

Musicology as Epiphenomenon: Derivative Disciplinarity, Performing, and the Deconstruction of the Musical Work

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This article advances a critique of musicology from my perspective as a music practitioner, a performer. As much iconoclastic think piece as scholarly essay, it targets what others have already assessed to be problematic aspects of the discipline, its adherents, and the ways in which they manufacture “rigorous” knowledge about music in the western classical tradition.¹ Although I am sympathetic with the issues raised in previous assessments—I will in fact revisit many of their themes—my piece differs in that its claims are drawn in a deliberately exaggerated and pointedly disruptive manner to initiate what I hope will be a positive outcome, a disciplinary transformation that opens

For their constructive feedback, I am especially indebted to David Staines, Catherine Schwartz, Nicole Grimes, Gilles Paquet, David Elliot, and Parvez Patel.

¹ See, for instance, Richard Taruskin, *Text and Act: Essays on Music and Performance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995); Christopher Small, *Musicking: The Meanings of Performing and Listening* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1998); Nicholas Cook, “Between Process and Product: Music and/as Performance,” *Music Theory Online* 7 (2001): 1-31, revised and reprinted as “Music as Performance,” in *The Cultural Study of Music: a Critical Introduction*, eds. Martin Clayton, Trevor Herbert, and Richard Middleton (New York: Routledge, 2003), 204-214; and Carolyn Abbate, “Music—Drastic or Gnostic?” *Critical Inquiry* 30 (2004): 505-36.

up at the center of musicology a space for a discourse grounded in the embodied experience of performing music.²

Opening up such a space might be taken as a covert attempt on my part to sneak into academia a wholly subjective and presumably ineffable experience, something that does not properly belong in an environment geared towards the dissemination of authoritative, objective knowledge; indeed, there is already a vital culture for performers to articulate that experience separate from academic discourse, a culture in which they can give voice to what they know of music through engaging in the activity of performing. But it is precisely this separation between actual practice and academic knowledge that motivates me to pinpoint what I take to be a foundational inconsistency in musicological discourse itself, that the subject position of the performer, although already latent within musicology, is held back from becoming a legitimate source of knowledge about music on par with current academic discourse. It is held back because, or so I will argue, musicology harbors a prejudice against the performer: its assimilation into technical rationality—that ideology which reduces practice to a supplement of research—has allowed musicology to displace music making altogether and to make of music an object for the subjective experience of listening—whether as a mental construct for aesthetic contemplation or as the focus of audience gazing.

² I define performing as that physical activity through which music is brought into existent, audible actuality by “human agents with certain abilities and with certain intentions about their activities and beneficiaries” (Stan Godlovitch, *Musical Performance: A Philosophical Study* [London: Routledge, 1998], 15) in order to distinguish it from the broader category of playing of which it is a species. Although playing undeniably involves an embodied experience of music, performing—together with its cognates, practicing and rehearsing—imposes a set of constraints on music-making not-present in those species of playing not oriented towards realizing specific artistic goals in actual performance situations. These constraints, in my view, have a determinant effect on that experience and its actual musical outcome; I will not elaborate on the extent of that effect in the present essay, but I will nevertheless assume a qualitative difference between the experiences and outcomes that arise from, for instance, performing a staged, operatic role and singing in the shower.

The reader will be hard-pressed to find in the present essay a concrete description of what performance- as opposed to listener-based knowledge looks like, however, particularly in relation to specific musical compositions; that articulation must of necessity occupy future essays. I will draw on that knowledge nonetheless—in, for example, my formulation of the geometry of the musical experience sketched below; but I will be more occupied here with opening up a space for such knowledge to become articulate *within* musicology rather than with articulating it *per se*. This I will do by showing how—contrary to the belief that it cannot be integrated into academic discourse—musicology itself depends upon, at the same time as it suppresses, the performer's subject position. I will demonstrate this thesis as follows: first, I outline how musicology displaces performances with "works" in order to install a seemingly common object fit for the industry of knowledge production as governed by technical rationality; then I target the method musicology deploys for manufacturing its various knowledge products, a type of disciplinarity that, in deriving tools and methods from already existing disciplines, reinforces the demotion of performing as an intellectually deficient form of engaging with music; I then assimilate the conceptual paradigm underlying the passive contemplation of "works" into a broader model of the musical experience derived from the vital action of making music in specific performance situations; finally, I analyze the mechanics of two widespread musicological projects—history and criticism—against this performance-based model to reveal an anterior but silenced performance underlying their methodologies.

Two related conclusions follow from this analysis: (1) that "works" are de-contextualized mental constructs stripped from the specific performance situations that give rise to them; and (2) that a musicology focused on "works" is an epiphenomenal discourse dependent for its existence upon the very performance events the work-concept suppresses. Rather than discard the concept, my analysis recuperates it: instead of serving as a distant object which disengaged listening subjects can apprehend in the privacy of their own minds, the musical work becomes the performance process through which

music enters actuality in specific but shifting contexts of actual artistic production. In short, the musical work *is* the work performers undertake to give birth to music in actual practice.

I

Centralizing performing over other activities may prove to be an impossible, perhaps even undesirable, task, especially given the state of pluralism into which musicology has evolved in the last few decades: all activities can function simultaneously as centers when both the objects and the means for manufacturing knowledge about them have diversified to the extent they have in musicology.³ Indeed, the field of music studies has become so diverse, so entrenched within the numerous domains constituting institutional research, that the old division between historical and systematic seems to have become an obsolete cartography: professional music discourse is no longer dominated by a single discipline, but is colonized by any researcher who stakes a claim within the perimeter defining the study of music. In Kevin Korsyn's more negative diagnosis, musicology has splintered into antagonistic factions each vying for epistemological authority.⁴

Nevertheless, performing has yet to be given its due as a *primary source* out of which institutionally legitimate knowledge about music can arise. This is because musicology, its diversification (or splintering) notwithstanding, transmits a prejudice against the activity, one it inherits from the history of ideas about music and one which is reinforced in an academic environment that programs its adherents to think about, and behave in specific ways towards, practice, musical or otherwise: rather than take the activity of music-making as an integral

³ For an overview of the current state of musicology, see Alastair Williams, *Constructing Musicology* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001); and Giles Hooper, *The Discourse of Musicology* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006).

⁴ Kevin Korsyn, *Decentering Music: A Critique of Contemporary Musical Research* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 5-31.

and necessary component for making music accessible to the industry of knowledge production, musicology denies not only its importance, but also its relevance, to the knowledge products it manufactures. Although Fritz Machlup, in his wide-ranging survey of the knowledge industry, defines knowledge production as involving “not only discovering, inventing, designing, and planning [knowledge] but also disseminating and communicating [it]” and applies that definition equally to “*how-to* knowledge as well as to knowledge *of* something and knowledge *about* something;”⁵ musicologists are programmed from the outset of their academic deformation not only to suppress performing (how-to knowledge), to look down upon it and those who undertake it as an inferior form of engaging with music; but also to uphold as superior, as more prestigious, those forms of knowledge about music (knowledge *about*) which can be produced without any recourse to actual music making.

This characterization might be disregarded for being overly generalized: there are many musicologists who are sympathetic to performance, indeed, who are accomplished performers themselves; but because it is a discourse embedded in academia, musicology necessarily transmits a deep-seated prejudice against practice, one with ancient roots in the Aristotelian distinction between *theoria* and *praxis*, and the set of concepts privileging “knowing” over “doing” the distinction underpins.⁶ Musicology transmits this prejudice irrespective of the sympathies or abilities of any of its individuals because even those individuals have been assimilated into a particular ideology governing how academia at large relates theory to practice, knowing to doing:

⁵ Fritz Machlup, *Knowledge: Its Creation, Distribution, and Economic Significance* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 1:8. He continues: “To know what and to know that are neither less nor more important than to know how.” *Ibid.*

⁶ For a survey of how this distinction and its cognates have determined thought about western classical music, see Karol Berger, *A Theory of Art* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 108-61. For a brief history of the difference between knowing and doing, see Lydia Goehr, *The Quest for Voice: Music, Politics, and the Limits of Philosophy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 132-40. For Machlup’s discussion of their hierarchical difference, see *Knowledge*, 27-58.

technical rationality privileges over practice one particular kind of knowledge, that manufactured through an objective research paradigm which separates the researcher from the object being studied and which produces a generalized, propositional knowledge for its own sake to which validity is granted for its logical coherence and congruence with evidence accessible to third-party verification. Although manufactured apart from and often without any concern for its relevance for or application in actual practice, such knowledge nevertheless exerts an authoritative force to which practice remains subservient: in this hierarchy, practice becomes professional, becomes authoritative and rigorous, only when it implements or applies such knowledge in actual practical situations.⁷ In music studies, the demotion of actual musical practice to a lower epistemological status is the logical outcome of a technical rationality that enshrines only an academic knowledge product as a superior form of, and a sufficient condition for, legitimate knowledge.

Since such knowledge—even when it boasts of being fully autonomous from actual musical practice—has to be “about” something nonetheless, many—but by no means all—musicologists direct the knowledge they produce to a particular musical “object.” Interestingly, that “object” has tended not to be actual performances but, rather, a conceit—the musical work. This object has, admittedly, become problematic of late with definitions of its nature extending from the fictive to the actual, as when Steven Davies defines it as “a performed sound structure...made normative in a musico-historical setting.”⁸ Musicological discourse, however, relies on a definition that

⁷ For one critique of this ideology together with an articulation of its antithesis, see Donald A. Schön, *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action* (New York: Basic Books, 1983), 21-69.

⁸ Stephen Davies, *Musical Works and Performances: A Philosophical Exploration* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 97. An overview of the various ontologies of the “work” can be found in *ibid.*, 37-43. For the “work” as fiction, see Robert L. Martin, “Musical Works in the Worlds of Performers and Listeners,” in *The Interpretation of Music: Philosophical Essays*, ed., Michael Krausz (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 119-27. Davies rejects Martin’s premise, that the “work” is a fiction. See Davies, *Musical Works and Performances*, 4.

posits an abstract and inter-subjective schematic construct anterior to—and spatio-temporally distinct from—the ephemeral “performed sound structure” that instances it.⁹ The reduction to abstraction might seem to circumnavigate the problem of the ephemeral nature of performance by substituting a seemingly universally accessible construct amenable to the mechanics of verification principle required by technical rationality; but the existence of such a construct is by no means guaranteed by the act of intentionality, the property of minds to be about, or directed towards, some “thing;” for in this formulation, the work-concept itself instances a fallacy peculiar to intentionality, namely that objects of the mind exist *because* minds can attend to, or apprehend, them. The fallacy is, in my view, elusive because the adeptness with which musicological discourse can make verbally or graphically concrete what its adherents apprehend as the “work” creates the impression that the abstraction to which the mental activity of contemplation is directed actually exists beyond the confines of the minds attending to it.

