

Chapter Two

Two Interpretive Roles

Having theorized analysis as an interpretive rather than a factual enterprise generally, I now home in on two interpretive functions of analysis in particular: first, analysis exposes ambiguities or, more generally, gaps in the text, serving them up to the performer; second, it offers metaphors for physical and emotional experience, which the performer embodies or expresses in some way. I will discuss the latter function primarily in regard to Schenkerian analysis.

Part 1: Ambiguity

Her autobiography, if such a thing were imaginable, would be, if such a thing were ever to be written, an assemblage of dark voids and unbridgeable [*sic*] gaps. . . . She understood that if she was going to hold on to her life at all, she would have to rescue it by a primary act of imagination, supplementing, summoning up the necessary connections.

—Carol Shields, *The Stone Diaries*

Iser's "Gaps"

Interpretation thrives on questions and problems posed by a text, literary or musical. These preclude facile comprehension; they insure the artwork against passive consumption and ensure that we actively engage with the text. It is precisely these impediments to unproblematic flow—impediments highlighted by theories—that draw the interpreter in, that solicit her involvement. The foremost such impediment is ambiguity, which below I consider musically. But first, I expose the notion of textual chasms generally, returning once again to Wolfgang Iser.

For Iser, writing has to implicate reading in order to yield the intentional object that is the artwork. A text implicates reading, in part, by referring to objects incompletely, thus placing the onus on the reader to fill them in.

Moreover, the text piques the reader's expectations, the fulfillment of which instantaneously yields new expectations. However, gaps in this implication-realization flow are essential to the reading process, for otherwise the reader would have few signals as to the *changes in perspective* she must synthesize or negotiate.¹ These incongruities beg the reader's attention and involvement; they require her to form some sort of gestalt, to strive for consistency in her interpretation.² Yet the reader is constantly forming new gestalts as the text unfurls: the latent gaps within one gestalt compel the reader to form another gestalt, which does not replace the previous one but rather modifies it. Our entanglement in the text is "never total, because the gestalten remain at least potentially under attack from those possibilities which they have excluded but dragged along in their wake. . . . The result is a dialectic . . . between illusion-forming and illusion-breaking."³

Since Iser apparently considers *Tristram Shandy* paradigmatic of reader-oriented literature, I offer another example from that work here. (Recall that the first, in chapter 1, revolved around Uncle Toby's Lockean disposition.) Blocks to the flow of implications and realizations, as mentioned above, would normally occur covertly; they would simply be part of the plot. Sterne, in contrast, makes these occlusions glaring; they are part of his literary style. For example, Tristram mischievously inserts so many digressions during the first few volumes, in which he recounts the story of his conception, as to disturb its verisimilitude. Sterne shows that his work is resistant to mimetic realism, drawing attention instead to the very act of reading. In fact, Tristram frequently stops the story in order to address the reader directly. For example, in chapter 20, in the middle of his birth story, he breaks the fourth wall and bickers with a fictional reader:

—How could you, Madam, be so inattentive in reading the last chapter? I told you in it, *That my mother was not a papist*. —Papist! You told me no such thing, Sir. Madam, I beg leave to repeat it over again, That I told you as plain, at least, as words, by direct inference, could tell you such a thing. —Then, Sir, I must have miss'd a page. —No, Madam, —you have not miss'd a word. —Then I was asleep, Sir. —My pride, Madam, cannot allow you that refuge. —Then, I declare, I know nothing at all about the matter. —That, Madam, is the very fault I lay to your charge; and as a punishment for it, I do insist upon it, that you immediately turn back, that is, as soon as you get to the next full stop, and read the whole chapter over again (51–52).

Sterne calls attention to how reading is not an unimpeded linear process, not only by obstructing the onward flow of the plot with this dialogic digression but also by the particular content of that digression: he reminds Madam that she has missed a crucial bit of information and must therefore turn back and

read again. Sterne foregrounds the fact that readers are always flipping back and forth, as it were, making sense of the text and forming gestalts gradually, piecemeal, and retroactively.

The literary text is pockmarked with gaps that the reader must fill with acts of imagination (hence the epigraph to this section). Such acts are not mere personal associations but flights of fantasy within the confines of the text. These gaps account for why the literary work is less a document to be decoded for hidden meanings than a vehicle for *communication*—the literary work is thoroughly heteronomous, implicating and beckoning the reader.⁴ “Whenever the reader bridges the gaps, communication begins. . . . Hence the structured blanks of the text stimulate the process of ideation to be performed by the reader on terms set by the text.”⁵



Music is as oriented toward the interpreter as is literature (especially eighteenth-century literature), although music perhaps beckons the interpreter in subtler ways. Although outright incongruities or chasms can be found—in late Beethoven, for example⁶—gaps more often appear in the guise of structural uncertainty and ambiguity. Ambiguity impedes (if often slightly) linear flow; such bumps in the road are what particularly compel the interpreter to construct meaning—either in the moment, as the music unfolds, or in analytical retrospect.

Two Fundamental Types of Musical Ambiguity

Virtually all music entails some degree of ambiguity. This is true of even apparently straightforward music: to wit, the thinly textured, airy, seemingly simple theme that opens Mozart's Piano Sonata in A major, K. 331 is perhaps one of the most picked-over passages in the music-theoretical literature.⁷ Ambiguity is, in fact, a normative condition of musical notation; it inheres in musical notation due to notation's (partial) indeterminacy. In other cases, ambiguity is a more salient feature, arising from a particular structural process. I will expand on this important distinction and offer examples of each.

Adorno correctly observes that sometimes ambiguity (or, more generally, obfuscation) is itself a structural property of the work to which the interpreter need adhere—in Jerrold Levinson's words, “a duality that is internal to, and arguably intended in, the work.”⁸ For example, a composer might initially pose an ambiguity and later “resolve” it—project one meaning over a competing one—as part of the structural arc. In this case, it might be possible and desirable for the performer somehow to convey an ambiguous quality. Yet I contend that such cases are much less common than the structural ambiguity

and expressive polysemy that are part and parcel of thematic musical notation. They are less properties requiring direct expression than corollaries of indeterminate notation that therefore warrant resolution.

In my view, the fundamental task of the interpreter, in formulating a conception of a particular piece, is to choose from among its several inherent structural and expressive possibilities and present a single, definitive way to hear the piece on a given occasion.⁹ It is the performer's job to guide the listener through the work's relations as she conceives them rather than to present a “neutral” version onto which the listener imposes his own interpretation—that would be more a conceptual exercise than an aesthetic experience. (To this idea Arthur Danto poses an art-critical corollary: “To seek a neutral description [of an artwork] is to see the work as a *thing* and hence not as an artwork: it is analytical to the concept of an artwork that there has to be an interpretation.”¹⁰) Moreover, musical objectivity is, if anything, encoded subjectivity and thus requires a subjective response; thus, to aspire toward neutrality or objectivity is necessarily to miss the mark.¹¹ An ostensibly neutral performance will ineluctably betray subjective biases at any rate, but, crucially, will not do so with the consistency and purposiveness needed for a compelling, cohesive interpretation. In short, one should not fall prey to the delusion that music can “speak for itself.”¹²

