleuning and Philip G. Downs—will combine to form a composite narrative.[1] Emphasis throughout will be on the similar ways in which all these commentators react to the musical events of the movement, however dissimilar their language and explicit agenda.

I am purposefully limiting the discussion to the first movement. Wilhelm von Lenz once observed that this movement is closed within itself, "like an overture raised to the power of a symphony."[2] Many of the other writers I have looked at implicitly subscribe to the same view, for most of their interpretive energy is pledged to the first movement, with the remaining movements receiving progressively less and

4

less coverage. Critics attempting to develop a programmatic interpretation that satisfactorily links all four movements of the *Eroica* face a number of stiff challenges, not the least of which is the presence of two movements after the hero's funeral. If Berlioz hit upon the happy expedient of hearing the Scherzo as a musical transcription of ancient Greek funeral games, there still remained no comfortable way to incorporate the finale. Most critics allow the finale to pick up a very different narrative strand from that projected by the first three movements—here, Beethoven's use of the theme from his ballet *The Creatures of Prometheus* provides a convenient and irresistible extramusical clue. The recent Prometheus-based interpretation of the *Eroica* by Peter Schleuning attempts to make a virtue of this situation, by claiming that the finale is the programmatic goal of the entire symphony, which allegedly follows the Prometheus story of Beethoven's earlier ballet through all four movements. Wagner, as we saw in the introduction, preceded Schleuning in the view that the finale crowns one long process; for him, the finale works to unite the facets of Mankind projected by the earlier movements into a heroically complete man. I would argue that the urge to create an embracing narrative for the entire symphony arises at least partially from the ease with which such programs are generated for works like the Fifth and Ninth Symphonies, and from the perception that such "through-composed" multimovement designs represent a higher form of the symphony.[3]

But it is not merely to avoid the interpretive challenges of the subsequent movements that I propose to limit this discussion to the first movement. As I stated in the introduction, it is primarily this movement that has been responsible for the stature of the *Eroica,* for its role as a turning point of music history. The unexampled drama of this movement singlehandedly altered the fate of sonata form, the defining form of the classical style, not to mention that of the symphony. And the homogeneity of its reception, the nearly universal feeling that it is most meaningfully heard as a powerfully stirring version of that premier story of Western mythology, the hero's journey, fairly demands that it be placed at the outset of our own journey.

I

The first forty-five bars of the *Eroica* Symphony comprise one of the most raked-over pieces of musical property in the Western hemisphere. No one denies the overtly heroic effect of the two opening blasts, and it is almost comic to see how programmatic interpreters inevitably rush off with the impetus of these two chords only to stum-

ble a few bars later when they realize that something distressingly less than expeditious heroism is implied by the much-discussed C♯ in bar 7. The tendency for critical discourse to slow down when passing this spot mirrors the inability of the piece itself to get started in a convincing fashion. What kind of a hero would pause so portentously at the very outset of his heroic exploits?

A. B. Marx and Aléxandre Oulibicheff offer a neat solution to this dilemma in their Napoleon-oriented programs, both dating from the 1850s: elements that impede the forward progress of the music or undermine its tonality are seen as external to the hero Napoleon and do not signify any weakness or vacillation on the part of the great general.[4] Napoleon himself is stuck in forward gear, and the concept of the heroic implied in these interpretations is that of a singularly obsessed hero fighting against a recalcitrant external world.[5] For both Marx and Oulibicheff, the music of the first forty-five bars represents morning on the battlefield, thereby establishing a setting for the ensuing battle. Marx, for example, notes that the theme (which he explicitly associates with Napoleon) first sounds in a lower voice and is raised in three successive stages to a full orchestral tutti statement. His program acknowledges this musical process by casting the entire section as a conflation of the rising of the sun on the battlefield with the rising of Napoleon onto his battle steed. Moments of tonal vacillation, such as the C♯ at bar 7 or, in the next statement, the sequential move to F minor, are associated with shadows and mists—things that hide the light of the sun (and of the rising hero).[6] These moments are always followed by an even more decisive statement of the theme, and a pattern of statement–liquidation–stronger statement is established. Not only does the hero persist; he grows stronger.

This pattern, which is noted in programmatic terms by both Marx and Oulibicheff, can help us identify what is surely one of the most striking features of this opening section: it functions simultaneously as an introduction (setting) and as an exposition of the first theme. That is why the theme cannot appear in full tutti splendor (Napoleon cannot appear in the saddle) until after the big dominant arrival and prolongation in bars 23–36. The dual image of sunrise on the battlefield and the hero preparing to present himself to his troops captures an important aspect of the musical process.

But that is not all. There is also a sense of musical development in these first bars. Both Marx and Oulibicheff note that the ambiguity provided by the C♯ in the bass and the subsequent syncopated G's in the first violins works to extend a simple four-bar phrase into a thirteen-bar *Satz*.[7] The fact that the theme always veers away from E♭ through the introduction of chromaticism is a mark of developmental

6

instability as well as developmental extrapolation. In Marx's reading, this kind of vacillation contributes to a pattern of action and reaction that extends throughout the entire movement.[8] The identification of the main theme of the movement with the protagonist Napoleon, who must exhort his troops to victory, conforms to the tendency of this theme to act more as a developmental force than as a melodic entity, even during the course of its own exposition.