The error is more clearly exemplified when the object in question belongs to that class of things that are agreed unequivocally as having no actual existence, such as the mythical continent of Atlantis, the Fountain of Youth, or unicorns. Although one can contemplate, imagine, draw, represent, or talk about such objects, none of these activities is sufficient for guaranteeing that such objects have *actual*

⁹ The classic phenomenological reduction to such a construct can be found in Roman Ingarden, *The Ontology of the Work of Art: The Musical Work, The Picture, The Architectural Work, The Film*, trans. Raymond Meyer with John T. Goldthwait (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 1989), 3-133. For more general discussions of the work-concept, see, Lydia Goehr, *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works: An Essay in the Philosophy of Music* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992); and Michael Talbot, ed., *The Musical Work: Reality or Invention?* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2000). Francis Sparshott goes so far as to say that the work-concept has salience “only for teaching in school courses, in financial contexts involving copyright, in historical discussions and in advertising musical performances to a public.” See Francis E. Sparshott, “Aesthetics of Music—Limits and Grounds,” in *What is Music? An Introduction to the Philosophy of Music*, ed. Philip Alperson (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1986), 81.

existence: to presume that they do *because* minds can attend to them is to beg the question. This error—what might be called the fallacy of intentionality (not to be confused with the intentional fallacy)—may be at the root of what constitutes the “works” about which musicological projects strive to manufacture knowledge. Indeed, that musicologists can contemplate, imagine, graph, catalogue, or otherwise write about “works” is, in my view, insufficient for establishing that “works” exist as actual objects we can know. Knowledge about “works” will be continued to be manufactured nonetheless, and this is why the insufficiency of intentionality for guaranteeing the existence in actuality of such an object must be kept in the dark, because its detection would have disturbing implications for that knowledge: what musicology claims to know about “works” is a knowledge about entities that do not exist outside the minds that make claims to know “them.”

Despite its exclusively mental status, however, this entity has come to stand as a symbolic substitute for the materially present, actually performed music that is said to instance “it.” Reified into a virtual object, a simulacrum for an actual performance, “it” is accorded a place of privilege in the repositories of musicological knowledge, of which the *Thematisches Verzeichnis* or the *Leben und Werken* are but two of its too many manifestations. “Works,” therefore, serve as the center around which various—but by no means all—musical and musicological projects revolve: composers compose “them,” philologists reconstruct “them,” historians contextualize “them,” analysts analyze “them,” hermeneuts interpret “them,” critics critique “them,” performers perform “them,” listeners listen to “them.” As Richard Taruskin has observed, the whole culture of “classical music has been assimilated... to the [work-concept].”¹⁰

The distinction between contemplating “works” and engaging in performing is one of the foundational oppositions underlying

¹⁰ Taruskin, *Text and Act*, 12. See also Carl Dahlhaus, *Esthetics of Music*, trans. William W. Austin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 10. For one critique of the musical work as autonomous object, see Nicholas Wolterstorff, “The Work of Making a Work of Music,” in *What is Music?*, 101-29.

musicological discourse, and the hierarchical structure of this opposition is long overdue for deconstruction. Recent scholarship may seem to have accomplished just that by shifting its gaze from “works” to performance events, both live and recorded. In a widely read essay, Carolyn Abbate develops a vigorously argued defense for turning live performances into legitimate objects for academic reflection, while José A. Bowen presents a taxonomy of the recorded history of performances of Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony.¹¹ But merely overturning the opposition, although a necessary step in deconstruction, is insufficient in that it avoids upsetting the ideology of technical rationality generating the two terms in the first place.¹² It is insufficient because turning attention from “works” to events compounds what I take to be a problem underlying work-centered discourse and transplants it into performance-centered discourse. Although scholarly engagement with the material presence of a performance event differs substantively from contemplating the metaphysical abstraction of the “work,” it fails to encompass the experience of music that emanates from those who engage music as performers (i.e. as someone who actually mounts the concert stage and delivers a performance with all its attendant risks). It fails because focusing attention on performance events shares with work-centered discourse the tendency to construct music as a distant object for listener consumption. Shifting attention to specific performance events might succeed in resisting the work-concept, but the maneuver inadvertently reinforces precisely the same agenda driving technical rationality: to discipline music into something observed from a distance, detached from the direct experience of music that arises through making it audible in practice. Contemplating performance events not only reduces the experience of music to a function of listening to *somebody else* make music; it also provides a discourse limited to articulating what

¹¹ See Abbate, “Music—Drastic or Gnostic?” 533-36; and José A. Bowen, “Finding the Music in Musicology: Performance History and Musical Works,” in *Rethinking Music*, eds. Nicholas Cook and Mark Everist (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 424-51.

¹² On this point, see Jacques Derrida, *Positions*, translated and annotated by Alan Bass (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1982), 40-42.

transpires only within that function—even when those who primarily listen might play what they are listening to themselves.¹³ Shifting the musicological gaze from “works” to performance events, therefore, ignores the knowledge and experience specific to the subject position of those who are *not* sitting in the audience (or on the couch), but who are actually on the stage playing music, singing music—in short, *doing* it.

Current scholarship again seems to take account of this subject position by folding the performer’s experience into that of a universalized listening subjectivity: with the performer thus annexed, musicologists can apprehend music as “listeners” and manufacture knowledge that supposedly applies equally to, and accounts for how, performers make and experience music. Even when the performer’s experience is paid some heed, it is nevertheless absorbed into the scholar’s position, which is usually that of an external observer, a listener. In his holistic ethnography of the symphony concert, for instance, Christopher Small pays lip service to the performer by referring to the contents of interviews with orchestral musicians on their experience of playing in an orchestra,¹⁴ while Abbate’s critique of the “gnostic” attitude in musicological discourse envelopes the performer under the rubric of “drastic” and gives an albeit short account of what transpired from that subject position whilst playing the piano in the (admittedly artificial) context of a lecture-recital/demonstration.¹⁵ Despite these efforts,

¹³ On the characterization of musicology as a discourse for disciplining listeners, see Nicola Dibben, “Musical Materials, Perception, and Listening,” in *The Cultural Study of Music*, 193–203. Roland Barthes broaches the difference between listening and doing in “Listening” and “Musica Practica,” in *The Responsibility of Forms: Critical Essays on Music, Art, and Representation*, trans. Richard Howard (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 245–60 and 261–66 respectively. What Barthes identifies as two styles of music, one for listening and one for playing (261–62), I take to be two differing modes of attending to music. The latter is, too often, put in the service of the former, as in Charles Rosen, *The Classical Style: Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1997) where performing serves formalistic-style criticism which itself services “historical contextualism” (more on this below).

¹⁴ Small, *Musicking*, 64ff and 113.

¹⁵ Abbate, “Music—Drastic or Gnostic?” 510–11.

both critics speak largely from the position of a concert attendee, Small disguised as an omniscient observer taking in a hypothetical performance, and Abbate as an audience member advocating for “a practice that at its most radical allows an actual live performance (and not a recording, even of a live performance) to become an object of absorption.”¹⁶

The failure to distinguish clearly between knowledge arising from the listener’s experience and knowledge arising from the performer’s rests on a wholly false assumption, that “music is *primarily* something to which one listens” (emphasis mine).¹⁷ Two problematic premises follow from this assumption: (1) that the musical experiences specific to both performers and listeners are identical; and (2) that performers can, as a result, be reduced to a type of listener. Of course, it would be foolish to assert that “listening” does *not* form an integral component of the performer’s experience of music, as when performers assess their own artistic work or that of other performers; but when engaged in the act of performing, performers cannot *also* listen to their own performances in the same way as do those who are listening to said performances: performers are, rather, engaged in *living through* the experience that is “the music” by bringing into material existence, through the application of technique, the sounded-by-product of what they imagine themselves to be living through. To be sure, performers are occupied with the logistics of performance external to that lived-through experience, matters germane to ensemble, stage action, intonation, or technique; they may be thinking of something that has nothing to do with the immediate task underway; but while they

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 506.

¹⁷ Alpers, ed. *What is Music?*, 3. It would take considerably more space than is allowed in this essay to survey the extent to which it is the listener’s, rather than the performer’s, subject position that dominates musicological discourse; two examples can be found in Jerrold Levinson, *Music in the Moment* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997); and Andrew Dell’Antonio, ed., *Beyond Structural Listening? Postmodern Modes of Hearing* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004). Both depart from the architectural or structural mode of listening that dominates academic discourse; but both remain firmly ensconced in listening nonetheless.

are performing, their attention can never be directed to, nor of the same nature as that of, the listener who can only observe or take in the musical object at a distance from the means by which the object they are apprehending is produced. It might be fair to say that when a performer becomes a listener, he ceases to be a performer. Despite this difference, the experience of music that is the performer's is superseded in musicology by the limitations of an experience that is one removed from the real thing, indirect and remote. Rather than centralize the experience of music at the site of someone whose experience of music is limited to merely listening, which is the pathology of musicology, an even more radical practice than that proposed by Abbate would allow the subject position of the performer engaged in the process which gives rise to that actual, live performance to be a source out of which professional knowledge can be constructed.

The tendency of music scholarship to reduce the experience of music to its lowest common denominator—to a distant object experienced by listening subjects at one remove from the performers who might make it—may be a necessity rooted in the need to have a stable object to which all can attend on more or less equal terms for the purposes of third-party verification. But it may also derive from the belief that the experience of music as something we do, as an activity that takes place within and through the subjective experience of performing bodies, is inaccessible to and irretrievable by academic discourse. Because academia tends to represent the body as a realm resistant to verbalization, experiences that take place therein or thereby would, or so it seems, fall outside the scope of what academics deem admissible as a matrix out of which knowledge can be manufactured.¹⁸

¹⁸ The current model for what is and is not accessible to discourse relies on Lacan's distinction between the Imaginary, the Symbolic, and the Real. Of these, only the middle term, that which is susceptible to symbolic representation, is deemed acceptable for knowledge production. Recent work in cognitive science, however, argues that the way in which we conceptualize the external world is rooted in a wholly embodied, subjective, inner experience. For one example of the application in music studies of this theory, see, for instance, Lawrence M. Zbikowski, *Conceptualizing Music: Cognitive Structure, Theory, and Analysis* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002).