Take the incipit of Bach's Fugue in D minor from the *Well-Tempered Clavier*, Book 2. In it, Leonard B. Meyer detects several possible melodic patterns. These, as shown in the two upper staves of example 2.1a, are primarily an arpeggiation of a D-minor triad with intervening passing tones (level A) and a sequence of fourth-leaps followed by a scalar passage descending from D² that fills the gap created by those leaps (level B). Meyer admonishes, “If the richness and complexity of these intertwining implicative structures is to be preserved, the fugue should be performed as ‘neutrally’ as possible. . . . Because none of the subpatterns should be thought of as being dominant, no special articulation or phrasing is called for.”¹³

I object on two grounds. First, how is it possible to play “neutrally”? Even if the keyboardist were to play the passage at a single dynamic and tempo, surely his *choice* of dynamic and tempo would evidence some stance toward, and affect our perception of, the musical relationships. (Meyer's scare quotes indicate that he recognizes this fact on some level.) But second and more important, why would Meyer think that playing “neutrally”—taken here to denote a relative lack of internal differentiation—would guarantee the “preservation” or perception of the relationships he posits? He clearly presupposes that these relationships are objectively present in the music, built into the notes. Thus, the performer need only play the notes, with minimal interpretive intervention, and these relationships will automatically come across. I would counter that the melodic patterns Meyer discerns are less objective traits than *potentialities*.

Example 2.1a. J. S. Bach, subject of the Fugue in D Minor, *Well-Tempered Clavier*, book 2 (analysis after Meyer, p. 149, but with several analytical symbols omitted).

Example 2.1b. Some performance responses to Meyer's implicative strands.

each awaits an analytical determination and a realization (response) by the performer in terms of dynamics, tempo, and articulation. (I pose some in ex. 2.1b.) Moreover, given the multiple melodic patterns Meyer notes, it would seem sensible to choose one in order to orientate the listener. To refrain from interpreting is to afford the listener not a richer experience but a vaguer one. Meyer's subtext is well taken—"don't play this passage in an overly fussy way"—but that is a far cry from avoiding interpretation altogether.

This passage is but one small example of what we might call "normative ambiguity." Such ambiguity is not particularly pronounced, it is not a salient musical feature; rather, it is simply a by-product of the multivalence inherent in musical notation. If the analyst exposes multiple structural possibilities, the performer does well to project a particular one rather than hoping against hope that if only he play neutrally, one or more of these possibilities will sail across the footlights. Normative ambiguity calls not for vague playing but, quite the contrary, decisive playing. In even the most apparently neutral of circumstances, music-cum-analysis beckons the interpreter.



In other cases, of course, ambiguities are much more pointed and salient and thus deserve to be expressed *as* ambiguities. The performer might accomplish this by creating a murky, hazy quality. Schoenberg offers the hypothetical example in which the pianist "blurs" motives rather than clearly delineating them in order to illuminate the multidimensionality of the piece

and its representation of "life on several levels."¹⁴ In the next chapter, I will offer a couple of my own examples, in which ambiguity is expressed not by fuzzy playing, as in Schoenberg's scenario, but by clear contradictory cues—for example, by simultaneously expressing one possible meaning through dynamics, another through tempo.

Yet ambiguity can be conveyed in a fundamentally different way. Take Mozart's Symphony in G Minor, K. 550, whose opening theme is famously ambiguous from a metric standpoint. As shown in example 2.2, the ambiguity derives from the fact that, on the one hand, the opening bar begins a pattern of octave oscillations in the bass, with the lower note intimating a stronger hyperbeat. On the other hand, the thematic content basically begins in measure 2, with the anacrusis to that measure reinforcing its hypermetric stability. (If, alternatively, measure 1 were hypermetrically more stable, measure 2, along with its anacrusis, would be an extended anacrusis to measure 3.) Mozart disambiguates this theme when it returns in the recapitulation: as shown in example 2.2, the retransitory passage, which as a whole has a decidedly anacrusic quality, encompasses the opening measures of the theme (mm. 164 and 165), such that they are now clearly anacrusic as well. They are now unequivocally weak hypermetrically, preparatory to the structural downbeat that is measure 166.¹⁵

Example 2.2. Mozart, Symphony in G Minor, K. 550, mvt. 1: primary theme at beginning of exposition and recapitulation. Hypermetric reinterpretation.

(continued)

In light of this subsequent hypermetric clarification, how might the conductor interpret the very opening of the piece? To abstain from a hypermetric interpretation would not, I think, ultimately convey the presence of conflicting meanings. Rather, one does better to make a clear choice from the start: one might emphasize the odd-numbered bars in light of how Mozart treats them in the recapitulation, as if the recapitulation held the key to how those bars were always to be heard. Alternatively, and I think more fruitfully, one might emphasize the even-numbered measures so that the "correction" in the recapitulation will have greater impact—the musical clarification will have a chance to speak. The conductor in this scenario conveys ambiguity in the long run. That is, on hearing the subsequent reinterpretation in the recapitulation, the astute listener realizes in retrospect that the theme always nested the possibility of dual metrical interpretations. In this scenario, the ambiguity emerges progressively, over the course of the movement; it is not contained in any one moment.¹⁶



Hence, whether the ambiguity arises simply from the indeterminate nature of musical notation or is evidently planted by the composer as part of a structural narrative, the performer can and should treat the ambiguity decisively. It is naive, I think, to assume that interpretive abstinence will somehow guarantee the expression of such a complex state as ambiguity. Nor, conversely, should ambiguity be used as a meretricious theoretical justification for restricting performers' liberties, for enforcing interpretive abstinence. Janet Levy, for one, surveys several examples of "beginning-ending ambiguity" and considers the ways in which performers might respond to them.¹⁷ In every case, she concludes that any tempo fluctuation will detract from the ambiguity, and therefore that the performer serves such cases by playing as unobtrusively as possible. For Levy, evidently, performance is more about what *not* to do than what to do; it is an exercise in inhibition.

Part 2: Embodiment and Schenkerian Analysis

Schenkerian Analysis as Truth Finding

Susanne Langer identifies two basic kinds of symbols.¹⁸ *Discursive*, or linguistic, symbols capture the rational order of experience due to their linear syntax and denotative capacity. *Presentational* symbols such as artworks, on the other hand, can capture extremely subtle and complex mental and emotional states that language cannot due to their multidimensionality and ability to present simultaneities.¹⁹ Music, in Langer's view, is a presentational symbol. In its rhythmic motion, patterns of tension and release, hierarchical complexity, and so forth,

Example 2.2.—(concluded)

music is a "logical analogy" for feelings and other internal states.²⁰ In other words, music and other art forms do not refer to dimensions of internal experience but *present* or embody them (hence "presentational" symbol).

Is Schenkerian theory discursive or presentational—or, roughly rephrased, science or art?²¹ This very question leads us astray, for the "is" suggests an essentializing tendency. Better to ask: how can the theory be *used*, or how has it been used, in particular circumstances? Because my main concern is performance/analysis, I will reframe the question thus: which among the various applications of Schenkerian theory to performance betray implicit but distinct biases regarding the discursive versus the presentational character of Schenkerian theory? Or more broadly: when Schenkerian theory is situated within the context of performance, what epistemological assumptions about it come to light?