Several critics of the twentieth century give the developmental and transitional features of this opening section a psychological reading. Alfred Heuss elaborates a view of the hero as a willful and wily leader, whose strategic mainspring is his quicksilver unpredictability, heard in the "demonic uncertainty" of the famous C♯.[9] The opening forty-five bars represent for Heuss a process in which the hero becomes conscious of his inner nature (expressed by the cello line at the outset) and transforms it into his public exterior (the transference of the theme to the upper register); when the theme is heard in both bass and soprano (bars 37ff.), Heuss exclaims: "And now . . . the hero looms before us as a giant, fully in tune with himself, both inwardly and outwardly a heroic character of hugest proportion."[10] In this rather more psychologically complex reading than Marx's black and white opposition of hero and external world, Heuss places the vicissitudes of the opening bars within the mind and character of the hero. This type of interpretive strategy, which in its shift of perspective makes the music out to be more a drama of the self in the first person than a depiction of some other self, is echoed in three other roughly contemporaneous interpretations.

Paul Bekker, Arnold Schering, and Romain Rolland all center their interpretations on the dual nature of these opening bars, hearing the passage in the same way as Marx and Oulibicheff but construing it differently. For Bekker, the hero vacillates in his own mind between "vorwärtsdrängende Tatkraft" (forward-driving energy) and "klagend resignierendes Besinnen" (plaintively resigning deliberation). He claims that these two facets of the hero's inner conflict can be followed throughout the entire movement (thereby matching the extent of Marx's narrative structure of actions and reactions).[11] Thus Bekker has transferred the scene of the action from an actual battlefield to a psychological process. At first blush, Arnold Schering's controversial interpretation seems to place the conflict right back on the battlefield, and not even a battlefield from modern European history but the plains of ancient Troy. Hector is said to be the hero of the first movement, the symphony as a whole to consist of selected scenes from the *Iliad*.[12] Yet the starting point for Schering's reading is that of Bekker's: an aggressive/passive duality. Instead of hearing this duality as a con-

flict within the psyche of the hero himself, Schering personifies the hesitating side of the hero by giving the role to Andromache, wife of Hector.[13] Psychology gives way to mythic archetype. The first section of the exposition thus illustrates, for Schering, the famous scene of Hector's farewell from Andromache in book 6 of the *Iliad*. Finally, Romain Rolland hears the opening section as a battle joined between two souls, figured roughly as the will and the heart (or, as he later puts it, between the "ego of love" and the "ego of will").[14]

All these critics feel the effect of duality and describe it in terms of action and reaction, whether the action is the rising of the sun, the deed-oriented drive of the hero, the urge of Hector to defend his city, or simply the will, and whether the reaction is morning mists and shadows, the passive contemplation of the hero, the wifely remonstrances of Andromache, or simply the heart. Among those latter-day analysts who seek to eschew programmatic interpretation, David Epstein sees this duality in terms of downbeat orientation versus upbeat orientation.[15] In my view, this is yet another translation of what is felt by those who account metaphorically for the musical process at work here. Moments of retarded action, which act as extended upbeats and build to a big dominant, enable a higher level of energy to be attained from which a new downbeat-oriented section can follow. Thus a kind of systole-diastole rhythm permeates this opening section and can be said to continue throughout the movement at several different rhythmic levels. At a local level, for example, the syncopated, upbeat rhythm of the first violins in bar 7 initiates a long intake of breath before the downbeat of bar 15; more globally, the so-called second theme as well as the so-called new theme provide large-scale reactive upbeats to ensuing downbeat sections.

Pausing to take stock of the various readings of the first forty-five bars, we notice that all our critics have identified in one way or another those aspects of Beethoven's style which are particularly characteristic of his middle period. These include the alternation of active downbeat-oriented sections with reactive upbeat-oriented sections, the liberation of thematic development to the extent that it may even take place during the initial exposition of the theme, and the polysemic formal significance of the opening section, understood as combining the features of introduction, exposition, and development. All the programmatic interpretations mentioned so far have equated these innovations with the will of a heroic protagonist, a hero preparing—either mentally or physically—for heroic action. Just as the protagonist himself has not yet gone through the fateful trials that will define his character as a hero, so too has Beethoven's theme remained, in a sense, unconsummated: its urge to slide immediately away from E♭ through chromatic

alteration, even in its tutti presentation, never allows it to behave as a truly melodic theme with a stable harmonic underpinning and normative phrase structure—in fact it will have to wait until the coda before it is granted that sort of themehood. Thus there is a strong sense in the opening section that this theme has not yet submitted to its destiny, has not yet exercised its full power or received its full due. The same might be said of any theme heard within the context of sonata form. But the fact that this theme must so submit in order to become more like a theme is unprecedented in musical discourse. This process establishes a new way in which music can be about a theme.