This apparent resistance may be as much a function of the limitations inherent in the discourse academics use to speak about music as it is of their intellectual limitations for reflecting deeply on their actual practice as musicians, however. To those of us who do perform, such grounds for exclusion from the umbrella of institutional legitimacy derive less from epistemological concerns and more from the ideology of technical rationality governing knowledge production in the academy. They are an invention designed to disenfranchise or marginalize alternate modes of knowledge so as to protect those that wield power in the academy for producing and disseminating authoritative knowledge: the scientific, the humanistic, and the socio-scientific.¹⁹ Unlike these classes, which tend to stress abstract conceptualization or empirical verification that can be verbally or graphically represented, performing embodies a knowledge that exceeds the limitations intrinsic to the symbolic forms these privileged classes rely upon to certify their knowledge product. Indeed, performing belongs to a wholly other class of knowledge, what has been termed “delta knowledge,” and as such is based in a modality of knowing that occurs only in action.²⁰ At first blush it might appear that such knowledge is not amenable to verbalization; but it circulates nevertheless in the discourses of teaching, coaching, practice, rehearsal, performance-based listening, and post-performance analysis, in a primarily oral—and sometimes un-verbalized (but not, therefore, ineffable)—state, the full breadth and depth of which is incompletely preserved in treatises and pedagogical writings and only fractionally indicated by the markings performers add to scores.²¹ This discourse is all too easily marginalized as utilitarian, for being directed towards mere “training” or “practice” rather than the more “scholarly” preoccupation

¹⁹ For his system of knowledge classification, as well as a brief discussion of the tensions between these three classes, see Machlup, *Knowledge*, 59-100.

²⁰ For one discussion of delta knowledge, see Willem Gilles and Gilles Paquet, “On Delta Knowledge,” in *Edging Toward the Year 2000: Management Research and Education in Canada*, eds. Gilles Paquet and M. von Zur-Muehlen (Ottawa: Canadian Federation of Deans of Management and Administrative Studies, 1989), 1-30.

²¹ Some aspects of this discourse are captured in John T. Partington, *Making Music* (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1995).

of making claims that “such and such is the case.” But despite its utilitarian function, there is no denying that embodied in the discourse of “doing” is not only a specialized knowledge of the experience of the body making music, but also a knowledge for attending to the music made by the bodies performing it.²²

What is crucial about such knowledge is its potential not only for becoming a class of knowledge on par with but distinct from those in good currency, but also for transforming the latter in a substantive way. But because performance-based knowledge falls under the rubric of “practice,” its ascent to equal status is squashed by the ethos of technical rationality. In this ethos, performers (and to a lesser extent composers) are reduced to a benighted class whose inclusion in the university setting always seems subject to question and whose moral, social, and intellectual status is in need of “civilizing” by scholarship, by their submission to the dictates of the academic.²³ The hierarchical relationship between “academic” and “applied” is most clearly illustrated in a curriculum that requires performers to demonstrate their “academic” competence from the first year of undergraduate study to the last year of doctoral work, but exempts academics from demonstrating their competence *as musicians* past the naïve level of acquaintance that constitutes their undergraduate training.

The result of assimilating music studies into the ideology of technical rationality has been to reduce performance to an object for the

²² See, for instance, Schön’s account of knowledge exchange and implementation in the chapter on master classes in his *Educating the Reflective Practitioner: Toward a New Design for Teaching and Learning in the Professions* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1987), 175-216.

²³ For one recent example of this relationship, see Jane W. Davidson, ed., *The Music Practitioner: Research for the Music Performer, Teacher, and Listener* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing House, 2004). Here, research is offered up for the “practical benefits [it] can bring to the practical musician,” in a “book which is of direct relevance to the music practitioner,” and which “can engage music practitioners and demonstrate the many potential links between research and practice.” *Ibid.*, 1. In 21 of its 24 essays, these links direct the flow of knowledge in only one direction, from research to practice, with the four essays of Part 3 offering some inkling of how the knowledge that arises in practice can inform research.

externalist-observational researcher and performance-based knowledge to the status of the utilitarian. If “works” are, as I argue, figments of the imagination, then the irony of a musicology that displaces practice in favor of knowing “works” should be immediately apparent: just as performance might be characterized as a utilitarian if skillful activity that produces a mere ephemeral outcome, so too does musicology practice various “skills” borrowed from diverse academic disciplines to manufacture knowledge geared towards facilitating the subjective experience of attending to an object that exists only in the mind, as a mere imaginary construct. Despite the parallelism, musicology elevates knowledge about mental constructs manufactured through the disciplined practice of borrowed skills, above the knowledge embodied within a performance discourse directed towards the skillful practice of real, if ephemeral, music. Under the banner of technical rationality, musicology can purport that it is possible to construct authoritative knowledge about music without any recourse to its actual practice.

II

The reasons for this hierarchical displacement of “doing” with “knowing” go deeper than any of the facile distinctions that oppose mind and body, objectivity and subjectivity, gnostic and drastic; for these oppositions are merely categories constructed by technical rationality to differentiate matters accessible to its particular mode of knowledge production (mind/objective/gnostic) from matters that are not (body/subjective/drastring). The reasons are largely political and involve how musicologists use these categories to aggrandize themselves, and the knowledge they manufacture, in a broader intellectual community programmed by technical rationality and, consequently, skeptical of the inclusion of music studies within its envelope. Intolerant and demeaning towards epistemological alterity, such skepticism is not to be found inscribed in institutional policy and, therefore, cannot be documented, but it extends nevertheless throughout the various levels

of the academy, in the unwritten attitudes held by students, professors, and administrators assimilated into technical rationality.

The attitude might be illustrated with a short anecdote involving an actual exchange between a music student and a group from another academic unit:

“What department is this?” the group asked the music student.

“Why, this is the music department,” she answered.

Their response: “*Music?* You mean you can *actually* get a degree in music?”

Although the question may have been innocent, its tone (indicated with italics) suggests otherwise: music is not worthy of inclusion within the circumference of institutional legitimacy because music is about “doing” and not about “knowing.” It is of particular interest to note that the exchange did not stop there, however. To their last question the music student replied with one of her own:

“What department are *you* from?”

Their reply: “Science.”

Her response: “*Science?* You mean you can *actually* get a degree in science?”

They remained silent.

This response encodes a brilliant answer to a stupid question: by challenging the status of scientific knowledge, she diffused (albeit temporarily) the arrogance that emanates from those who conform to this or any dominant intellectual paradigm.²⁴ Her response houses a lesson that musicology still needs to learn. Instead of adopting the strategy of this music student, musicology systematically deploys another mechanism to answer such an attitude. The mechanism,

²⁴ Korsyn refers to the same anxiety, and recounts a similar anecdote, in *Decentering Music*, 64-65.

what I will term “derivative disciplinarity,” is endemic to music studies in that musicologists use it to bring their knowledge product within the circumference of institutional legitimacy by constructing a discourse for understanding and explaining music in terms of already legitimated disciplines. Whether in the formalist-positivism of the old, the postmodern strains of the new, or the empirical slant of the latest, the history of musicology has unfolded according to the degree to which its adherents have not only borrowed tools and methods from anterior disciplines already inhabiting the institution, but also have allowed those disciplines to dictate both its object and its methods for studying it: the text scholar borrows from philology the techniques for establishing a critical edition; the music historian borrows from art and literary history to formulate analogous historical periods and he deploys an analytic method that puts “works” into their proper genre or style category; more traditional historians construct the contexts in which such “works” were created and circulated; the identity and context of “works” having been authenticated, hermeneuts can then “read” them for immanent or constructed meanings according to various critical methodologies; or empiricists can subject “works,” and the broader contexts in which they are consumed, to various modes of empirical study with all of its attendant technological paraphernalia.²⁵ The list can go on. What everyone’s diagnosis of music research misses is that the means by which the authority of each research program is consolidated derives exclusively from appeals to anterior disciplines. Although such appeals have spawned a more diversified and pluralized musicology than the founders of the discipline could ever have envisioned, no one seems to have recognized that all musicological projects replicate precisely the same maneuver: who knew that the “newness” of any advancement in

²⁵ For examples of the latter two types, see (among others) Lawrence Kramer, *Classical Music and Postmodern Knowledge* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995); and Eric F. Clarke and Nicholas Cook, eds., *Empirical Musicology: Aims, Methods, and Prospects* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

musicology really depends on suppressing its origin in precisely the same mechanism of derivation as its predecessors?²⁶

Perhaps this is how fields of study develop and expand the knowledge they manufacture, but it has always seemed strange to me that musicologists never strive to consolidate the authority of that knowledge from the subject position of a musician. This may be due to a lack of confidence in their own identities as musicians, but in allowing themselves (and consequently music) to be influenced by anterior academic identities, musicology has distanced the knowledge it produces through derivative disciplinarity from the object the aforementioned prejudice is often directed against—music-making as an activity out of which legitimate knowledge about music can arise. In maintaining this distance, derivative disciplinarity thereby reinforces the opposition between “knowing” and “doing” that splits music studies into the “academic” and “applied” camps.²⁷ The opposition governs not only the administrative infrastructure and the degree programs various institutions deliver, but also how individuals construct their identities (or how they are constructed for them), how they are categorized as individuals, how their work is (or is not) adjudicated, how they have been educated, and how and whom they educate. Unfortunately, the difference is an unequal one in that technical rationality enables a dual class system which elevates the academic above the practitioner by bestowing on “knowing” a greater value than that accorded “doing.”²⁸

²⁶ Early exhortations to open up the discipline can be found in Joseph Kerman, *Contemplating Music: Challenges to Musicology* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985), 17; and Rose Rosengard Subotnik, “The Cultural Message of Musical Semiology: Some Thoughts on Music, Language, and Criticism since the Enlightenment,” *Critical Inquiry* 4 (1978): 741-68, reprinted in *Developing Variations: Style and Ideology in Western Music* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), 169-94. For a critique of this tendency, see Hooper, *The Discourse of Musicology*, 5-40.

²⁷ For one perspective on how the division between academic and applied structures music schools, see Bruno Nettl, *Heartland Excursions: Ethnomusicological Reflections on Schools of Music* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1995), 55-68.

