

Memoirs of a Musical Object, Supposedly Written by Itself: It–Narrative and Eighteenth– Century Marketing

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Dedication¹

To the Nobility, Gentry, and the Public at large, who have witnessed my talents, and raised me from obscurity to the proud eminence on which I now stand, I dedicate my following maiden essay in literature.

[. . .]

I have been patronized by the first rank this *vast* empire has to boast of; to whom, as well as all my Patrons and Friends, I beg leave to return my most ardent thanks; and while I breathe, possessed of my mental powers, which from my *youth*, and lack of experience, are but *now* in the *bud*, I will on every occasion that calls them into action, show an earnest intention to render them *effective* and *impressive*, from an *active* display of their *native* energies. In me the world will see, and posterity may read, a lesson in my existence and labours, that *time*, *assiduity*, and *patience*, led on by *perseverance*, will ultimately surmount every obstacle that may retard the progress of *genius*.²

—Toby, the Sapient Pig (1817)

Apology to the Reader

As most articles begin with a self–effacing rhetorical flourish, here is my apologia: I am no ordinary author. While the person who typed this text has indeed signed her name, the story she offers is not her own; it is mine. I present myself in the manner of many of the texts that I will discuss: as an object, unfolding its life through the voice of another. I address you, dear reader, both through and as a medium. You know my kind well, though you may never before have heard one of us speak. I suspect that you have spent countless hours staring at, and learning from, the likes of me, without realizing that there might be, simultaneously, a sentient force staring at and learning from you. Yes, you are accustomed to “looking through” me and my brethren, searching for information about historical context and meaning, as Bill Brown has said.³ Now I ask you to look *at* me.

In Which the Object Reveals Itself

As the reader has surely guessed my Sphynx-like riddle by now, I will venture to present myself. I am a published score from 1779 and have varied contents: I include an “Italian trio” and a “French trio,” both in a number of guises—for keyboard, guitar, and several combinations of voices. I have been told that it is not indiscreet to append to such a memoir a portrait of oneself, so, in keeping with tradition, I am enclosing Figures 1–4.

Figure 1: Giordani, “Favorite Airs in the Critic” (London: Longman & Broderip, 1779). (Title page.) Yale University, Beinecke Library, Osborn pm523.

THE
Favorite Airs
in the
C R I T I C
Sung with universal Applause
by Miss Field
Miss Abrahams & Sig. Delpini
at the
THEATRE ROYAL DRURY LANE
adapted for the
Voice, Harpsichord, Violin,
German Flute & Guittar.
Sig.
SIG. GIORDANI
Price 1s 6d
LONDON Printed by LONGMAN and BRODERIP N^o 26 Cheapside
Music Sellers to the ROYAL FAMILY

Figure 2: "Favorite Airs in the Critic," p. 2.

2

The
FRENCH TRIO
 Sung by
Sig.^r Delpini & the Miss^{es} Abrahams

Violino 1
 Violino 2
 Bass

Je
Pizzic^{to}
Sig.^r Delpini
 Allegro
Je

Figure 3: "Favorite Airs in the Critic," p. 8.

8

THE FAVORITE TRIO
in the CRITIC
 Sung by Sig.^r Delpini and the Miss^{es} Abrahams.

Adapted for the Harpichord. With English & French Words

Allegro
Je
 I

Je suis for-tis de mon pays pour Jou-er de ma Chi-tarre Je suis for-tis de
 I left my Country and my Friends, to play on my Gui-tar I left my Country

Figure 4: "Favorite Airs in the Critic," p. 11.

11

The admired D U E T Sung by Miss ABRAHAMs and Miss FIELD in
the CRITIC Adapted for the Harpsichord. with English & Italian Words

Andante

Cruel flatterer you deceiv'd me, and tru-
du'd my feeling heart; Weeping, sighing, flattering, lying, pledg'd your faith with skill and
art, Traitor false, unkind de-ciever, all my griefs - first sprung from
you; Love, fond Love, and tender passion bid me think you would prove
true; But forsworn your cru-el u-fuge, merits now my just dis-dain; Go elle-

A Mysterious Moment Explained

I was visited in the Beinecke Library at Yale University on a recent fall afternoon. Imagine my joy at being brought forth from the airless sterility into the open, touched by human hands for the first time in decades. The warmth, the breath, the moisture, all created quite a shock—a little death, if you will—through which I found new life, one in which, to my surprise, I could speak! O great joy! And speak I did, quite a bit, requiring my new friend repeated visits in order to take down all of my musings. She never seemed bothered, as she told me, in the words of the outspoken fan of the material, poet Francis Ponge: “ideas give me a queasy feeling, nausea. Objects in the external world, on the other hand, delight me.”⁴