At this point I would like to suggest that the programmatic equation of theme and dramatic protagonist makes explicit a certain attitude about the nature of Beethoven's use of thematic development in his middle-period style. It was this dimension of Beethoven's style that was felt to be revolutionary and deeply engaging by his first critics; programmatic interpretation allowed them to address this specific aspect while downplaying the more generic and easily describable categories of musical form and harmonic syntax. There was no analytical metalanguage that could account for overall thematic process comparable to that which could describe periodic structures and other features that the *Eroica* shares with stylistic practice that had already been codified. Most of these critics were perfectly capable of describing the music in terms of form, thematic structure, and harmony.[16] They simply chose not to, for those things were not what was most meaningful to them about this music.

Yet it would be limiting to imply that the nineteenth-century prevalence of programs was solely a matter of exigence, of the need to find an analytical metalanguage that could map onto the elusive logic of thematic process. To take a broader view, such programs may simply be indicative of the need to approach works of imagination with imagination. Anthropomorphic metaphor was not the only available language for romantic critics, but it may well have been the only commensurate language for what they felt was the deep imaginative potential of this music. Metaphors involving human actions engage the imagination more directly, overtly, and powerfully than those detailing faceless processes that are merely organic. And the concept of theme as protagonist reflects the dynamic nature of the thematic process in Beethoven's heroic style while offering an available and easily identifiable model for the engaging drama of this music.

This is a more portentous critical turn than one might think, for in musical thought since Beethoven, themes and motives have often been conceptualized as dramatic protagonists.[17] This interpretive reflex provides a mode of identity with the theme, a way to be present in the

musical experience. And it has since come to characterize our general perspective on Western tonal music: in such music we like to hear a temporal dramatic process featuring a theme or motive. Because first movements of symphonies most readily exemplify this model, they have received the most attention in critical and analytical writings. The imputation of dramatic agency to music finds in Beethoven's heroic style something of a *locus colossicus*; for here, in Wagner's terse formulation, all is melody, and the entire symphonic texture is heard as somehow moving into dramatic action as a theme might.[18]

II

For many writers, the most explicitly novel feature of the first movement of the *Eroica* Symphony is the theme in E minor that enters in the development section after a climax of shattering force.[19] The newness of this "new" theme has been challenged by analysts who have unearthed more or less hidden connections to previous thematic material.[20] Such analytical observations often put on a self-congratulatory air of discovery, as if the fact that this theme bears latent resemblances to other aspects of the thematic, rhythmic and harmonic arguments of the movement would somehow negate the overwhelming reality that it is, in fact, a *new theme*.[21] Moreover, it is arguably the only theme yet heard in the movement—none of the thematic utterances within the exposition can claim the melodic and harmonic character of a theme to the same degree. And it is clearly meant to be heard as a major statement, for Beethoven marks its entrance with incomparable drama. This is no place, then, for clever compositional subtleties; rather, the new theme somehow bears the brunt of the entire conception of the movement. How have our critics dealt with it?

In characteristic form, A. B. Marx dissociates the new theme from his hero. Marx leaves the question of the theme's precise meaning open; he offers a number of possible interpretations, all of which represent the utterance of an outside agency reflecting on the sad business of human carnage.[22] As such, the theme stands in Marx's reading as the culminating reaction in a series of action-reaction configurations. In the exposition and earlier part of the development these involved the interaction between Napoleon and his troops; here the reaction is expressed by some greater entity that stands beyond the field of action. Peter Schleuning, in his recent interpretation of the *Eroica* as a symphony about Prometheus, recognizes the new theme as a turning point in the musical process, one that signifies an "internally heard higher voice" warning Prometheus not to destroy his own work (an act that

10

he had almost managed in the preceding bars).[23] The similarity to Marx's reading is striking.

For Wilhelm von Lenz, the new theme records the moment immediately after the hero is slain. Lenz provides the following stanza as a poetic equivalent to the theme:

> I feel I have lived for all the ages
> And hitched my fame to the stars.
> The world shall know that the lion now dies,
> And *Vienna* shall light his funeral torch.[24]

The hero, and the music, have clearly crossed the line into the afterlife; the otherness of this realm is expressed in the otherness of the new theme. Lenz's interpretive stanza also resonates with the Homeric notion of *kléos* (glory), a concept to which I shall return presently.

Oulibicheff's reading calls for a change of scene: hearing an oriental note in the new theme, he speculates that Napoleon, staggered by the force of the preceding music (is it forecasting his disastrous Russian campaign?), turns his thoughts back to his campaigns in Egypt and the Indies. As in Marx's program, the new theme thus represents a turning away from the action at hand. Like Oulibicheff, several critics of our own century also prefer to hear the new theme as indicative of an internal process taking place within the mind of the hero. For Paul Bekker, the new theme represents a catastrophic impasse reached by the conflicting sides of the heroic personality, a paralyzing disjunction that results in brooding and languishing exhaustion.[25] In the Homeric scene envisioned by Schering, the new theme illustrates Hector's Christian reluctance to kill Patroklos after a protracted standoff. This moment of anachronistic morality is Beethoven's addition to the Homeric tradition, claims Schering.[26] Schering's version thus shares with those of Marx and Schleuning the aspect of an outside agency (Christian humanity) that intrudes at the crucial moment upon the action (Hector's urge to kill Patroklos).