Rather than attempting a comprehensive survey of the literature, I will offer a representative example of a Schenkerian performance and analysis study that, to my mind, clearly evinces a discursive bias. Cynthia Folio aims to offer a practical account of how analysis can be applied to performance, utilizing the first movement of Bach's Sonata in E Major for flute and harpsichord as her central example. Some of the pervasive features of this piece that she uncovers using Schenkerian techniques are parallel tenths governing relatively long stretches of music, embedded double-neighbor motives, and motivic connections between flute and harpsichord. Her main advice to performers is to emphasize or "bring out," dynamically or agogically, the notes comprising these underlying lines and motives; she also recommends highlighting long-range structural and registral connections by dynamically "matching" the notes that are so connected.²² In this account, the analysis itself, while not overtly reductive, ultimately betrays such an orientation by using performance to cut through foreground phenomena in order to project structural lines. This reductive methodology, in turn, equates with a discursive or propositional one; it is tantamount to stating a supposed fact—that a structural entity exists. Folio thus approaches the analysis-performance relationships discursively: the foreground, via performance, is reduced to (supposed) structural fact.

Another literalist application of Schenkerian principles to performance involves producing long lines, as supposedly implied by the *Urfinie* and perhaps by *Züge* (middleground linear progressions) as well. The *Urfinie* and *Zug* relate mostly noncontiguous pitches, exposing a musical logic operative over long time spans. Yet some misconstrue this metaphorical notion of aural or conceptual connection as implying or entailing *literal*, physical connection—that is, as a mandate to create a long line.²³ A rigidly discursive approach to Schenkerian theory cum performance, then, will view high-level structures as actual and factual in two senses: first, *they exist*—hence, the analyst/performer must excavate and project them; second, the *connection* among these structural

tones is *real*—hence, the performer must actually connect long strands of tones with overarching legato.

Certainly, it is sometimes appropriate and desirable to project structural tones or spin long, legato lines. Yet the literalist approach is generally dubious on two counts. First, it adheres to the letter of Schenkerian thought but not to its spirit; it does not create the organic coherence that is the driving force behind Schenkerian theory. Simply demarcating or connecting structural pitches does nothing to ensure or create meaningful relationships among these pitches.²⁴ In other words, the musical *unity* with which Schenker is primarily concerned is often misconstrued by performers as implying *uniformity* of articulation (and frequently of tempo as well).²⁵ Such unity—or more precisely, unity in variety—can be achieved only through the strategic and varied use of articulation, dynamics, and tempo, the performer's essential resources.

Second, and more crucial, the particular pitches that comprise the *Urfinie* and the *Zug* are hardly the point. Rather, their significance derives from their interaction with the surface, from their function as a backdrop in relation to which foreground particulars achieve expressive salience.²⁶ In short, the discursive/literalist approach simply does not go far enough. By focusing on the supposed fact of structural entities, this approach limits the creative uses to which such entities can be put.

I will offer a performative alternative to this view below. In preparation, I sketch three paradigms from German philosophy that likely influenced the formation of Schenker's theory: Goethe's organicism, Kant's synthetic apprehension, and Freud's dreamwork. The following premise and question guide my inquiry: the most fruitful approach toward Schenker vis-à-vis performance is not to fetishize background structures but rather to use those structures in the service of rendering the notated music vitally, freshly, and imaginatively. Which, if any, of the three philosophical backdrops above justifies applying Schenker's theory in this way?

Because Schenker apparently had reservations about philosophizing about music too explicitly, we should not expect to see in his work overt mention of these philosophers' concepts. Rather, as Korsyn suggests, we are more likely to encounter *displacements* (in the Freudian sense) of these concepts, which by and large are built into the very fabric of his theoretical structures.²⁷

Schenker and the Philosophers

Goethe

Schenker's theory implicitly and explicitly likens musical masterworks to living organisms, in which the whole infuses each part and each part is indispensable to the whole.²⁸ But as is well known, Schenker actually began his career

with an anti-organicism manifesto of sorts, "The Spirit of Musical Technique" ("Der Geist der musikalischen Technik," 1895). Here he claims that "harmony and melody seem to espouse the principles of necessity and logic, and they feign both."²⁹ Thus, composers create merely the illusion of organicism. This idea that musical necessity is an effect that a composer *works* to create arguably came out of Schenker's intense engagement with Beethoven; his music, perhaps more than any other composer's, gives us a palpable sense that organic unity and compositional willfulness go hand in hand. This ideal, in fact, is itself a Goethean one. Goethe closes his *Dichtung und Wahrheit* with the sentiment, as paraphrased by Burnham, that "we are creatures of time, pulled inexorably onward. Yet we hold the reins and can act courageously."³⁰

By 1906, however, Schenker's conception of the compositional process was starting to change; in *Harmony*, he talks about the composer not as an artful manipulator of tones but as a somnambulant vehicle for the forces of nature. The great composer was defenseless against the intrinsic will of tones, *Der Tonwille*. The ten-issue periodical of that name (1921–24) quotes, in its second volume, Goethe's poem "Typus": "There is nothing on the skin, / that is not in the bone" ["Es ist nichts in der Haut, / Was nicht im Knochen ist"].³¹ This was in essence Schenker's rallying cry marking his official turn to organicism, to which he was increasingly devoted until the end of his career and life in 1935.

At least three parallels between Schenker and Goethe are worth mentioning. First, Goethe's *Urpflanze* is a precedent if not direct impetus for Schenker's *Ursatz*. If the *Urpflanze* is an archetypal plant that manifests itself in a variety of physical forms, the *Ursatz* is a melodic-harmonic archetype that manifests itself in a variety of musical forms.

Second, the *Ursatz* ramifies into ever finer diminutions, just as the *Urpflanzen* ramifies into ever more intricate appendages, ever more specialized layers of the plant. The foreground embellishments are like so many flowers and fruit. What is more, the plant, according to Goethe, exhibits a process of growth directed toward a goal, which he terms *Steigerung*; it is the path an organism takes to realize its essence, to actualize its potential in each individual part. Schenker simulates this process, as we have seen, in typically presenting his analyses from the top down, proceeding from background to foreground with directed motion—as if the background were the beginning, the middle-ground the middle, and the foreground the end of a narrative chain of events. I believe Schenker does so precisely because he means to depict the growth of an organism, or as he puts it, "an energy transformation—[music is] a transformation of the forces [that] flow from background to foreground."³² Music, in Schenker's view, thus has a teleological impulse by which it strives to actualize its aesthetic DNA as encoded in the *Ursatz*.