²⁸ For one discussion of how the “intellectualization” of music sustains this divide, see Richard Leppert, *The Sight of Sound: Music, Representation, and the History of*

In its most extreme form, this ideology allows a quasi-apartheid to form in music studies, one that favors those whose claim to authority lies in the knowledge they manufacture about an art they cannot practice above those whose parallel claim rests in the expertise with which they practice that art.

Of course, it is simplistic to couch the situation in this way, by equating academics with those in possession of legitimate, authoritative knowledge and performers with those who, because they merely practice music, are precluded from possessing a comparable knowledge: active musicians know that they must have a knowledge base from which to practice, and academics do undertake activities to produce knowledge. The difference is, however, crucial because it underlines the one activity academics do *not* undertake that distinguishes them from the active, productive musician: instead of taking performing as a viable matrix out of which they can construct and test knowledge about music, academics reduce the activity to a supplement of research, as either a vehicle for presenting the knowledge they manufacture, or as data for empirical study. Either reduction is ingrained early in the educational path charted for music students who aspire to become—or are seduced into becoming—academics: their intellectual formation as musicians is deformed by displacing the never-ending process of mastering music with the mastery of skills and discourses derived from alternate disciplinary identities for the purposes of knowledge production.²⁹ The deformation is subtended by a covert displacement into that identity, a conscription made palatable with monetary incentives—in the form of funding, admission scholarships, and research or teaching assistantships—and the promise of attaining status through knowing music in a way superior to that of everybody else. The assimilation from musician to “academic” may be gradual or immediate, but it is

the Body (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993). For an alternate vision of how the class system structures the relationship between students, professors, and administrators, see Nettl, *Heartland Excursions*, 45-55.

²⁹ The importance accorded these identities derives not so much from any relevance they have for the education of the musician, but rather serve to maintain a secure position in the institutional power structure for the professors who lobby for them.

overtly signaled by how aspiring academics come to name themselves, not as *musicians*, but as historians, theorists, critics, ethnographers, scientists. Although the academy aligns such identities to music by virtue of the object to which they attend, and although musicologists might fancy themselves as musicians, the discipline that constitutes each one of them effectively reduces that identity to a modifier: the subject position of the musician becomes subject to a greater authority embodied in the nouns it qualifies. This substitution creates a bizarre irony of academic accreditation: music students aspiring to become authorities on music can earn a Master of Arts without ever having to master the art.³⁰

The irony might be diffused by pointing out its basis in mistaking an MA for an MMus, a PhD for a DMA, or the art object for its mode of production. But the mistake carries a point, nevertheless: such students eventually become professors who profess to succeeding generations how music should be played, heard, studied, taught, understood, experienced. Their authority as professors resides, however, not in the expertise with which they cultivate the art (even though some of them might cultivate the art with expertise), but in the extent to which they subjugate it to the procedures they have assimilated from the parent disciplines defining their newly formed academic identity.³¹ That authority is rooted in technical rationality, in how faithfully they manufacture a discourse that derives from anterior disciplines. Although it is easier to appropriate someone else's

³⁰ To those students who lack the discipline for mastering the art, this substitution allows for a tantalizing prospect: they can become institutionally recognized authorities on an art form they do not have to practice!

³¹ The lecture/recital format is a case in point, the performance event being subject to the disciplinary procedures applied in the formation of the material presented in the lecture. Rare is the recital that refutes or debunks the lecture. Of course, musical performance itself is incapable of making claims; but musical performance can, nevertheless, serve as a venue out of which claims can be advanced. The non-relationship between performance and scholarship is aptly documented in Taruskin's "Report from Lincoln Center: The International Josquin Festival-Conference, 21-25 June 1971," *Current Musicology* 14 (1972): 47-64, reprinted in Taruskin, *Text and Act*, 322-43.

tools and methods instead of constructing or developing one's own, intellectual laziness accounts for only a part of the formulaic nature of musicological knowledge. Reconstituting one's identity in terms of an already legitimated discipline not only makes music intelligible to those academics in other departments who do not readily acknowledge a place for it in the academy; more importantly, it allows the musicologist and his knowledge to be legitimated by analogy. It is for this reason that each branch of musicology resembles a disciplinary parent to the letter and the study of music is made to march in step. Although musicology may have come to the academy only recently, it may be the first academic unit (or perhaps the only one) for which derivative disciplinarity has precluded it from establishing its own disciplinary identity.³²

As the mechanism through which musicological discourse is manufactured and professional identities are formed, derivative disciplinarity turns the study of music into a world ripe for disciplinary colonization by technical rationalists. Instead of producing educated and functional musicians, the mechanism generates disciplined authors who manufacture knowledge about music in terms of conceptual paradigms derived from anterior disciplines which in turn dictate the terms through which music is understood; instead of facilitating the production and consumption of actual music, it shifts the emphasis to the production and consumption of words about mental constructs or distant objects. In the end, the time spent mastering these words reduces its disciples into (at best) intramural musicians, amateurs who "perform" in the protected environments of the salon, office, classroom, and lecture-recital; or (at worst) it renders them into armchair musicians who strive as hyper-informed listeners to regulate how music is composed, performed, heard, and understood by enforcing agendas specific to their disciplinary deformation. In either case, scholarship and book-learning become institutionally legitimated substitutes for that mode of

³² On this aspect of the discipline, see Bruno Nettl, "The Institutionalization of Musicology: Perspectives of a North American Ethnomusicologist," in *Rethinking Music*, 288.

knowing music specific to the activity of performing it. The profession of musicology, enveloped within the ethos of technical rationality, allows its adherents to bypass deepening that experience beyond the naïve level of acquaintance that constitutes their undergraduate training and to climb a ladder of status and acquire instead a position of authority in an unequal regime that values as superior a modality of knowledge obsessed with abstraction, disengagement, and verbalization, over the type of knowledge that arises in concrete perceptions of doing what is real in real-world, performance situations.

The hierarchical relationship that ensues, between the types of knowledge in good currency and knowing through doing, has allowed musicologists to reclaim the status they may not have won as the musician that brought them to the academy as students; but through it they channel back into music studies the prejudice against music they sought to redress. For from within their derivatively constituted identities, musicologists treat the performative as an extraneous component of the musical experience by demoting it to a supplemental status in the mechanism of knowledge production; they characterize both its process and its outcome as having little of the intellectual substance their derivative deformation affords them; and they view performers themselves as tradesmen whose identity as music makers precludes them from being knowledgeable about the art they practice with such discipline. Like an obedient technical rationalist, the musicologist's derivative makeup accords the performer legitimacy only when his performing demonstrates its subservience to the discourses musicology derives from anterior disciplines. In the process, what is learned *through* the activity of performing, the knowledge that can be constructed by reflecting *from* performing, is negated. Nowhere is this negation as clearly exemplified than in a collection of essays offering "practical advice" on—believe it or not—aspects of performance: the collection is published *in the hope* "that [it] will inspire readers to further investigation about performance, whether by perusing other general literature on performance studies... or by delving into more specialist

publications.”³³ Understanding performance—or music in general for that matter—becomes a function not of knowing through doing, but of reading a book.

III

Derivative disciplinarity has succeeded in making musicology legitimate within the regime of technical rationality, but it has done so at a significant cost to the experience of performing music. Its effectiveness in rendering the study of music acceptable depends on reconfiguring that experience so as to make it conform to the conceptual models underlying the disciplines musicology appropriates for manufacturing knowledge. The geometry implicit within these derivative models has allowed for the substitution of a discourse latent within music-making with ones derived from outside that activity and applied to a generalized listening experience. Because derivative disciplinarity furnishes the musicologist with ready-made, easily transferable discourses that can be appropriated, applied, and assimilated into music studies, the mechanism obscures the reason why performance events have been replaced with the work-concept: despite its exclusively mental status, the latter provides for a much more stable “object” about which a properly disciplined listening subject can replicate knowledge according to the appropriate disciplinary paradigm and consolidate his position of power within the academic infrastructure. “Works” function, therefore, not so much as preexistent “objects” to which academic discourse can be directed, but as the “objects” whose existence arises out of the authority attached to the discourses assimilated into technical rationality. The relationship is, of course, reciprocal in that both discourse and object mutually consolidate the status of each other, but the results are the same: because technical rationality accords authority to the knowledge

³³ See John Rink, ed., *Musical Performance: A Guide to Understanding* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), xiii.

musicology constructs about “works,” musicologists can quite rightly discipline how composers, performers, and listeners engage with actual music.

That mode of engagement can be schematized as follows: since composers create “works” and encode the instructions for their recreation in scores, performers have to understand the conventions for decoding those instructions if they are to realize “faithful” instances of such “works” in “authentic” performances; and listeners need to understand the contexts of the creative process if they are to gain access to, and can commune with, those “works” as they are instanced in those performances.³⁴ Performances, whether “authentic” or not, can interfere with such communion, however, and, for this reason, bypassing them altogether so as to access “works” directly by reading scores and aligning something heard in the mind’s ear with what is viewed in the notation becomes the aim of those sufficiently “educated.” This institutionally sanctioned reduction effectively turns the score into a text to be read for meanings or deep structures encoded in a notation that embodies, not performative instructions, but a visual representation of an aural sound image heard in the privacy of the mind.³⁵ The procedure necessarily relegates the performative component to a secondary or supplemental activity that services listening to “works”: performances become windows listened *through* for various stylistic abstractions, formal patterns, underlying tonal structures, extra-musical meanings, and social forces, as attributes or properties of the “work” which those performances instance.³⁶ When performances are removed from the

³⁴ The clearest, short exposition of this philosophy can be found in Igor Stravinsky, *Poetics of Music in the Form of Six Lessons*, trans. Arthur Knodel and Ingolf Dahl (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975), 121ff.

³⁵ The conditions for this text-based, cryptographic paradigm were arguably laid well before the inauguration of musicology as an institutional discipline in a tradition that negated the identity of the performer in favor of that of the composer. See Mary Hunter, “‘To Play as if from the Soul of the Composer’: The Idea of the Performer in Early Romantic Aesthetics,” *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 58 (2005): 357-98.

³⁶ On this aspect of work-centered discourse, see Goehr, *The Quest for Voice*, 140-49.

equation altogether, the “work” becomes an object that can be read without ever having to refer to, or bother engaging in, a performance event. Either mode of engagement ignores the material reality of that event and passes over the processes that went into its making in order to attend to something abstract, non-material, and non-corporeal. Reinforced by the primacy of the sound recording as the principal medium through which music is experienced, this reduction so thoroughly underwrites how musicology disciplines its adherents and its detractors to experience music, that it is difficult for even those who actively perform to acknowledge how distorted the geometry of their experience becomes in the mechanisms of derivative knowledge production geared towards explaining mere mental constructs.