All these views emphasize the otherness of the new theme, the effect of supreme disjunction that it brings to the musical discourse. Yet this very disjunction is somehow seen as a necessary stage in the psychological and dramatic process of the movement. Marx, the premier nineteenth-century theorist of form, acknowledges the disruptive effect of this theme on his notion of sonata form and seeks to assuage his discomfort by appealing to Beethoven's ability to create dramatically compelling *Sätze*: each *Satz* leads to the next in such a way that the listener is prepared to "take it up."[27] The new theme is thus made to sound inevitable or at the least, credible, and that which is unjustifiable in terms of formal analysis is justified in terms of dramatic process. In

the interpretations of Bekker and Schering, the new theme is felt to be a necessary, if extreme, component of the hero's psychology.

Heinrich Schenker fleshed out Marx's intuition about our willingness to accept this "unerhörte Tat" by showing how the motivic preparation for the theme starts some forty bars before its appearance.[28] Furthermore, Schenker understands the remote tonality of the new theme as made necessary by a chromatic upper neighbor to B♭ in the bass, indicative of the *Aufwärtsdrang*, or "urge to ascend," an emblematic—and distinctly heroic—trait of the musical process, which he tracks throughout the entire movement (see example 1.1).[29]

Example 1.1. Beethoven, Symphony no. 3, first movement, development section: voice-leading graph. From Schenker, *Das Meisterwerk in der Musik*, vol. 3, supplement, figure 3.

In terms of harmonic progression, there is a long-ranging string of rising fifths that starts in the fugato and leads, with some prolongational episodes, to E minor (F minor, bar 236; C minor, bar 239; G minor, bar 242; D minor, bar 245; A minor, bar 254; E minor, bar 284). The positioning of the A-minor sonority, as a iv^6 about to land on V^7 in E minor, undermines its identity as an independent tonicization. Instead it marks the beginning of a thirty-bar approach to and elaboration of the dominant of E minor, culminating in the clash between E and F at the top of the orchestral texture, a clash that makes explicit the implied dissonance respective to the tonic of the ♭II sonority. The energy of this clash is shunted off gradually in the following bars by the repeated pulses of the dominant with minor ninth—a toned-down, more normative presentation of half-step dissonance—followed by the dominant seventh. Analysis of this long-range underlying tonal preparation of E minor, whose path leads locally through

12

some disorienting diminished seventh chords (bars 266–71 and 272–73) as well as the harrowing impasse of bars 276–79, supports the insights of a Marx concerning our willingness to accept the seemingly unacceptable. For if we do find ourselves in what may retrospectively be adjudged an impossibly remote harmonic realm, we are made to feel the ineluctable continuity of the process through which we arrived there.[30] This continuity, both long-range and short-range, is compelling enough to make us believe in anything.[31]

While analysis such as Schenker's gives the impression of careful and strategic preparation of an end determined by the deep structure of the movement, most programmatic reactions to this section of the development indicate a process carried dangerously afield by its own destiny-driven engine. The effect of the continuity in this scene is rather like a movie camera tracking in one shot the progress of two combatants, whose heated struggle takes them far away from where they started. Their struggle has its own coherence in the long-range harmonic progression detailed above; no single step of this progression is unorthodox, and there are no magic doors, no remote modulations. Yet this progression moves far beyond the precincts of E♭: the shock of this distance is accentuated by the grinding halt on an "evil chord" standing on the brink of E minor.[32] This moment of dissonant climax has been described by all programmatic commentators as a catastrophic impasse, either a standoff between two fighters or two armies (or two states of mind), resulting in death (or mental paralysis), or an extreme state of Promethean frustration and enraged despair.[33] In either case, the agency we have been tracking through this movement has forgotten itself and risked everything in its fatal progress, has moved to an ultimate point beyond which lies nothing and from which there can be no turning back.