Finally, both piece and plant curb the potential promiscuity of growth. Under the concept of *Polarität*, the tendency of development is held in check

by a unifying force. As Goethe says, "the idea of metamorphosis is one of the most venerable, but at the same time one of the most dangerous, gifts from above. It leads into formlessness. . . . It is like a centrifugal force and would lose itself in infinity were it not for a counterforce. I mean the tendency toward specificity, the tenacious, constancy-seeking faculty. . . . This is a centripetal force."³³

At the most basic level, the *Ursatz* is centripetal in ensuring monotonicity. But it is centripetal in another, more specific way. It often begets diminutions in its own image; the *Ursatz* is often found in microcosm, at a lower structural level, a phenomenon Schenker terms "transference of the *Ursatz*."³⁴ In Beethoven's "Freude" theme (ex. 2.3), for example, the $\frac{3}{2}-\frac{2}{1}$ of the *Ursatz* is replicated verbatim at the foreground (see the circled notes). That $\frac{3}{2}-\frac{2}{1}$ is a window into the basic form from which the piece has sprung. The interrupted form of the *Ursatz* is also found at a lower level: notice that the first pitch of Schenker's $\frac{3}{2}-\frac{2}{1}$ (first level) nests a smaller $\frac{3}{2}-\frac{2}{1}$ || $\frac{3}{2}-\frac{2}{1}$ on the level of measures 1–8. The theme is thus rigorously recursive.³⁵ In short, the *Ursatz* counters the potential for relentless growth, the potential for the music to spiral into unrelated diminutions, by spawning smaller-scale versions of itself.

I see a very close parallel to the transferred *Ursatz* in the "proliferous rose" (*durchgewachsene Rose*), as Goethe termed it (see fig. 2.1).³⁶ It is "a partially defined flower, as it were, with a stem growing again from its center, and new leaves developing on this stem."³⁷ The proliferous rose involves a mutation by which, in place of a stamen, a new branch arises, on which new flowers develop; in other words, in place of reproductive organs, a rose in microcosm begins to emerge, just as the transferred *Ursatz* is an entire tonal structure in microcosm. In both formations, the whole is remarkably palpable. In both, the whole infuses the parts not merely in an ideal sense but in a quite real one as well: the whole is almost literally one of the parts. Both thus illustrate organicism in the most vivid possible way. In Goethe's words, "the proliferous rose . . . offers a very clear example of everything we sought earlier through our power of imagination and understanding."³⁸

Kant

For Kant, the synthesis of diverse phenomena must come from the apprehending subject.³⁹ Synthetic unity would seem a contradictory concept: how can a manifold be unified? It can because diverse phenomena are united as *my* thoughts—as belonging to "transcendental apperception." Likewise, the *Ursatz*, far from being a formula to which a piece is reduced, is a vehicle for transcendental apperception. It is the "I" of the piece, the metaphorical subject that lends coherence to the various foreground events.

Crucially, the transcendental subject binds phenomena through time; "time-determination," Paul Guyer asserts, is "the real basis of Kant's epistemology."⁴⁰



Figure 2.1. A proliferous rose. Photograph by Gordon Miller. Used with permission.

For Schenker, the *Ursatz* (along with other high-level structures) is precisely such a vehicle of time-consciousness—it binds a series of disparate tones unfolding in time. Time-consciousness is the mental tension by which we carry over the initial tone of a linear progression to the end. Schenker states, “The conceptual unity of a linear progression signifies a *conceptual tension* between the beginning and the end of the progression: the primary note is to be retained until the point at which the concluding note appears. The tension alone engenders musical coherence.”⁴¹ What ensures unity in multiplicity is that the listener mentally holds on to a single entry over a period of time—a single tone that passes through the others and through which the others pass. This tension ensures that a string of events will form not a mere succession but a coherent statement. So contrary to the common criticism that Schenker ignores musical rhythm and time, the above suggests that the *Ursatz* represents first and foremost a temporal faculty.

“The organic composition, then, is a correlate of Kant’s cognitive subject; the *Ursatz* is the transcendental consciousness of the piece, its ‘I think.’”⁴² This model, Korsyn muses, accounts for why an encounter with a musical work often seems like an encounter with another person, or even with a version of our own deeper selves: music sensuously embodies a crucial element of how we think.

Cook, I surmise, gets at these same basic Kantian ideas but in non-Kantian terms. He argues that the composer-oriented values that originated with

Example 2.3. Schenker's analysis of Beethoven's "Freude" theme (*Free Composition*, fig. 109c/3).

Beethoven's heroic style "ran underground, so to speak, in the twentieth-century analytical commentaries that eliminated the composer but retained the traces of creative intentionality."⁴³ He cites Schenker in this regard, claiming his is a theory not of music generally but of masterpieces in particular, and of how they are created in a "lightning flash" (Cook's phrase). Schenker's move was to retain composerlike intentionality while taking the actual composer and the feelings typically ascribed to him out of the equation. Indeed, music theories are often theories of creativity tricked out in formalist attire. The values of coherence and unity are seeming formalisms that in actuality bear vestiges of creativity and intentionality. Hence, to return to Schenker's Kantian predilection, compositional unity and organicism implicitly symbolize and valorize the transcendental mind that gave rise to them and that governs musical unfolding from behind the curtain, as it were. In this sense, everything in a musical work, from a Schenkerian perspective, is thoroughly personified.

Freud's Dreamwork

Freud and Schenker did not travel in the same social circles, but they were almost exact contemporaries. Both lived in Vienna and attended the University of Vienna only ten or so years apart. Both were Jewish but basically secular. Both were born of Galician parents. Their affinity was not only cultural but also intellectual: Cook claims that their respective theories were not just theories in the modern sense but "programme[s] for action," movements with political and religious overtones.⁴⁴ More specifically, both obviously adduced and valorized deep structures. Both Freud's and Schenker's theories seek to expose the motivations underlying complex and variegated phenomena.

Rather than attempt to consider Freud's theory of mind generally, I will focus on his dream theory in particular, because here his affinities with Schenker, in my estimation, are most tangible. Freud's dream theory is so well known as to warrant only a brief rehearsal. Events on the day preceding the dream trigger unconscious associations, thoughts of past experiences, and a wish, which the dream in a sense fulfills. The dream distorts these "dream thoughts" by transposing psychological intensity onto otherwise indifferent dream-day material; the dreamwork appropriates that material to express repressed memories and desires. Such distortion satisfies the agency of censorship. This agency is very strong in waking life, which is why unconscious thoughts often reach quasi consciousness only in dreams, where that agency is less strong. To slip by the censor, dream thoughts disguise themselves; in particular, several are often condensed into a single image, which is thereby "overdetermined." Sleeping dreams differ from daydreams in having a strong hallucinatory component, for which Freud offers an ingenious explanation: normally, we first receive sense perceptions, which then leave traces in memory; in dreams, this normal path is reversed. Due to censorship and to the absence of fresh stimuli,