The geometry can be extricated from such mechanisms nonetheless by paying heed to what happens when music is brought into existent actuality through performing. The geometry I propose distinguishes between physical objects, actions, and ideas and, as such, has points of contact with models already implicit in the literature.³⁷ My geometry is drawn not from reading books, however, but from reflecting on my own experience as a professional singer, and such, should be taken as the first installment towards an articulation of performance-based knowledge. Since my experience is entirely within the Western European Classical tradition—the standard operas and oratorios from the baroque to the modern eras, including premieres of compositions at which the composer was present in some capacity (as performer or listener)—the geometry is not intended to speak to other musical practices, although it can certainly be adapted to them. Restricted to the experience of performing music in that tradition, therefore, the geometry necessarily maps relationships between the three agents that comprise that tradition (the composer, performer, and listener), the activities they undertake (composing, performing, and listening), and the material outcomes that result from their activities

³⁷ In his critique of text criticism, Taruskin attributes the superficial literalism into which such criticism falls to “the confusion of a physical object (text) with an act (performance) and an idea (work).” See Taruskin, *Text and Act*, 39.

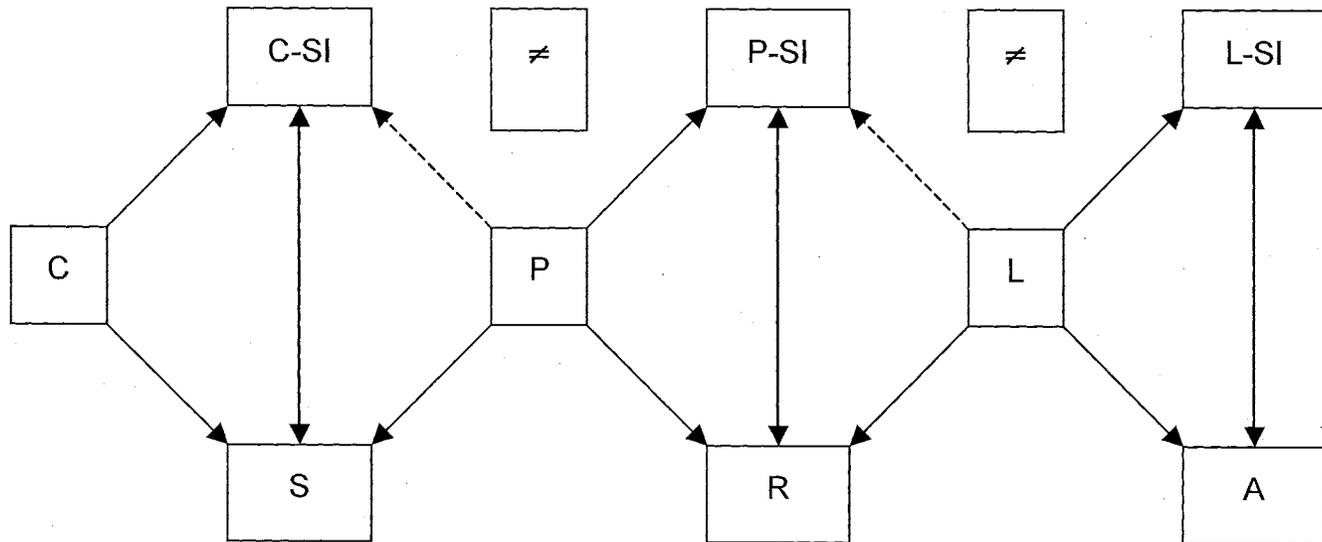
(the composition, the performance, and listener response). Although similar maps have certainly been drawn in the past,³⁸ they tend to omit a particular category of components evident to performers who reflect on their activity. I will call these components “sound images” (cf. Taruskin’s “idea”), imaginary conceptualizations of music which exist in the inaccessible interior of each agent but which give rise to the material outcomes accessible to anyone who chooses to attend to them.

Diagram 1 charts the relationships between these components: along its central horizontal axis are the three agents (C, P, and L), above them the sound images they produce (C-SI, P-SI, and L-SI), and below them the material outcomes to which those sound images give rise (S, R, and A). The sequence by which music is brought into being in this geometry is straightforward: the composer (C) imagines a sound image (C-SI)—which he may or may not execute into a realization (R)—the instructions for the recreation of which are housed in the notation of the score (S). When the performer executes these instructions to recreate that specific R, he envisions what he thinks (or hopes) is the C-SI, but is in fact realizing an R that arises from a wholly different sound image, his own artistic conception of a piece peculiar to the circumstances of his particular performance situation (P-SI). When attending to the R presented in that situation, listeners (L) create their own sound image (L-SI) that can be made explicit in verbalized accounts (A) but need not be for the geometry to be complete.

I will avoid specifying at present the complex nature of the processes by which each of the three agents yields their distinct material outcomes, as well as the degrees to which these processes can mutually influence one another, in order to highlight two crucial relationships

³⁸ See, for instance, Roger Sessions, *The Musical Experience of Composer, Performer, Listener* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974); Jean-Jacques Nattiez, *Music and Discourse: Toward a Semiology of Music*, trans. Carolyn Abbate (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 69-90; Carolyn Abbate, *In Search of Opera* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 5; and Berger, *A Theory of Art*, 54.

Diagram 1. A Geometry of the Musical Experience.



between those outcomes and their attending sound images.³⁹ The first involves a reciprocal relationship—indicated by vertical double arrows—between both components. Material realizations do not flow from preexisting sound images in a unidirectional circuit: each produces the other so that the realization of an idea into material form alters or conditions the idea that simultaneously gives rise to the realization. Thus, the identity of a C-SI, P-SI, or L-SI is contingent on the material realization to which each of these images gives rise. The reciprocal relationship between an SI and its materialization is experienced when a performer, for instance, conceives of shaping a phrase in a specific way but in the realization of that phrase in performance might hit on an alternate shaping which he did not previously conceive but which is viewed as preferable. As a result, his concept of the phrase is altered.

The second crucial relationship involves the non-identity between adjacent sound images (C-SI, P-SI, and L-SI) indicated by both the dotted lines joining P and L to an anterior SI in the sequence, and the non-equal signs separating each SI along the topmost plane of Diagram 1. Although the reverence accorded the compositional agency has tended to discipline performers and listeners alike to desire communion with the C-SI when engaged in their respective activities of performing and listening, these agents construct altogether different sound images (either P-SI or L-SI) reflecting the conditions imposed by the particular, localized position they occupy as performing or listening subjects. The dotted line connecting P to an anterior C-SI and L to an anterior P-SI indicates, therefore, the illusory identification with the SI of an anterior agency. In its most radical formulation, this non-identity relationship between adjacent sound images means that for every agent in the C-P-L network, a sound image will always differ even when the agent is the same person, as when a composer makes a recording of his own performance of his own music and listens to the result after the fact. The desire to access or reconstruct a singular, fixed C-SI becomes, even in this scenario, a questionable and pointless objective.

³⁹ An attempt at drawing these influences, within the framework of semiotics, can be found in Nattiez, *Music and Discourse*, 76.

To those committed to the work-concept (and its companion, *Werktreue*), the geometry I have just sketched will give immediate pause for it seems to exclude the foundational object, as well as its associated value of fidelity, underlying musicological discourse. The geometry, however, does allow a place for what musicology names as the “work” even though it does not accord it the transcendental status the discipline takes as given. The concept can be enveloped within that which subsists in the imaginary realm, as what any of the three agents conceptualizes whilst engaged in their respective activities (as either the C-SI, P-SI, or L-SI). Thus, what a composer might identify as the “work” when he points to his score is the irretrievable C-SI for which the instructions encoded in the score are what he thinks are the means for realizing that C-SI into material reality, as a performance.⁴⁰ But when a performer realizes those instructions and claims in the process to be playing the “work” through their execution faithful or otherwise, he is realizing only his own P-SI no matter how much he believes he has accessed the C-SI. Similarly, when a listener claims to be attending to the “work” as he listens, he is attending to only what he envisions as the L-SI he constructs in response to a particular performance, real or imagined, even though he may be informed by the latest scholarship illuminating compositional intention. In this reconfiguration, the “work” becomes not a stable entity ontologically distinct from specific performances, but rather a local, plural, and fluid conceptualization of sound resistant to closure.⁴¹ Even if we accord this sound image a priority akin to what musicology accords the “work,” its identity is nevertheless contingent on its materialization, for the moment it enters the material realm, as either a score, a performance, or an account, its identity as an imagined idea is affected by its materialization such that the identity perceived in the imagination is contingent on the materialization to which the imaginary idea simultaneously gives rise.

⁴⁰ I acknowledge that my reduction of the relationship between notation and performance does not take into consideration the nuances that Butt outlines regarding the function of notation. See John Butt, *Playing with History: the Historical Approach to Musical Performance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), chapter 4.

⁴¹ For a similar definition of the “work,” see Small, *Musicking*, 112-13.

Although this reciprocal relationship between imagined idea and material outcome is inextricable, only the latter circulates in an arena accessible to discourse. For this reason, each of the material outcomes left behind by composer, performer, and listener is of more importance in the social realm than any of the imaginary ideas of which they are the material trace. And of these three material outcomes, it is the performance that is paramount. If we accept that music exists only in and is defined by what is made audible through performing, the two other agents are dependent on the performer in an irrevocable way: a composer cannot transmit his creation to a listener, nor can a listener have access to it, without the intervention of an agency who realizes the notation into audible sound. Even though the relationships between the nodes of this geometry are irreducible and invariable, the process by which a performer yields that audible outcome will always generate a proliferation of Rs that differ from performer to performer, time to time, place to place. Thus, what a performer makes audible in the act of performing, and what a listener takes from that, will always differ from what a composer living or dead imagines, even when a performer aspires to recreate the C-SI for which he thinks his realization is the conduit, and even when a listener strives to condition his experience of that realization according to the dictates of even the most meticulously reconstructed C-SI. In this scenario, what we speak about when we speak of “the composer’s intention” is simply a component of a P-SI or L-SI that we authorize by attributing its origin to a compositional agency. As such, the concept of fidelity to some imagined original defined by the intentions of that agent becomes moot, and artistic meaning is free to proliferate in the shifting contexts of artistic production.”⁴²

⁴² For extended critiques of the pertinence of compositional intention to performance, see Randall R. Dipert, “The Composer’s Intentions: An Examination of their Relevance for Performance,” *The Musical Quarterly* 66 (1980): 205-218; and Peter Kivy, *Authenticities: Philosophical Reflections on Musical Performance* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995), 9-46.