The movement has thus reached an antipode.[34] This important arrival has occurred in the development section, a section normatively reserved for working on thematic material and building up to the recapitulation. Again we see that one of the central critical intuitions about this movement, that its opening theme is somehow less a musical object than a potential to act, less *ergon* than *energeia*, is borne out by the progress of the musical discourse. The point here is not to showcase a given theme by first exposing it, then moving away from it, and finally returning to it in triumph. Rather the theme embodies from its outset a process of action and reaction that culminates at the arrival of the new theme, a kind of photographic negative of the initial theme itself (which may be a more fruitful way of assessing the hidden features the new theme shares with the main theme). This arrival is just as important to the psychology of the movement as the moment of

syntactical climax, the recapitulation.[35] For here the first theme has engendered its complement, a true alter ego.[36] The ensuing dramatic juxtaposition of this complement with the first theme itself further profiles their charged relationship. After bursting onto the scene in a militant C major (bar 299), the first theme's arpeggiated thrust darkens to C minor, muscles its way up to E♭ major, and then darkens again, now to E♭ minor. That the new theme then takes up this key—the tonic minor—indicates a psychologically complex irony: for if it here seems that the new theme has in fact succeeded in usurping the place of the first theme, its role in the larger harmonic design is that of a minor-mode inflection of tonic that will eventually settle onto the protracted dominant pedal leading to the major-mode recapitulation and the renewal of the first theme.[37]

Analytic methodologies that attempt to demonstrate the presence of a web of thematic relationships emanating from some initial thematic utterance will perforce neglect the otherness of the new theme in an aesthetically motivated zeal to assimilate it into a larger organic whole.[38] Programmatic criticism, on the other hand, does not seek to *explain* the new theme by showing secret organic connections to the first theme but rather attempts to understand the effect of this important disjunction and how it arises, by describing the entire process metaphorically. By interpreting the new theme as an important turning point in a psychological or dramatic process, metaphorical programs suggest a significance at once deeper and more immediate than one based solely on hidden motivic relationships.[39]

III

If the old story is true, the next musical crux in the movement moved even Beethoven to violence at its misapprehension. The impact of poor Ries's boxed ear has resounded on through the years of this symphony's critical reception. In view of that reception, Beethoven's imputed action takes on a symbolic cast, for most of the programmatic critics interpret the famous horn call as a bold reminder, a recalling to duty, an *Ohrfeige* for the exhausted hero. For Schering, the horn call brings Hector back to his senses as if calling him by name.[40] In the words of Bekker, "Then, like a spectral exhortation full of promise, the horn motive sounds, leading [the hero] away from his dusky brooding back into the living world of the deed."[41] Commenting on the horn call's apparent temporal displacement, Marx characterizes the passage as "drifting entirely out of a lost distance, strange, a summons not at all belonging to the present moment but which augurs and heralds

14

those to follow—namely, the return of the heroic theme after the struggle seemed extinct."[42] With the word "strange" (*fremd*), Marx implies that in the world of the second theme and its aftermath, the first theme itself has become alien, heard from a "lost distance." Here in the midst of doom the horn call sounds both as a monitory utterance from the beginnings we have so utterly left behind and as a premonition of the redeeming glory to come. A reminder from destiny, linking past and future?[43]

Critics like Oulibicheff and Lenz treat the striking harmonic juxtaposition of dominant and tonic during the horn call as one of the moments in this grand conception where the idea of the piece overrides musical considerations. As Lenz puts it, "It is not the ear but the *idea* which acts as judge, when *storm cloud* and *lightning* appear all at once in this manner. . . . Tragedy need not flatter the senses but ought to uplift the soul, and the *Eroica* is a *tragedy* [expressed through] *instrumental music*."[44] Schenker, ever the man to deflate such speculation, justifies the moment harmonically by showing that it is based on a rather common mode of dominant prolongation (see example 1.2).[45]

Example 1.2. Beethoven, Symphony no. 3. From Schenker, *Harmony*, 162–63.

Other critics point to similar juxtapositions in works like the *Les Adieux* Sonata and the "Pastoral" Symphony, presumably to identify this type of harmonic conflation as a style trait rather than as something that needs interpretation in this specific context.

We would do well to examine this context to understand how the syntax of this passage has brought on the unanimous programmatic response that something both momentous and mysterious is afoot.[46] Starting as far back as bar 338, the retransition section that eventually includes the horn call is regularly articulated in four-bar groups, generally consisting of one harmony per group. After working slowly up from the B♭ of bar 338 to an E♭ in bar 358, the bass drops suddenly to

C♭ at 362, an arrival given climactic status by the prolonged fortissimo and tutti projection of the C♭-major sonority.[47] The energy of this fanfare is slowly dissipated in the exchanges between winds and strings that follow; at bar 378 the bass returns to B♭, and by bar 381 the upper voice has been coaxed down from G♭ to D. The C♭ in the bass of bar 362 has thus taken sixteen bars to complete a long-range resolution to B♭.

Now the winds drop out for two bars and the tremolos begin. The C♭ appears once more, this time as a minor ninth now taking four bars to resolve to the B♭ in bar 386. At bar 390 the resolution of C♭ to B♭ is further compressed to just two bars. The drama of this progressive compression is matched by the sustained suspense of the violin tremolo, now uninterrupted by the winds or by any bass articulations. Beethoven carefully prepares the disappearance of the bass by staging its gradual reduction from quarter-note arpeggios (bars 369 and 373) to eighth-note arpeggios (bars 374–77) to single-note pizzicati in each bar of the four-bar group (bars 378–81) and, finally, to pizzicati in bars 3 and 4 only (bars 384–85 and 388–89).