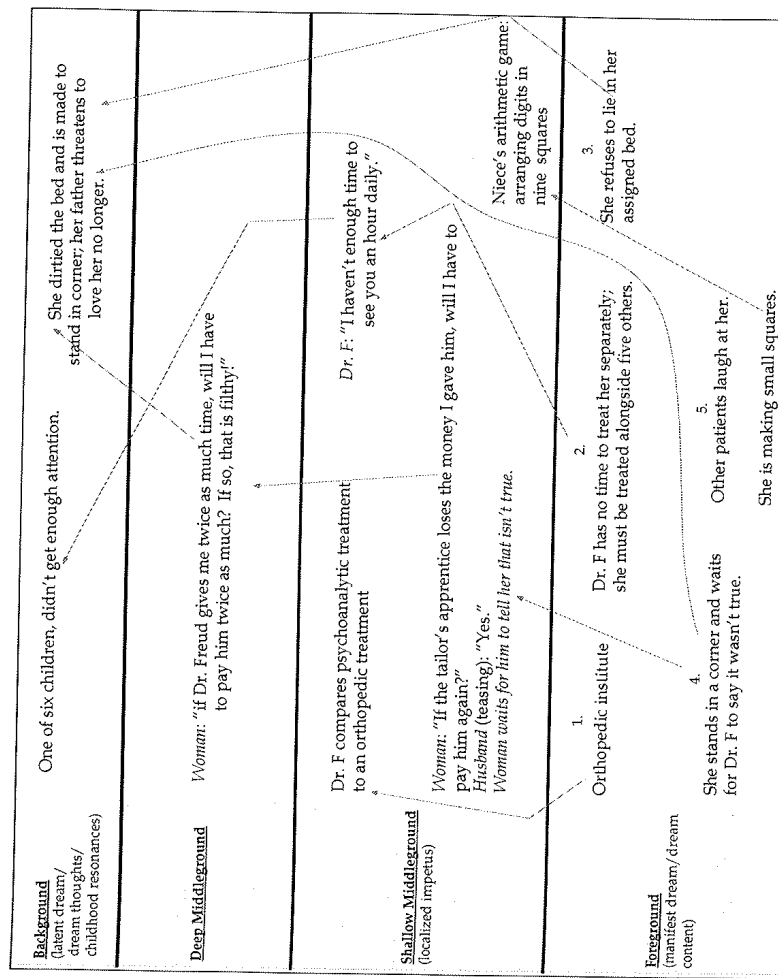


Figure 2.2. A Schenkerian-type graph of a "woman patient's" dream. Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, 232–34.

the process runs backward, from mnemonic traces back to sensory perceptions. In this sense, the dreamwork is "regressive."⁴⁵

The psychoanalyst and the analyst recover the latent thoughts underlying the dream content; they disentangle from a single image the various thoughts that catalyzed it. If the patient forgets part of the dream or doubts her memory of it, that is no impediment to analysis, for these are but a continuation of the dreamwork and its censorship. The point is not to reconstitute the dream perfectly but to disinter the unconscious thoughts it buries.

A Freudian dream analysis can, without too much effort, be plotted along Schenkerian strata, as figure 2.2 demonstrates.⁴⁶ The arrows indicate a derivational relationship—they trace the various modules of the manifest dream back to recent events (both inside and outside therapy) and those in turn back to the latent dream thoughts.

Meanwhile, Schenker's *Schichten* can readily be described in Freudian terms.⁴⁷ If ultimately all dreams, as Freud insists, fulfill a wish, then ultimately

Example 2.4.—(concluded)

all music, in Schenker's view, expresses the *Naturklang*, the "chord of nature"—the consonant triad as derived from the first five partials of the overtone series. The background, the first presentation of the *Naturklang* in linear form, is the unconscious of the piece, the latent dream. (Of course, a key difference is that whereas the latent dream is much more intricate than the manifest dream, the background, conversely, is much simpler than the manifest dream, the background (of which there might be several) is the preconscious agency of censorship, guarding the gates to the conscious, the foreground. It provides the initial set of transformations by which the background will enter the foreground in distorted or disguised form. Finally, the foreground (or perhaps the actual piece) is both the conscious mind and the sensory faculty. It is a dream of tones that variously conceals and reveals the latencies from which it arose.

Consider, as an example, Schenker's analysis of Bach's Little Prelude in D minor. Example 2.4 condenses this analysis, omitting some minor inner-voice detail.⁴⁸ The background describes an octave *Urlinie*,⁴⁹ which is divided into a fourth and a fifth (the two progressions overlap on $\hat{5}$) based on the fact that

Example 2.4. J. S. Bach, Little Prelude in D Minor: voice-leading graph (after Schenker, "Bach: Twelve Short Preludes, No. 6").

(continued)

D²-A¹ unfold over the initial tonic chord, whereas A¹-D¹ unfold over the cadential progression (i-iv-V-i). Middleground 1 begins the process of transposition, most notably by changing the melodic tone C² of the background from a dissonance (a seventh) into a consonance (a third); it also changes the melodic tone G¹ of the background from a perfect consonance (an octave) into an imperfect consonance (a sixth). We might regard this process of inverting consonance and dissonance as analogous to inverting psychical intensities. (Recall how the dreamwork foists strong emotions and desires onto otherwise innocuous material.) Then, the penultimate bass note is shifted back to coincide with the F; entities that were separate become conjoined or condensed, as in the dreamwork. Middleground 2 continues the transformational process, transmuting B^b into a different object altogether: B₁. Thus, the middlegrounds collectively perform the operations of inverting psychical intensities, condensation, and displacement.

The foreground introduces its own motive, that of a fourth (indicated with brackets), which takes on its own internal logic, irrespective of the foreground's relationship to higher levels. That is, the fourth motives have identity as such even though not all share the same "structural description" (in Richard Cohn's phrase). For example, Schenker identifies both the D-C-B^b-A of measure 1 and the B^b-A-G-F of measures 1-2 as fourth motives, even though the former falls neatly within a triadic span, the latter does not (for the B^b, a neighbor note, falls outside the A/F triadic boundary). In his later work, Schenker hesitated to posit motivic connections in such cases, because he came to believe that a pitch configuration assumes motivic status by being derived (in Cohn's words) "from the *Ursatz* via voice-leading transformations, rather than its treatment elsewhere in the piece."⁵⁰ Consequently, "many surface contiguities which were recognized by traditional theorists, including the early Schenker, are now [in late Schenker] considered false entities."⁵¹

By analogy, Freud submits that the connections among events within the dream itself are in a sense illusory in that they represent separate, latent content:

There are dreams in which the most complicated intellectual operations [seem to] take place, statements are contradicted or confirmed . . . just as they are in waking thought. But here again appearances are deceitful. If we go into the interpretation of dreams such as these, we find that . . . what is reproduced by the ostensible thinking in the dream is the *subject-matter* of the dream-thoughts and not the *mutual relations between them*.⁵²

(Ostensible) motives at the foreground are analogous to connections among thoughts in the manifest dream: connections among ideas in the manifest dream signify deeper, latent content, meaning that the connections themselves are merely apparent; just so, such faux motives as described above relate not to each other but to deeper levels, which they embellish.

Assessment

Clearly, all three models just discussed valorize depth, that is, forces operating beneath or on sensuous surfaces. But of Goethe, Kant, and Freud, Freud seems to valorize deep structures the most. That is, he seems concerned with "foreground" phenomena—neurotic symptoms, parapraxes, jokes, and so on—mainly for the window they open onto subterranean forces.⁵³ (This stands to reason, because he is, after all, primarily concerned with alleviating mental pathologies, the key to which, in his view, is disinterring repressed thoughts and desires.) Goethe, in contrast, is interested in growth, in how the *Urphänomen* actualizes itself in particular organs and appendages. Likewise, Kant's faculty of transcendental apperception is not a force lurking behind diverse phenomena but a faculty acting *on* them; the unity of the transcendental subject is a pretext for binding a manifold.

We might therefore place Goethe and Kant in one corner, Freud in the other. As for Schenker, we cannot easily place him in either. As we have seen, his theory resonates with all three philosophies in particular ways; it is, in some fashion, structurally analogous with each. Perhaps examining Schenker's own statements as well as the particulars of his mature methodology will clarify the philosophical camp to which he most belongs.