IV

As has already been observed in the literature, it is both to arrest and to obliterate such proliferation, to rein back the multiplicity generated through performing, that musicology reconfigures the geometry sketched in Diagram 1 to a fixed and stable construct, a point of origin it identifies as the “work.”⁴³ To construct a stable identity for that origin, musicology has tended to appeal to the context of its composition, to, in Bruno Nettl’s formulation, “the way it came about, the order in which its parts were added, the artist’s intention, its relationship to the artist’s other works and its cultural context in general, and the identity of the creator.”⁴⁴ Because performance events differ from and exceed the identity of such a construct, suppressing both their difference and excess is necessary to maintain the stability of that object for derivative knowledge production. To this end, first-wave musicology (embodied in the various projects servicing “historical contextualism”) brings the reconstruction of an authoritative score—the “critical” edition and the contexts out of which it arose—to bear on how performers and listeners are supposed to understand “works” in the present.⁴⁵ Put another way, one agenda of the music-history project is to legitimate $P \rightarrow P\text{-SI/R}$ and $L \rightarrow L\text{-SI/A}$ only insofar as these agents replicate (or conform to) the conditions revealed in what historians reconstruct of an original, compositionally-centered, context. The project can and does extend beyond the circumstances of genesis to include the contexts

⁴³ Speaking of historical performance practice, Taruskin asserts that it “requires that we repudiate the proliferation of possibilities.” Taruskin, *Text and Act*, 33. In a similar vein, Butt outlines the history of notation as a reactionary attempt “to counteract the fear of the increasing openness of artistic meaning.” Butt, *Playing with History*, 105.

⁴⁴ Nettl, *Heartland Excursions*, 14. For a brief discussion of the importance of the work concept for musical historiography, see Carl Dahlhaus, *The Foundations of Music History*, trans. J.B. Robinson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 132ff.

⁴⁵ On the historical conceptualization of the artwork, see John Andrew Fisher and Jason Potter, “Technology, Appreciation, and the Historical View of Art,” *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 55 (1997): 169-85; 174-75.

of performing traditions and listening communities (under the rubrics of performance practice and reception history); but it nevertheless enforces a mode of understanding shackled to original context.⁴⁶

Even if we grant the possibility of reconstructing that context in all its authentic glory, the integrity of the project hinges on suppressing the extent to which the historian's discourse contradicts the *a priori* assumption underlying the primary lesson of history, the embeddedness of all human activity—including, and especially, the historian's own discourse—in specific contexts of production. By privileging the compositional moment, the music-history project subordinates not only the contextuality of all subsequent performing and reception situations to that privileged, original moment, but *also* the contextuality of the historian's own statements about the "work," for there can be no statement put forward about a "work" (about its form, its style, its score, its meaning, etc.) that does not already implicate the agent of that statement in the geometry sketched in Diagram 1—as either a real or virtual performer and/or listener who is giving account of an object he must regenerate in the present to apprehend it. When a historian writes about the "work," therefore, the object he cites is not the trans-historical entity he idolizes but the P-SI or L-SI that arises in his own mind as he "reads" or plays through the score or listens to a performance, imaginary or real. As a result, the historian's statements about "works" are about objects that originate in contexts localized elsewhere from the one the historian seeks to privilege. Historical knowledge about music, therefore, becomes always mediated by each and every context within

⁴⁶ Although Butt's critique of the historical performance movement leads to a view of performing that parallels mine, performance for Butt still remains closely tied to the service of an albeit problematized historical contextualism. See, for instance, the following assertion: "the ultimate value of studying intention for the purposes of [historically informed performance] might rest not so much in telling us how a piece should or should not sound but rather in how performance, as the medium of sounding music, conditions our idea of how music relates to the world in which it first sounded and that in which it continues to sound. It can be a counterbalance to the traditional way of viewing music history as merely the history of musical works." Butt, *Playing with History*, 95.

which performance events and listening responses (either virtual or real) *subsequent* to the original context take place.

This contingency involves something more than recognizing that “all ‘pasts’ are constructed in a present;”⁴⁷ it involves recognizing that the music-history project—even when it strives to remain autonomous from (instead of policing) actual performance and listening practices—violates its own lesson: historical understanding contravenes the principal of contextuality because it negates the origin of the historian’s discourse in the constraints of a local context (the historian’s own) that is distant and different from the original, compositional one.⁴⁸ That the music-history project wants to impose on its own discourse constraints it excavates from a privileged past is symptomatic of its need to suppress the degree to which its own efforts to articulate what constitutes historical knowledge both arise from and are embedded within a context far removed from the one it privileges.⁴⁹ In spite of this contradiction, the music-history project remains, or at least was at one point, the pillar of musicology because it achieved acceptance within the institution through conforming to the anterior discipline of historiography and its related fields; but in doing so, the music-history project has succeeded in distorting present musical experience so that it effectively suppresses from becoming articulate what the continuing mastery of music as performance in the present strives to deepen: an

⁴⁷ Taruskin, *Text and Act*, 218.

⁴⁸ Even when a synthesis of those differing contexts is sought, the compromise still tends to favor the original. See, for instance, Leo Treitler, *Music and the Historical Imagination* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989).

⁴⁹ It is precisely for this reason that Taruskin’s critique of the early-music movement is right on the mark: the rhetoric of “authenticity” is a façade concealing the present contextuality of “historical” performance practice—their embeddedness in modernism—even when its proponents claim to be reviving a privileged past, which is merely an illusion that fuels its commercial success. See his *Text and Act*, 102. For a recent discussion of the issues involved in this debate, see Butt, *Playing with History*, 3-50.

experience of music composed in the past that can only emanate from, and speak to, the here and now.⁵⁰

The difficulty of acknowledging the distortion derivative disciplinarity wroughts on this experience is directly related to fear. As Taruskin has already observed, speaking again of “performance-practice fundamentalists” as the servants of historical contextualism: it is “fear that the refusal of [musicians] to submit to the will of [music historians] will undermine the authority of the canonical repertory and eat away its power to validate contemporary practice.”⁵¹ But there is a greater fear missed in this observation, the fear of having destabilized the authority historical musicologists achieve through being assimilated into the conceptual paradigms governing knowledge production in the discipline of historiography. For to scrutinize the applicability of this, or other such paradigms, to music studies threatens the reward that makes their assimilation an effective means for consolidating positions of authority in an academy governed by technical rationality.⁵² That applicability hinges on an implicit argument from analogy, a simple logical proposition, that what applies in one discipline or field applies or should apply in another. All analogies, of course, break down in any sustained comparison between two disparate objects, and so the link that matters for any such argument to have cogency is precisely that point of contact where a specific resemblance between the two objects in question is required to support the analogy. For the music-history project, that point involves the implicit premise that a musical “work” is an historical object access to and understanding of which depends on “hearing” or “conceptualizing” it in relation to some contextual

⁵⁰ For a more sympathetic critique of the music-history project, see Rob C. Wegman, “Historical Musicology: Is It Still Possible?” in *The Cultural Study of Music*, 136-45. For a defense of the discipline, see Leo Treitler, “The Historiography of Music: Issues of Past and Present,” in *Rethinking Music*, 356-77.

⁵¹ Taruskin, *Text and Act*, 32-33.

⁵² Adam Krims charges music analysis with a similar fault in his “Disciplining Deconstruction (for Music Analysis),” *19th-Century Music* 21 (1998): 297-324.

backdrop reconstructed through the discipline of historiography.⁵³ The identity of that object as historical artifact depends, however, on suppressing the extent to which the process that makes that object accessible to reflection is embedded in a present context distant from the one the historian privileges. The suppression of that present context might allow historical knowledge to function as a backdrop against which that artifact can be understood from the present; but it hides the fact that the musical object to which the historian actually attends—whether the “work” or an historically informed performance event—is *not* identical to a genuine document or artifact of the story the historian constructs. Of course, everything in the present eventually becomes a thing in the past, becomes data for someone to interpret, but when the historian attends to any score he becomes implicated in a process that must repeatedly reconstitute the musical object (whether virtual or actual) in a locale distant from the origins of its original conception. No matter how hard he try, the historian cannot even rehearse in his mind’s ear an imaginary historical performance without that audition taking place in a present context determined by constraints different from those governing the historical situation the historian seeks to envision. It is at this moment—where the historian seeks to make accessible to his own reflection the object about which he claims to have historical understanding—that the analogy between the music-history project and its parent discipline breaks down, for the object upon which he reflects is not—can never be—the object that existed at some historical moment, whether that moment be a C-SI or the first performance.

A similar breakdown takes place in the discourse of the latest professional identity to have gained institutional legitimacy through

⁵³ To be sure, the music-history project involves much more than giving an account of “works.” But even those historians who are exclusively occupied with biographical or broader contexts nevertheless advance the contexts they construct as the correct backdrop for understanding the products that are created from and circulate within them, musical works or otherwise.

derivative disciplinarity, the academic music critic.⁵⁴ The legitimacy accorded this identity—which represents but one example of second-wave musicology, a musicology geared towards the *interpretation* of “works”—is predicated on how effectively it has been constituted through derivation from an anterior discipline: since *literary* criticism already enjoys institutional recognition, for instance, it makes strategic sense for the fledgling music critic to derive his tools and methods from the parent discipline to carry out the task of knowledge production in his own area.⁵⁵ The knowledge produced thereby involves the formulation of critical readings, interpretations that combine appeals to historical context, arguments from music analysis, salutes to various critical authorities, and deployment of the latest critical jargon, all for the sake of making verbally explicit what a specific “work” means, how it is put together, how it does cultural work. Lawrence Kramer characterizes the readings that ensue from the criticism project as constructive descriptions, “Verbal attributions of meaning to music... [that] do not decode the music or reproduce a meaning already there in it but attach themselves to the music as an independent form or layer of appearance.”⁵⁶

Underlying the mechanism that produces such descriptions is an implicit analogy, that what music critics construct in relation to musical “works” is analogous to what literary critics produce for literary texts. The analogy appears valid, “reading a musical work” seems to resemble “reading a literary work;” and the almost complete assimilation of music into text-based models of understanding would seem to indicate how widely the analogy has been assimilated; but the equivalency suggested by using metaphors of legibility to describe

⁵⁴ For reasons that I will not expound upon here, I include music analysis under the rubric of criticism.