Everything has died out save the pianissimo violins, and yet there is an eerie sense of energy in the air; the quietly humming presence of dissonance voices a suddenly brimming sense that an issue is imminent. Progressive textural reductions have reinforced the four-bar regularity of this section (initiated back in bar 338) while building dramatic tension in conjunction with the compressed resolutions of C♭ to B♭; further reduction or further compression is unthinkable. We are being set up: the predominant pattern of chord change every four bars leads us to expect yet another chord change at 394, and the local dramatic conditions demand it. Syntactically, this is a good place to arrive at E♭—but are we really prepared for the thematic recapitulation? Can Beethoven simply die away into his heroic return? That would surely be a *resurrectio ex abrupto*, for we have been told all along in no uncertain terms that the arrivals of important statements of the first theme need a strong upbeat to send them off.[48]

Beethoven has it both ways. He brings E♭ back at the right spot *and* provides the needed upbeat. The reference to E♭ major supplied by the horn call becomes in fact the necessary condition for initiating the critical upbeat. For the effect of the horn call overlaid on the continuing, albeit pianississimo, tremolo of B♭ and A♭ is to challenge this remnant of V^7, releasing the latent energy of its quiet persistence and instantaneously transforming a glowing ember into an explosive force. The tremolo had reduced the V^7 to its barest dissonant combination, the major second, an interval that could preserve the energy for a big move to tonic but could not resolve there directly. The A♭ needs to

16

attain a higher register—it cannot remain as a bass line. After the explosion in bars 396–97 scatters the voices of the V^7 sonority into a resolution-worthy configuration, the recapitulation may proceed.

Just as striking as the harmonic juxtaposition, with which critics have been exclusively concerned all these years, is the rhythmic juxtaposition of downbeat (reference to first theme) and upbeat (the move to the recapitulated theme). We have explored the rhythmic pattern of the presentation of the first theme in the opening forty-five bars as an increasingly intense succession of large-scale downbeat and large-scale upbeat sections, usually coordinated with tonic and dominant areas respectively. The horn call combines in one mysterious utterance the essence of the theme (a triadic call) and the essential crux of its presentation (the downbeat-oriented tonic configuration that becomes upbeat- and dominant-oriented). The two poles of this basic rhythmic/harmonic pattern of respiration occur at the same moment, an observation that deepens the preceding interpretive characterization of the horn call as both a warning from the past (downbeat) and a premonition of the future (upbeat). Remarkably, the horn call performs this feat by matching an utterly simplified V^7 with the simplest triadic statement of tonic, as if answering the elemental with the elemental—whispering, as it were, the magic word.

And there is yet another dimension to the magic of this word. We must remember that in terms of the thematic material of this movement, the horn call is nothing other than a baldly stated two-bar citation of the first theme in its original mode and register. The appearance of the first theme as a military horn call takes on a communicative function hovering suggestively between the referential and the phatic. In other words, the horn call both represents the hero and summons him by name. As a representation of the hero/theme, this terse reduction refers both to the musical essence of the first theme, by revealing that component of the theme which remains invariable throughout its many appearances, and to the poetic essence of the hero, by metonymically symbolizing the hero as a military horn call. But the abstracted essence of the first theme here heralds rather than enacts the important thematic return; or, semantically speaking, this use of the theme stands not for the hero himself but for his name. Thus the poetic essence of the character of the hero (a military horn call) is used to name the hero. This is precisely the sense in which the heroes of Greek mythology are often named. Hector, for example, takes his name from the verb *ékho*, in the sense of "protect": Hector is named as he who protects the city of Troy.[49]

The programmatic interpretations of Marx and Schering recognize the function of naming enacted by the horn call and the powerful effect

it has on the musical process—an effect of recalling, in a trice, a development that has hurled itself into territory representing the extreme implications of the opening argument (the new theme and its aftermath) back to the return of that argument itself. Perhaps the most overt aspect of this effect of the horn call is quite simply its reminder of E♭ major at the end of a long retransition exclusively concerned with E♭ minor: the same utterance that names the hero/theme thus names the home key in its appropriate mode while forecasting the important formal event of that key's return.

Those critics who, like Oulibicheff and Lenz, interpret the horn call as one of many moments in Beethoven's symphonic works where the *Idee* overrides musical considerations are also on to something important about this moment. It is a classic case of the "stroke of genius": the horn call solves a syntactic problem (the arrival of tonic, which cannot yet be the arrival of the recapitulation) while at the same time naming the hero (reminding the music of its original mode as well as its initial thematic and rhythmic premise), releasing the explosive potential of the major second tremolo, and merging the two poles of the movement's thematic complex—tonic/downbeat over and against dominant/upbeat—into one synoptic moment. Our *Idee*-minded critics are reacting to a representation of something "unerhört," something that defies convention and defines genius, as conceived in the early nineteenth century.[50] When they invoke the notion of a poetic *Idee* to account for this type of passage they are not simply at their wit's end but realize that more is at stake than a daring harmonic anomaly: there is a higher significance that goes beyond the local effect. We detect a wonderful symbiosis, for the *Idee* serves the form (articulates its major juncture), and the form serves the *Idee* (provides for a return to the hero's identity after the exploration of some "other" state).