Schenker, as I previously mentioned, often adopts a kind of zealous rhetoric by which the *Ursatz*, like Freud's unconscious, is the truth, one not just deep seated but actually hidden: "The fundamental structure amounts to a sort of secret . . . which, incidentally, provides music with a kind of natural preservation from destruction by the masses."⁵⁴ Schenker relished such secrecy on the basis that it immunized his beloved masterpieces against what he viewed as disintegrated (localized) hearing and musical mediocrity. Similarly, in discussing motivic parallelisms, Schenker speaks of "the mysterious concealment of such repetitions [as] an almost biological means of protection: repetitions thrive better in secret than in the full light of consciousness."⁵⁵ These quotes substantiate Cook's contention that both Schenker's theory and Freud's have a strong mystical component, perhaps a trace of Talmudic philosophy.⁵⁶ Both regard the truth (of mental illness for Freud, of the musical masterwork for Schenker) as concealed, not readily apparent, and thus as needing inspired analytical intervention to be seen. In Cook's words, "Whether in religion, psychoanalysis, or musical analysis, then, truth takes the form of revelation, being accessible . . . only to the adept."⁵⁷

The notion of concealed repetition, on the one hand, affirms Schenker's allegiance to organicism: note how he describes it as a "*biological* means of protection" (my italics). We might even regard concealed repetition as strengthening that allegiance. For, back in his *Harmony* of 1906, Schenker was talking about moment-to-moment motivic repetitions, motives at the foreground, and thus part-to-part relationships (though he likened even these to biological

procreation). In *Free Composition* of 1935, in contrast, he is talking about level-to-level motivic repetitions and thus part-to-whole relationships. On the other hand, that "whole" is, in Schenker's view, mysteriously tucked away. By casting deep structure as "hidden," he shows his Freudian colors, colors that tint the organicism on which he relies in other respects. That is, Goethe's depth is not concealed; the *Urphänomen*, by virtue of entelechy, lives to be realized in the particular part. Thus, I believe Schenker, knowingly or not, filtered his beloved organicist model through the Freudian ethos of his time, thus upsetting that exquisite balance of surface and depth that Goethe achieved and placing more emphasis on deep or hidden structure.⁵⁸

I don't mean to reduce Schenker to Freudian terms, for the "Freudian ethos" to which I refer can itself be seen as belonging to a broader paradigm—namely, a geological or archaeological one, by which deep structure is buried and in need of excavation. Cook affirms that "like Freud's use of the [archaeological metaphor], Schenker's entails digging through the surface to recover what lies beneath, removing the layers of accretion or misrepresentation that have built up over the years."⁵⁹ Holly Watkins detects the gradual ascendancy of this model across the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries; she maintains that artists and writers gradually relinquished organicist metaphors in order to embrace geological ones. If, at the beginning of the eighteenth century, depth was thought visible in the surface, it was later thought hidden and needing to be exhumed.⁶⁰



For the performance-oriented reasons I alluded to previously, I find this geological trend dubious—better, in Schenker's case, to regard the foreground as a transparency through which the higher levels are visible rather than as opaque, sedimentary rock under which they are buried. Better still, let's not reify and fetishize the background, not consider it apart from the foreground phenomena into which it grows (within a Goethean scheme) or that it renders unified and coherent (within a Kantian scheme). Fortunately, Schenker lends some support to this stance, for his archaeological protestations are belied by his preferred, generative methodology.

As I mentioned before, Schenker's typical analytical narrative takes us on a journey from background to foreground. That is, he presents a particular level as an elaborated and, in some respects, transformed version of the previous, more abstract level rather than a more normative version of the next, more concrete level.⁶¹ But Schenker's own remarks on his methodology are somewhat equivocal and muddled:

The question of why my representation of voice-leading strata moves in all cases from the background . . . to foreground, and not . . . vice versa may be

answered as follows: actually, it makes no difference. Nevertheless, the opposite direction of presentation [from foreground to background] . . . would give more consideration to the needs of teacher and student, but would not so accurately represent the true process.⁶²

In one breath, Schenker states that it does not matter which direction one takes and that the "true process" is top-down. I will try to disambiguate his stance in three strokes:

- (1) The compositional process is essentially top-down. Of course, this "process" is conceptual rather than temporal: the composer may conceive of all levels simultaneously, with different structural levels perhaps occupying different levels of consciousness.
- (2) *Once the levels are generated*, the analyst can proceed in either direction, or shuttle back and forth between the two. That is, music-structural relations are symmetrical—generation and reduction are two sides of the same coin.
- (3) The difference in direction is procedural rather than logical: for analysis, it is more efficacious to proceed from background to foreground; for pedagogy, the reverse is true.

The upshot is that Schenker's generative methodology suggests that the *Ursatz* is merely the point of departure from which the lower levels and the musical composition arise. That the *Ursatz* is meant to generate and unify musical content does not mean that the content is reducible to its structural or conceptual origins. In fact, the *Ursatz* can be viewed as a universal backdrop against which the particularities of a piece are all the more apparent, "the general as a foil for the sensed particular," in Pieter van den Toorn's memorable phrase.⁶³ For example, the *Ursatz* establishes tonal and melodic goals that the foreground resists or delays. Often, it is precisely the details that exceed or evade the structural plan that have the greatest expressivity and urgency—qualities that would not arise, or would not be as salient, if not for the backdrop of the *Ursatz*. Indeed, the point is not to hear *through* foreground phenomena to the background, but rather to hear them *in relation* to the background. In short, that Schenker departs from the background does not mean that he prioritizes it. Quite the contrary: the point of the *Ursatz* is to eventuate in the foreground and illuminate its particularities. In Schenker's theory, the *Ursatz* serves the actual music, not the other way around.⁶⁴

Thus, Schenker's rhetoric notwithstanding, I think it is completely justifiable to view the *Ursatz* not as buried treasure but as a germinal seed whose goal is to blossom into a resplendent musical organism, or as a mode of synthetic apperception, or both. From this latter, Kantian perspective, the *Ursatz* is not merely readily visible through the surface but is actually a constituent of the

surface, in the sense of being crucial to perceiving foreground events as coherent. A remaining question, however, is whether the *Ursatz* (and other high-level entities) is merely symbolic of this faculty or is an empirical apparatus by which actually to exercise this faculty. In other words, does the *Ursatz* merely signify transcendental apperception or does the *Ursatz* actually enable us, the listeners, to practice it? Does the *Ursatz* symbolize the notional "I" that is the music's central persona? Or does it aid the empirical "I"—I the listener and how I actually make sense of the piece? The next section grapples with this perhaps unanswerable question.