⁵⁵ For repeated appeals to literary precedents as justifications for music criticism, see Edward T. Cone, “The Authority of Music Criticism,” in *Music: A View from Delft*, ed. Robert P. Morgan (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 95-112.

⁵⁶ See Lawrence Kramer, “Subjectivity Rampant: Music, Hermeneutics, and History,” in *The Cultural Study of Music*, 124-35; 128.

musical experience breaks down precisely at that point of contact where an exact resemblance is required to justify an argument from analogy, the relationship of the critic to his object and its meanings. In literary criticism meaning is constituted by an act of reading which brings the artwork into being; but can the same be said of reading the musical “work”? It is in the answer to this question that the argument from analogy authorizing music criticism becomes, in my view, suspect, for in order to access the “work” the critic must read the score as if it were a text: he must convert its notation—a set of instructions for doing something—into a graphic representation analogous to what is encoded in a literary text. Reading a score as text means, therefore, suppressing the physical activities which the notation prescribes by aligning what is seen in the notation with an imagined performance heard in the mind’s ear. It is this imaginary performance heard through the eyes that criticism identifies as the “work” being read.

The equivalency relationship music criticism strives to sustain with its literary parent subsequently hinges on the music critic conflating two distinct sound images (the P-SI and L-SI) without making explicit the performance (R) they presuppose: on the one hand, the desire to maintain unmediated proximity to the score requires the music critic to displace the performer in the $S \leftarrow P \rightarrow P\text{-SI}$ circuit, but he shirks the obligation of engaging in the reciprocal activity of realizing his P-SI into an R; on the other hand, the desire to produce “constructive descriptions” (A) about the object to which he attends as a listening subject requires that the critic also occupy the position of the listener in the $R \leftarrow L \rightarrow L\text{-SI}$ circuit, but he fails to make explicit the specific R to which he attends as a listener. The resulting discontinuity in this reading operation—between a P-SI and an L-SI that are subtended by an absent R—is conveniently resolved by installing in the place of the missing performance the “work” as the object being read. In this reconfiguration, the work-concept makes unnecessary any reference to that absent R, allowing thereby the material outcome of the critical operation to erase not only the performance presupposed by—but not necessarily followed through from—reading the score; but also

the performance presupposed by—but not necessarily made explicit when—contemplating the “work.”

One justification for this erasure may be found in the model of silent reading that governs the consumption of literature, an act of engagement that stands as a sufficient concretization of the text to which the literary critic attends. Michael Talbot words the equivalency quite aptly: “A person reading and enjoying a score has to imagine its sound in order to assimilate its content, just as it is impossible to read these present lines without converting the words on the page into a mental sound-picture that is arguably a kind of ‘performance’ in its own right.”⁵⁷ Although this mode of engaging with either texts or scores is accorded high cultural value for its *silence*, the production of a P-SI (Talbot’s “mental sound-picture”) of what is read in the notation is, in my view, incomplete without undertaking the process that realizes the P-SI into the audible materiality of an R. It is incomplete because of the reciprocal relationship I have proposed in Diagram 1, between imagined ideas and their material outcomes: the attributes of that sound image are contingent on the performance process necessary to yield a realization to which the sound image gives rise. In other words, the nature of those features which the critic selects for discussion as he reads the score are dependent on how the ensuing P-SI is performed in a particular moment by a particular performer because that performance can alter the P-SI. Misconstruing the score as a text, substituting the work-concept for a P-SI and an L-SI subtended by an absent performance, are conveniences that allow music critics to bypass the activity of executing the score at the same time as they allow knowledge to be manufactured about an object the critical operation does not explicitly bring into the existent actuality its interpretations presuppose.

Criticism exerts considerable effort to maintain its operational autonomy from performance nonetheless. Although critics and performers might engage with the same score, for instance, they embark

⁵⁷ Talbot, *The Musical Work*, 7.

on mutually exclusive operations each of which produce two logically distinct outcomes *equidistant* from a preexistent “work,” a critical interpretation and a performative realization. According to Jerrold Levinson, criticism produces a verbally articulated “view of what [a work] means or expresses and how it hangs together at various levels” (A), a view that differs from a performance, which is “a considered way of playing [a work], involving highly specific determinations of all the defining features of the piece as given by the score and its associated conventions of reading” (R).⁵⁸ Levinson’s expenditure of effort to sustain equidistance from the “work” reveals criticism to be contingent on performance, however, as when he concludes that the latter (R) ideally facilitates the former (A).⁵⁹ Although this ideal does not constitute an admission of a necessary relationship between the two activities, Levinson’s examination of how performative realizations and critical interpretations interact posits the performance event as necessarily anterior to the critical one. He writes: “*On a first run-through*, I may well carry away an impression of the piece...as basically song-like...” (emphasis mine).⁶⁰ Neither the piece nor the impression are of importance here; what matters is that Levinson’s impression, which is what gives rise to his “critical interpretation,” depends on an anterior performance event, signified in the phrase “on a first run-through.” Despite Levinson’s attempt to maintain the autonomy of criticism from performance, his wording confirms that the critical operation is parasitic on a prior performing action however much or little subsequent performing actions might be influenced by the critical observations about a piece that ensue (as Levinson ably demonstrates in his discussion). Distinguishing one from another, therefore, does not free the critical interpretation from its dependency on performing: although music criticism tries to suppress that dependence—by evading, or failing to make explicit, the manual work required to make music accessible to the critical act, or by substituting for the actual R the

⁵⁸ Jerrold Levinson, “Performative vs. Critical Interpretation in Music,” in *The Interpretation of Music: Philosophical Essays*, 34 and 36.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 60.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 57-60.

mere verbalization of a P-SI/L-SI, or by assimilating a silenced R and its adjacent P-SI and L-SI into the work-concept—the prerequisite of that anterior performance to the critical act simply cannot be erased.

Although critical readings might be accurately characterized as “constructive descriptions,” they are descriptions, not of “the music,” but of a specific P-SI or L-SI that arises from the critic engaging in or attending to an actual or virtual performance, one which arises from either playing through the score, listening to a performance (or set of performances), or imagining one that never gets performed; but the failure of criticism to reference that anterior performance from which its reading operation derives calls into question the method through which music criticism achieves its social agenda on at least two counts. Constituting itself in terms of the literary ideal of silent reading gives music criticism an institutionally legitimated means for not having to make its actual object explicit, but it does not absolve the critic from hiding behind the work-concept the actual object to which the critical act is directed. The failure to make that object explicit is, in my view, tantamount to a methodological sleight of hand: not rendering into R the P-SI that arises from “reading the score” allows criticism to bypass the litmus test of whether the meanings and social forces it imputes to “works” are viable in actual performance and, therefore, can be manifested in real reception situations. What matters is not *what* the critic imagines (as a P-SI that arises from merely reading the score) but the *effects* produced by its materialization into actuality. Since music cannot exert social force unless it achieves materiality in real performance situations, critical interpretations as “constructive descriptions” constitute merely hypothetical, untested verbal constructs, hypothetical because they have not been explicitly realized into actual performance events, untested because their validity has not been measured in any explicitly defined performance or reception situation.

Secondly, installing in place of an explicit performance the simulacrum of the “work” not only allows the critic to shirk the responsibility of testing his reading in or against an actual performance or reception situation; it also makes an integral component of the critical operation—the R and the spiritual, mental, and bodily work

that produce the real object to which criticism attends—inaccessible to the scrutiny of the community in which the critic is making his claims. Silencing the formative role this component plays in the critical operation reduces to a supplement, to an extraneous phenomenon unnecessary for the critical enterprise, the process that brings into existent actuality the meanings and social forces which the “constructive descriptions” of music criticism seek to make explicit in the first place. Ironically, in its effort to foreground the social force of music for conveying cultural meanings and for forming subjective identities, criticism—in its literary-derived, text-based format—displaces the very activity through which music *becomes* social.⁶¹ It is paradoxical that so important an objective as what the criticism project endeavors to achieve falters on such a critical oversight.

V

The preceding analysis—of the imaginary status of musical “works,” of the derivative origins of musicological discourse, of a geometry of music which those derivative origins distort, of the presence of an anterior but suppressed performance nevertheless enabling that discourse—can certainly be dismissed as belated, for with the emergence of “performance studies” musicology may have entered its third wave, one replacing work-centered projects with research programs focused more on performers and the performances they produce through performing. What is more belated than my analysis, however, is the arrival of musicology at this juncture in its evolution. Even though derivative disciplinarity has allowed musicology to be assimilated into the technical rationality governing other academic units, the advent of performance studies signals precisely how divorced the knowledge musicology manufactures about actual musical practice is from the

⁶¹ Cook arrives at a similar conclusion in his “Between Process and Product: Music and/as Performance,” paragraph 31.

knowledge practicing musicians actually take as their starting point: the centrality of performing to the ontology, signification, and cultural force of music. The charge is admittedly unfair, given the derivative origins of musicology: since musicology evolves not according to the depth of musicianship of its adherents, but by its appropriation—whether in whole or part—of paradigms developed outside of and yet applied to music, the arrival of performance studies is arguably right on schedule for it replicates anterior developments in theater studies, dance, and ethnography. Rather than mark a return to, or a reengagement with, the activity of performing itself—and the knowledge of music that takes place therein—the shift towards a performance-based paradigm is simply just another instance of the mechanism, and the motivation, controlling how musicology manufactures its knowledge product.

Characterizing the emergence of performance studies in musicology as a function of derivative disciplinarity is beside the point, for the turn from “works” to events that the paradigm shift entails avoids disturbing the larger agenda of technical rationality governing musicology as a whole, the reduction of music to a distant object, and the reduction of the musicologist to an external observer in whose hands rests, nevertheless, the power for producing and disseminating authoritative knowledge. Although the shift to a performance-based paradigm is couched in terms that seem to liberate discourse from the limitations or imperfections of a previous disciplinary paradigm, turning performance into the newest object of research not only removes from its operation the suppressed performative component the preceding analysis has exposed as integral to work-based discourse; it also renders music into an even more remote object to be consumed, explained, and understood by mere listening subjects.⁶² For all its promises of liberation from the ideological underpinnings of the work-concept, performance studies—particularly when performance is turned into a site for plundering empirical data or when performers themselves

⁶² Exemplary in this regard is Abbate, *In Search of Opera*. The “search” takes place from the subject position of a listener/spectator and not from that of a doer, of someone performing the object of the search.

are reduced into objects of psychological or scientific observation—embodies the ethos of technical rationality in full: it effectively turns music into a distant object for external, non-participatory observers to take in at a distance. Situating musicological discourse at this site may be the only viable option for those whose experience of music is confined to that of listening; but to those of us who experience music predominantly as something we do, the shift signaled by performance studies makes complete the disengagement from performance even at the same time as it attends to somebody else making actual music: attending to performance events reduces musicology to a club for glorified listeners.