The case of the horn call illustrates the point that programmatic critics are responding metaphorically to something of great moment in the musical process, something that we would today be inclined to describe syntactically or stylistically. From this we should conclude not that we are only now able to understand these aspects of the music but rather that we are making these same aspects explicit with a different type of analytical language. Neither would I wish merely to reduce earlier metaphorical accounts of the *Eroica* to a series of analytical statements closer to our own customary discourse about tonal musical processes. To do so would be to treat such metaphorical language as protoanalytical, to patronize this mode of musical understanding by imputing to it the inchoate glimmers of our own analytical discoveries. Much more germane, I believe, is the observation that practitioners operating from a wide range of critical and analytical standpoints

18

notice similar things in this music and express these things in the different languages available to them. Yet the persistence of programmatic criticism throughout the reception history of the *Eroica* signals a need to characterize the process of this movement in terms more universal and fundamentally meaningful than those of musical syntax or morphology.

IV

We left the heroic presence in our composite story poised at the return of the opening music after facing the danger of the climactic standoff and experiencing the mysterious voice of the new theme. In the midst of a dramatic standstill the horn call summons the hero into action once again, and the expansive surge of bars 430ff. tempered by the warming influence of the preceding sections in F and D♭ suggests that the hero has grown as well as triumphed.[51] As this scenario already indicates a process of journey and return, of loss and greater gain, and of quest and discovery, we might imagine that the story is in essence over. Everything that happens now would then be the mere playing out of a musical form, a kind of travel expense owed to the vehicle of this journey, symphonic sonata form. Yet the coda adds perhaps the most important stage to the story, in that it provides a consummate ending, one that is both goal and closure, telos and epilogue.

It would be hard to find music more exemplary of one's general notion of the heroic style than the music of this coda. This perception, coupled with the embarrassment of trying to fit a large-scale repetition into a dramatic narrative, makes it no surprise that not all our critics bother to account programmatically for the repeated music of the recapitulation, moving instead from the onset of the recapitulation right to the coda.[52] Marx, for example, leaps to the very end of the coda in his program—he relegates the entire body of the recapitulation to the general category of victoriousness and hears the fourfold return of the first theme in the last section of the coda (from bar 631 on) as the absolute culmination of victory.[53] Wilhelm von Lenz suggests that the recapitulation expresses the hero's posthumous fame, in a manner perhaps not unlike the epic retelling of heroic exploits.[54] This reading, in conjunction with Marx's comments on the thematic return at the end of the coda, could supply us with the final programmatic stage of our hero's journey: after the hero's life and death, his eternal glory resounds to the heavens.

In the culminating passage of the coda, from bar 631 to the end, the first theme is provided with a regular harmonic underpinning of tonic

and dominant and regular four-plus-four phrasing. The power of this square treatment of the theme is precisely in its presentation: the theme becomes more like a real theme, for it is now an actual melody. That is to say, in its previous manifestations the first theme acted more as a bass line in motivating harmonic development; now it is freed from its compulsion to act as an unstable, driving force and is able to enjoy a truly melodic character.[55] In the context of this movement, such stability could inform only the final manifestation of the theme, where it marks the tonality of E♭ major in such a way that we need never again fear its imminent dissolution.

Yet the melodic repetitions at the end of the coda do not constitute a theme in the usual sense, for they do not represent a closed melodic structure.[56] Rather, they are left open—harmonically, by the symmetrically balanced exchange of tonic and dominant, and melodically, by the insistence on the fifth scale degree, keeping alive the unresolved feeling of a dominant-heavy melody.[57] This openness suggests the possibility of endless repetitions, endless affirmation. It takes another, and stirringly powerful, manifestation of Schenker's *Aufwärtsdrang* to close the cycle, a chromatic swell in the first violins (bars 663–68) that reaches a high A♭ and resolves it to G (a final culmination of the first violins' opening move from G to A♭ in bars 7–10). This is followed by the completion of a cadential gesture that had been kept open in all its previous appearances.[58]

Thus the final melodic utterance of the opening theme has thematic stability but not thematic closure—again, what an appropriate way to signal an apotheosis: the unstable and volatile theme of the opening bars is now heard as a stable, indeed, potentially unending iteration. Another aspect to this apotheosis is the almost childishly simple nature of this final version of the theme. Imagine how impossibly banal such an utterance would be if heard at the outset of the movement. Yet this stripped-down version plays well as a monumentalization of the theme—here it can truly transcend any notion of a worldly theme; it has no need for a closed structure as it hymns eternally on tonic and dominant. Although this version of the theme is thus kept open harmonically, it indeed assumes a cumulative progress in the way its iterations are treated orchestrally and dynamically: the slow rise to the height of orchestral sound and the top of the orchestral register triggers the closural sweep of the *Aufwärtsdrang* and final cadences.