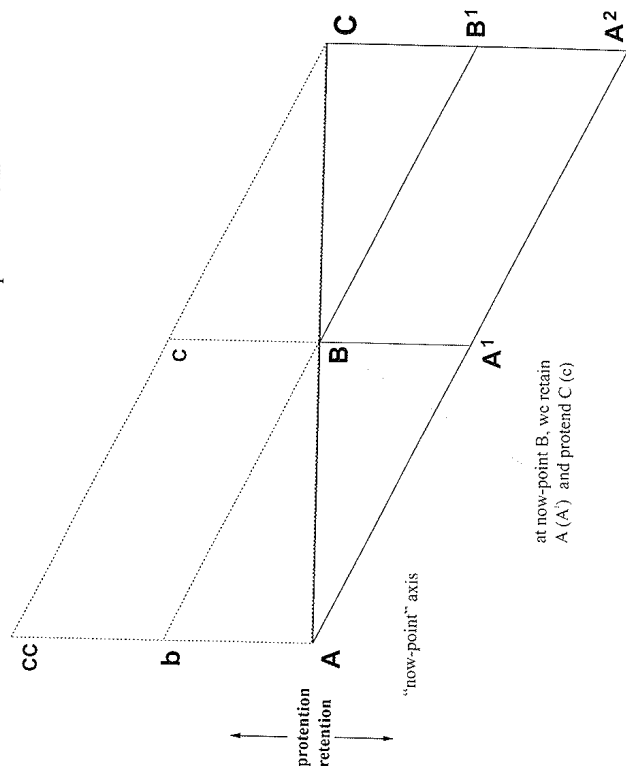
A Phenomenological View of the *Ursatz*

Recall Schenker's assertion that what unifies a sequence of tones is the mental retention of the primary tone ("the primary note is to be retained until the point at which the concluding note appears"). This statement is Husserlian in spirit, and can be seen as but the tip of the phenomenological iceberg. This is no place to attempt a full-blown theory of Schenkerian perception, but I would like to take a few small steps in that direction.

Markand Thakar offers a lucid account of music phenomenology, although not from a Schenkerian perspective. I reproduce and gloss one of his key diagrams in my figure 2.3.⁶⁵ Basically, Thakar argues that aesthetic objects or experiences are indivisible, such that every "now-point" is infused with both the past and future: elements of the past are retained, those of the future protended. In this sense, though music flows in time, it is a simultaneity nonetheless. Naturally, we don't literally hear everything at each now-point, but each now-point sounds as it does and makes the sense it does by virtue of its relation to the remembered past and anticipated future: "In any experience of an indivisible . . . temporally extended object, our focused consciousness at any now-point includes the corresponding now-phase, the retention of 'just having been' now-point experiences, and the protention of 'as-yet-to-come' now-point experiences."⁶⁶ In this model, even where the whole is not literally replicated as one of its parts, as in the transferred *Ursatz*, the whole is still in some sense refracted through each and every part.

Thakar does not musically concretize the dual processes of retention and protention; invoking Schenker is one way to do so. (Of course, other, non-Schenkerian modes of phenomenology are possible.) Using a very brief example—the incipit of the "Freude" theme—my example 2.5 appropriates Thakar's model from a Schenkerian perspective. As this example reveals, I have reservations about the notion of protention. One could perhaps make a case that retention is somewhat natural: to hear a tonal melodic or harmonic progression coherently, we necessarily condense (reduce) previous elements, "chunking" them, in order to secure a context in relation to which subsequent sounds make sense. But the notion of protention is much more problematic

Figure 2.3. Thakar's music-phenomenological model. Adapted from Thakar, *Looking for the Harp Quartet*, fig. 6.2. Used with permission.



and enigmatic. Do we have a natural predisposition to hear $\frac{3}{2}$ of the *Urtinie* or *Zug* as implicating $\frac{3}{2}$ - $\frac{2}{1}$, for example, such that we pretend the final $\hat{1}$ from the get-go? I doubt it. I don't doubt, however, that one could *learn* to hear that way; one could deliberately aim to listen in a Schenkerian way. In other words, I don't view Schenkerian hearing as inborn or inevitable, but rather as a specialized kind of hearing we need (or most of us need) to learn and to consciously adopt (or not) in each instance. (This is not to say that, once we learn it, we cannot listen in a Schenkerian mode spontaneously and unconsciously.) It is arguably only within an acknowledged Schenkerian framework that I hear a structural $\frac{3}{2}$ at or near the beginning of a piece as implicating a $\frac{3}{2}$ -line *Urtinie* (or, more locally, a third *Zug*), that I hear in some sense a future promised by $\frac{3}{2}$. This way of hearing, I believe, is largely theory-dependent.

To reiterate the question I posed at the outset: is the *Ursatz* more symbolic of ideal (transcendental) perception or indicative of how one might actually perceive music? Clearly, I lean toward the former, but the latter is possible with sufficient training and will. In other words, just as literature and music do not merely reproduce epistemes and experiences but modify them and create new ones, neither does Schenkerian theory reflect the way we hear. Rather, it is a system of metaphors in terms of which we could hear. It is to this metaphorical aspect of Schenkerian theory that I now turn.

A Performative Approach to Schenkerian Analysis

On the broadest level, Schenkerian theory might well be a directive to imagine that the music at hand arose organically or intuitively, and also, concomitantly, that it unfolds organically. Again, viewing organicism as metaphorical is consistent with early Schenkerian thought. To offer another apposite quotation from "The Spirit of Musical Technique": "the material of musical content never arises completely organically, but rather, the composer's teleological intent is to bring it about that the arrangement of proportions and the order of moods . . . should be judged *from the perspective of the organic*."⁶⁷ Kevin C. Karnes states that these moods "must be heard and evaluated, in other words, *as if* they were the products of an unimpeded outpouring of spontaneous invention."⁶⁸ He adds, "Schenker considered it of the utmost importance that [the] element of deliberate craftsmanship be employed with discretion, so that the finished work *sounds to the listener as if . . . it were a product of nature rather than compositional artifice*."⁶⁹ If organicism was a metaphorical truth for the later Schenker, for the earlier Schenker it was a contingent metaphor.

Large-scale tonal structure, as I have argued, is likely something we decide to hear; the *Ursatz*, *Züge*, and so forth are imaginative apparatuses we consciously adopt and then aspire to perceive. That long-range tonal hearing generally is not an inborn ability of even relatively experienced musicians is

borne out empirically by Cook's widely cited study "The Perception of Large-Scale Tonal Closure." Cook found that the longer the musical work, the less likely university music students were to notice that the piece was altered to end in a different key from where it began—in other words, the less likely they were to perceive long-range tonal structure. Invoking this study, Daniel Leech-Wilkinson states, "long-term structures are theoretical, useful for composers, an invitation from analysts to *imagine* music in a particular way, but apparently not perceptible."⁷⁰

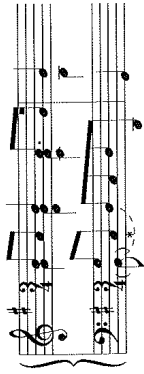
More specifically, Cook argues that Schenkerian analysis offers a metaphor of Fuxian counterpoint in terms of which it asks us to perceive the music. In other words, through a Schenkerian filter, we listen to a piece as if it were a prolongation of the prototypes of species counterpoint.⁷¹ Consider example 2.6, taken from the first volume of Schenker's *Counterpoint*. Here he ascribes a passing function to the bass's C even though it is approached by leap. This function depends on the Fuxian model, in terms of which Schenker has us hear this example, and in the absence of which we probably would not hear passing motion. Strict counterpoint is thus a metaphor that extends the meaning of this passage, or creates a partially novel meaning. Likewise, in discussing another attribution by Schenker of passing-ness (in Schumann's "Aus meinen Tränen spriessen"), Joseph Dubiel states:

In this story there is no issue of whether the note in question "really is" what Schenker says—only of what would be involved in making it so, including the issue of how much of Schumann's score can be interpreted how deeply in the attempt. The quality of "passing" is here clearly not an automatic outcome of the way the tones are organized, but an interpretation to which the tones' organization leaves them open.⁷²

As Dubiel's last clause implies, these metaphorical attributions are hardly arbitrary, for there is a reasonably good fit between the domains of species counterpoint and free composition; the Schenkerian metaphor thus seizes on what is objectively present in music even as it extends it metaphorically. (Clearly, not every metaphorical model will fit music equally well.) Note, for example, that Schenker claims the C (in ex. 2.6) has a passing quality partially because the harmony to which it belongs, the predominant *Stufe*, harmonically passes to the dominant chord.⁷³

The point, then, is not to state an objective fact about the piece—"it elaborates this contrapuntal configuration"—but rather to ask, "What would it be like to hear the piece as an elaboration of this contrapuntal configuration—what particular details come to light at a result?" Put more baldly, Schenkerian theory is a Waltonian directive, a rule of the game (the "game" here being a particular hearing/performance): *hear these configurations as embellishing or prolonging tonal prototypes*. But to reiterate, a Schenkerian directive contrasts with

Example 2.6. Prolongation of the passing tone (after Schenker, *Counterpoint*, book 1, example 250).



(Handel, *Chaconne* in G major, var. 2)

more typical ones, ones we adopt more intuitively—for example, those implicit in a mimetic art form (*pretend the actors on the stage are real people with real thoughts and feelings*) or those basically built into a musical genre or style (*hear the recaptulatory restatement of the secondary theme in the tonic as a gesture of resolution and closure*). In contrast to these, a Schenkerian directive is one we more or less consciously adopt. A Schenkerian insight, in short, is “an action disguised as fact,” a catalyst for imaginative perception.⁷⁴



We can't stop here, however. Remember that most musical imaginings are dual imaginings: most structural imaginings have salient somatic and expressive connotations. I will address each in turn. The notion of structural levels employs a spatial metaphor, whereby (mostly) noncontiguous pitches are collected into various spaces—conceptual categories and physical spaces (strata) on the page—indicative of their structural significance. The “source domain” of space is mapped onto the “target domain” of time, rendering it more tangible.⁷⁵ The concept of voice leading is at once spatial and somatic: it implies an agent moving through tonal space toward a goal. Schenker himself associates the *Urlinie* with the notion of tone-space.⁷⁶ Note that this voice-leading metaphor is anthropomorphic. Most music-somatic metaphors will be, because the physicality ascribed to a musical process is more easily envisioned as enacted by an implicit musical persona than as motion in general.⁷⁷

On a more specific level, Schenkerian theory is replete with metaphors that are perhaps even more saliently somatic in orientation: these include unfolding, register transfer, reaching over, and motivic processes such as expansion and compression (motivic parallelisms). All of these rely on the metaphor of musical space and of an agent occupying such space in various ways.

Consider, for example, the Chorale St. Antoni, which forms the basis of Brahms's *Variations on a Theme of Haydn* (ex. 2.7a; ex. 2.7b offers a slightly simplified version of Schenker's graph).⁷⁸ The deep middleground reveals a 3-2-1 *Urlinie* whose *Kopftón* is embellished by an upper-neighbor 4. This figure, D-E-b-D-C-(B-b), is found, verbatim, as a local parallelism, in measures 1-3

and, in incomplete (interrupted) form, in measures 4-5 (see the brackets and beams in ex. 2.7a). In relation to the opening figure which has an elongated quality due to the hypermetrical situation depicted in example 2.7a, the D-E-b-D-C of measures 4-5 has a compressed quality. The performers could seize on this compression, minutely accelerating the tempo. Note that the quicker rhythms—the sixteenth notes in measure 4—can be seen as a surface manifestation of the compressed parallelism; they gently intensify the underlying motivic acceleration. Just so, the performers, in playing those sixteenth notes at a slightly quicker tempo, letting them gather momentum into the downbeat of measure 5, gently intensify the built-in rhythmic acceleration. The quicker rhythms betoken the quicker parallelism (relative to mm. 1-3); the quicker tempo betokens the quicker rhythms.⁷⁹

Next, consider the middle section, starting at measure 11. Schenker's *Untergreifzug* (motion from an inner voice) distinctly connotes something gradually emerging from beneath the surface into the light of day; that light is perhaps musically embodied by the E-b of measure 15. Not only is it the melodic apex of this phrase (discounting the F that is its neighbor) but it marks the point at which we regain the middleground melodic pitches. The performer can depict this emergence with a slight crescendo across measures 11-14, even though one is not marked. However, the *pp* in measure 15 implies that regaining the main melodic thread is perhaps a bit unsettling; seeing light after prolonged darkness forces us to shield our eyes. The oboe could perhaps embody that quality by pinching her sound on the E-b. It is not just a matter of a softer dynamic but of a thinner timbre, of conveying a sense of wincing, recoiling, withdrawing, or something along those lines.

Next, consider that the second oboe's chromatic line in this section—F-E-b-E-b—is an expanded retrograde of the E-b-E-b-F of measures 4-5. (The second oboe's line continues onto the lower strings' D in measure 14.) A slightly broader tempo in measures 11-13 will perhaps attest to this elongation; an alternative is for the second oboe to backphrase, lingering slightly behind the other instruments. Also, assuming that the basses in measures 4-5 crescendo slightly, the second oboe might decrescendo in response to the retrograde factor (even as the first oboe crescendos). Next, notice the *Urlinie*-parallelism in the basses of measure 14. A fitting response might be to move it forward since it is so compressed; one might also play it somewhat cursorily, clipping the final note, because the *Urlinie* tones appear here in an ephemeral, unadorned guise, with no pomp and circumstance. In contrast, the middleground-parallelism in the next five measures is the most expansive of any parallelism in the theme; consequently, it might be played at the broadest tempo thus far or with viscous *tenuti*, as if to suggest that this line will take a very long time to unfold, or that we don't want it to be over too soon.

theory might “carry further suggestions, whose connotative dimension is more marked. A background of ‘stability,’ contextualizing features deemed ‘disruptive’ at a more local level, is not merely a technical feature of a tonal style, but impinges on the potential mood of a phrase or section in which it is exemplified.”⁸² For Cumming as well as for myself, metaphors in Schenkerian theory are particularly live or salient, expressively marked in relation to the unmarkedness of comparable metaphors in other music theories, and expressively suggestive for the musical works to which they apply. Such markedness perhaps accounts for the widespread appeal and longevity of Schenkerian theory.

In short, if Schenkerian analysis implicitly frames musical processes in terms of our physical engagement with the world, it also frames them in terms of our emotional reactions to such engagement. After arriving at such isolated physical-cum-emotive states, the interpreter’s next task is to bridge the gaps among them, to integrate these states into some sort of narrative framework. Such a narrative approach will render these isolated physical and emotive states more specific; it will engender a more multidimensional, complex human condition that the performer can more readily identify with, physically embody, and musically project through sound, touch, and time. This I hope to show in my reading of Chopin’s great C-minor Nocturne.

Part Two

Analytical Essays