Although in turning its attention to performance events, performance studies seems to allow for the abandonment of music-making as a necessary component in the intellectual deformation of those who wish to be absorbed in the performance-object as mere listeners, the new paradigm nevertheless makes tangible what the work paradigm has systematically kept hidden. By focusing on the material presence of music as it is made accessible to perception through a performance event, the construction of music as a distant object for derivatively disciplined listening subjects meets the paradigm of music as doing: attending to a performance event involves confronting the performative component musicology has historically suppressed to construct itself and its object. This is precisely the conclusion which David Lewin draws from his generalized theory of musical perception.⁶³ Although the music-theory project is equally reliant upon the work-concept—in that the construct supplies the discourse with a stable object to which the systematic application of derivative analytical methodologies yields a knowledge product⁶⁴—Lewin laments that it is impossible to formulate a theory of musical perception which does not

⁶³ See David Lewin, "Music Theory, Phenomenology, and Modes of Perception," *Music Perception* 3 (1986): 327-92.

⁶⁴ For a thoughtful account of the rise of music theory as an institutional discipline distinct from historical musicology, see Patrick McCreless, "Rethinking Contemporary Music Theory," in *Keeping Score: Music, Disciplinarity, Culture*, eds. David Schwartz et. al., (Charlottesville: University of Virginia, 1997), 13-53.

also take into account the process of performance, of what his own (or by extension somebody else's) body must do to make music accessible to his perception.⁶⁵

Rather than distinguish the contemplation of "works" from absorption with live, actual performance events, I am arguing precisely for what Lewin admits to at the end of his phenomenological analysis, that the process that gives rise to the performance event is itself already implicit within, although suppressed, by the discourse that attends to "works." More precisely, the derivative knowledge the various musicological projects manufacture about "works" presupposes an anterior but silenced performance—the musicologist's own rendition, an echo of a remembered performance (or set of performances), or (more usually) an imagined performance (or set of performances) that is never realized—a potentially actual entity displaced by the conceit of a mental construct. Like the fundamental structure which reductive analysis reveals by stripping away surface detail to uncover underlying patterns, the "work" arises from reducing the multiplicity of particulars inherent in one or more of such performances to only those (usually sonic) properties that all performances supposedly have in common. What results is a disembodied, de-materialized, de-particularized, and de-contextualized mental construct that stands as proxy for an anterior performance event removed from the actual material and particular context that produced it, a construct which in turn serves, ironically, as the object which musicological discourse seeks to re-contextualize, re-embody elsewhere.

Exposing this original if diluted performance in the algorithms of work-centered discourse is not identical to making explicit the actual performance event the work-concept conceals, however, and it is this step which musicology systematically avoids. Instead of making audible what arises out of the process that realizes notation into material actuality—by supplying either live performances or recordings

⁶⁵ Lewin, "Music Theory, Phenomenology, and Modes of Perception," 377-78. Lewin's model is discussed and critiqued from this perspective in Korsyn, *Decentering Music*, 166-75.

that anyone who chooses to can hear—and manufacturing knowledge from *that* point of origin, musicology accepts as sufficient substitute for that real object a mental construct which is nowhere to be heard. Since transmission and dissemination are essential components of the knowledge industry, it follows that even the singular and ephemeral performance event that is the actual object about which musicological knowledge is manufactured must be made explicit, because it is *that* performance—however diluted the process that brings it about may be—which gives rise to musicological discourse about “works.” Making that actual performance explicit weakens the false confidence of the musicologist who presumes his colleagues are apprehending the same object as he when they attend to the same score, as when Kramer suggests that the “constructive descriptions” produced by criticism predispose a listener or player to grasp musical meaning *in the same way* that the critic constructing the description from playing or hearing the same score does.⁶⁶ Who is to say that someone reading such “constructive descriptions” will read them *in the same way* as the critic who constructed them, let alone imagine a performance or play through the score *in the same way* without actually hearing what the critic himself hears or plays?

The substitution of an un-sharable mental construct apprehended only in the mind of a single listening subject for the ephemeral but real one which everyone can potentially hear, is a bizarre irony for a discourse geared towards manufacturing “authoritative” and “objective” knowledge about music: allowing anterior disciplines to dictate the terms of that discourse and its object has substituted the subjective experience of music as “doing” for a subjective listening experience which the discourses provided by derivative disciplinarity construct as “knowing.” It is from this contradiction that musicology hides because making explicit the specific performance to which musicologists attend as virtual performing and/or listening subjects when they contemplate “works” threatens to destabilize the authority musicologists acquire

⁶⁶ Lawrence Kramer, “Music, Metaphor, and Metaphysics,” *Musical Times* 145 (2004): 5-18, 9.

through derivative disciplinarity insofar as performance events exert social forces and produce meanings that differ from, and exceed the constraints imposed by, paradigms geared towards making objective the subjective experience of contemplating a virtual object created within the mind. It is to protect the hegemony that such mentalism holds over what constitutes institutionally valid knowledge that a discourse rooted in performing has been unable to achieve legitimacy within musicology on par with the knowledge types derivative disciplinarity supports; for the discipline of doing music, and the knowledge it subtends, may potentially demonstrate that knowledge manufactured about virtual objects using borrowed discourses may simply be symptomatic of a widespread confusion endemic to musicological discourse about the true identity of its musical object, of the limitations of its knowledge about real music, and of the derivative authority of its knowledge.

The prejudice against the performer arises, therefore, because musicologists, having sold out the discipline of music making to win acceptance from the disciplines of an intellectual community governed by technical rationality, do not want the conceit of the “work” exposed for the fabrication that it is. Having disciplined music, themselves, and their students according to the dictates of those disciplines, musicologists may finally have caught up with the disciplinary parents they yearn to emulate, they may have finally won their approval (perhaps as compensation for an approval they did not win as musicians); but they have effectively retreated from the practice that brought them to the academy in the first place. Despite its derivative origins and its capitulation to technical rationality, performance studies nevertheless reveals that it is the execution of that practice in specific performance situations (and not in relation to any reconstructed historical context, analytical paradigm, or critical theory formulated through derivative modes of knowledge production) that provides the context through which artworks come into being, acquire structure, generate meaning, and exert social force. Even though any musicologist who attends to a “work” must *ipso facto* be engaged in, at minimum, a mental performance event which produces in his mind a sound image he mistakes for the “work,” the conceptual apparatus he inherits through

derivative disciplinarity is insufficient for verbalizing the experience of music that arises through performing, because that apparatus is limited to making verbally concrete only the attributes of the non-existent object of intentionality. In other words, the discourse through which musicology makes the knowledge it constructs verbally explicit has yet to encompass the discourse implicit within actual performing even though the performance process is implicit within the algorithm of musicological discourse.

Opening within musicology a space for such a discourse to become articulate not only requires musicologists to recognize when they occupy the performer's subject position; it must also accept as legitimate the knowledge about music that the subject who undertakes that activity can potentially construct, especially when that knowledge does not conform to the dominant epistemological types. That acceptance is already implicit within current musicological discourse in that the very "thing" I have been deconstructing, the musical "work," is a substitute for an actual performance event that is never realized, never heard. The necessity of allowing performing—as the process through which that event comes about—to become a source out of which knowledge can be created may prove difficult in that it would require musicologists currently constituted through a derivative disciplinarity supported by technical rationality to accept as a valid source the insights into music that performing musicians can potentially construct when they reflect on their own practice. Those too heavily invested in the prevailing ideology may find such acceptance to be against their better interests: nobody likes taking a step backward to move forward, and nobody likes their limitations or deficiencies exposed, musical or otherwise. But humility can be a good albeit unpalatable quality, especially in those academics who make claims to being knowledgeable about an art they do not practice. Making explicit the anterior but silenced performative act underlying the derivative knowledge musicologists manufacture about "works" might destabilize the authority of those who suppress its function within their discourse in order to uphold as superior the derivative knowledge they produce under the banner of technical rationality; it might expose their limitations (or failures)

as practicing musicians, limitations from which they have sequestered themselves into the refuge of derivative identities; but at least it is honest.

Recognizing and making explicit the suppressed performative component within musicological discourse involves, therefore, more than simply acknowledging “music as performance,” more than allowing performance events to become legitimate objects for reflection: recognizing it challenges musicology to resituate its discourse within a geometry rooted in performing, one that acknowledges not only the disciplinary integrity of the performance process and the knowledge embodied therein, but also the necessity of making the outcome of that process explicit, as the real object about which and through which knowledge, derivative or otherwise, is manufactured. In short, it dares musicologists to dispense with the fiction of “works,” to use with suspicion discourses derived from other disciplines, to engage in, rather than merely with, real performance events, and to create from that matrix a knowledge that is subject to the dictates of the discipline of practice. How musicology can extricate itself from technical rationality, derivative disciplinarity, and the work-concept; how it can construct a science of music, a *Musikwissenschaft*, from actual musical practice; how the knowledge implicit therein can become a class of knowledge in good currency yet resistant to technical rationality, are all projects yet to be undertaken. The importance of opening up a space for them lies not in the unfortunate fact that the terrain occupied by a praxial epistemology will provide yet another *terra incognita* for the technical rationalist to colonize; opening up a space for such projects might allow for a full reversal of the hierarchy governing the knowledge industry at large. The hierarchy, which privileges propositional over performative knowledge, “treats professional competence as the application of privileged knowledge to instrumental problems of practice” and thereby creates in the separation of “knowing” and “doing” what Schön identifies as “a dilemma of rigor or relevance.”⁶⁷ For the flow of

⁶⁷ Schön, *Educating the Reflective Practitioner*, xi.

knowledge is not—as the doctrine of technical rationality would have us believe—unidirectional, from academic to applied, from concept to percept, from *theoria* to *praxis*. It is, rather, reciprocal: the knowledge that arises from performing can transform at the roots how and what musicology programs its adherents to think, and consequently to know and understand, about music. If “doing” can determine “knowing,” to what extent can a discipline that makes claims to knowledge be “in the know” if its adherents do not *also* do?