Regarded metaphorically, the thematic process of the entire movement seems to realize Heraclitus's famous apothegm, "character is destiny": we are made to hear that the hero's fully revealed character entails the process of his destiny. In Marx's interpretation, Napoleon can become Napoleon only through successful interaction with his

20

troops. For Lenz, the hero must die in order to obtain eternal glory. This was the fatal transaction made explicit by Achilles in the *Iliad*; as he says in book 9, lines 410–16: "I carry two sorts of destiny toward the day of my death. Either, if I stay here and fight beside the city of the Trojans, my return home is gone, but my glory [*kléos*] shall be everlasting; but if I return home to the beloved land of my fathers, the excellence of glory [*kléos*] is gone, but there will be a long life left for me, and my end in death will not come to me quickly."[59]

Marx's description of the final moments of the movement as a culmination of the hero's glory works well with the notion of *kléos* that Lenz invokes. The standard Homeric formula for *kléos* is that *kléos* reaches the heavens (*kléos ouranòn hīkei*). Such an image aptly captures the impression made by the soaring conclusion of the movement: the theme (the hero) flies to the heavens, liberated from the battles of mortality. His final form is that of a true melody; this was a form forbidden to him until he lived through to the uttermost consequences of his heroic character. As a melody, he can now be sung by posterity. Thus the heroic journey here envisaged ranges from life to death (or some related experience symbolizing death) to the eternal glory of epic song.

In order to increase our understanding of the coherent musical process that informs this kind of reading we must consider one final musical crux: the famous passage at the outset of the coda, where the music plunges directly through D♭ major to C major (bars 551ff.). In his eagerness to get at the movement's final peroration, Marx omits any account of this striking passage from his program, although he comments on it elsewhere when addressing Oulibicheff's criticism of the same bars. Both critics see the passage as expressive of the tenacity of the hero's will. In the words of Oulibicheff: "It is the voice of the hero, the summons of glory. . . . In whatever land or whatever circumstances this summons is heard, . . . the hero always wants the same thing, and he is always sure of being obeyed."[60] Marx, somewhat more in the Prussian manner: "The [hero's] word shall prevail! And it has triumphed! And it shall triumph and rule!"[61] Do these critics hear the passage in this way simply because its harmonic syntax seems so willfully arbitrary, or is there something in the process of the coda that makes such a compact expression of the willful nature of the first theme indispensable at this very spot?

The work of Joseph Kerman and Charles Rosen has shown that one of the primary roles of the Beethovenian coda is that of finishing any business that cannot be transacted within the recapitulation proper.[62] In the case of this movement, several pieces of thematically related business remain: the new theme, as the essential second theme of the

movement, needs its own recapitulation, and the first theme needs to attain its final form. There is also a tonal agenda that arguably needs to be completed. In order to understand the nature of this agenda we must invoke the very beginning of the recapitulation.

The recapitulation in classical-style sonata form more often than not emphasizes the subdominant area before proceeding to the second theme group. As Charles Rosen points out, this requirement is met in a most unusual way in the opening moments of this particular recapitulation. At first it seems as if the music will move toward the subdominant, as the C♯ from bar 7 now drops down to C♮—but the key that shows up is not F minor, which would stand for the subdominant A♭ major, but F major, which is in fact the dominant of the dominant. Beethoven's particular approach to this F major neutralizes its function as an applied dominant, however; there is no aural sense that this key will move to B♭. The following passage in D♭ plunges deeply into the flat side of E♭, as if to compensate for the ambiguous use of F major, thereby suggesting a subdominant orientation for the entire section.[63]

One might expect that another, less equivocal move to the subdominant area would be attempted in the coda, if it is indeed the locus for unfinished business. And this is in fact the case. Beethoven establishes the subdominant area with the key of F minor, heard as the functional representative for the subdominant key of A♭ major. This is the F minor we missed at the outset of the recapitulation but that is much more at home here as the tonality of the new theme. The passage at the outset of the coda sets up F minor by passing in short order from E♭ to C major and then fashioning the latter as a dominant. But can we hear this passage merely as a grandiose yet awkward preparation of F minor? The notorious chord progression, with its bald parallels, frustrates the search for local harmonic logic and seems to point to some larger requirement.

The D♭ that makes a momentous appearance at the beginning of the coda (in bar 557) is the ultimate manifestation of the C♯s at bars 7 and 402, as many have pointed out; now it sounds as the root of its own triad, and the passing motion of E♭ to D♭ to C is hypostatized with triads built on each of these tones. Perhaps it is not too farfetched to argue that the unusual manner of touching on the subdominant that Rosen notices at the head of the recapitulation has left the C♯/D♭ with some latent energy still unspent. Or, if we would rather talk in terms of a pitch story, the transformation of the C♯ of bar 7 to D♭ is not yet complete in bar 402; D♭'s greatest role is played in the coda. This is to read the D♭ as signal of the impulse to move to the subdominant. In its early guise as C♯ (bar 7) it has a "noch nicht" effect; moving here to the