In Which the Music Explains its Provenance to Those Who Are Generally Interested in the Provenance of Old Pieces of Paper

Yes, I am music. Specifically, I am seven pages of two of the finest little ditties this side of the Thames—or perhaps I should say, around these parts, the Hudson? At least that’s the kind of reputation I used to have. I understand that Richard Brinsley Sheridan’s play *The Critic* (Drury Lane, 1779) is not the draw that it was in my day, although the British Broadcasting Corporation recorded a performance in 1992 that is available in many libraries through Alexander Street Press’s “Theater in Video” database. A version of my contents can be found in Act I, for which I was created by Tommaso Giordano as incidental music. (I do despise that word “incidental.” Clearly I am no mere peripheral occurrence, as I was reprinted and sold in this form, including multiple versions of the same tune for varied domestic pleasure.)

I offer a bit more about the dramatic context of my original presentation, so that you understand my true nature: In Act I, the audience meets several silly characters: Mr. Dangle, a director; Mr. Puff and Mr. Sneer, both critics; and Sir Fretful Plagiary, a playwright. All have convened in Mr. Dangle’s house to put together a show for which they are auditioning musicians. (You see, I hope, that I originate in a play whose plot revolves around the production of plays.) Signor Pasticcio Ritornello arrives with an entourage of performers, having been sent by Lady Rondeau and Mrs. Fuge. It is in this moment that my contents are presented.

Some Account of the Object’s Humble Musings, and a Question

As I recounted these and other details to my listener, I found myself yearning to explain beyond my own theatrical history, to confide to someone my reflections on my existence, my *dasein*, as it were. I yearn to understand my own presence as a printed excerpt of a once-performed stage piece. When I was brought into the open, the discovery of my voice caused a process of Enlightenment, as I began to ask a series of questions about myself and my place in the world: Where are my peers? My contents, after all, are extracted from a popular play, but I don’t see any other extracts in my vicinity. So, I wondered, why am I still here? I suppose this would be the cliché existential crisis for an object. In the meantime I have come to accept that I am, for my interlocuter and dear reader, a historical curiosity, a museum piece, collected by James Marshall and Mary Louise Osborn in the 1940s and gifted to Yale University. I accept my current status as a relic, but not unlike other old souls divorced from their context of origin, I found myself considering an even more dire and seemingly unanswerable query: Why did people want me in

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the first place? Certainly I remember my early life, but I know nothing of the desires of those who purchased me. This most basic question led to a journey of discovery regarding not the reasons for my manufacture but the motivation for my circulation.

A Number of Obvious Remarks and a Facile Dismissal

It is important to understand what exactly people are desiring when they desire me. I am not a subject, after all; I am an object, one who happens to sound a bit like a subject.⁵ Some of you might want to call me a thing. Actually, I find “thing” to be a silly word—derogatory even, especially when said in German. There is a theory about things, resulting mostly, I am told, from early twentieth-century philosophers and artists.⁶ Work inspired by Thing Theory investigates the physical properties and “social lives” of wares on the marketplace, hypothesizing about their meaning and value from there.⁷

No matter how vain I might be, I do not presume that you are interested to know about the quality of my paper and ink, nor do I believe that there is much to be gained, in my case, from such an inquiry. Rather, I present myself as an object, as a text whose purpose is revealed in its interaction on and off the marketplace.⁸ Perhaps you think it a sign of self-loathing to focus on human interest rather than object manufacture, but rather than a collection of properties born of circumstances, consider me a child taken in by the marketplace itself, eager to understand the causes for my adoption.

Desiring, a Digression

At this point, the object, overcome with excited nostalgia, takes a rest from narration. The interlocutor continues, with a digression.

The object may not realize that there are many ways to explain this kind of consumer desire. Colin Campbell enumerates three possibilities, distilled from Kenneth Galbraith's study in Keynesian economics.⁹ First, like Neil McKendrick, John Brewer, and J. H. Plumb,¹⁰ one might take an “instinctivist” position and assume that every consumer has latent, pre-programmed wants that are merely awakened by advertising. Or second, one might, like Vance Packard in his work on subliminal messages, see want as a product of the marketplace, a “manipulationist” idea wherein desire is created by salesmanship.¹¹ One also might take Veblen's approach, where want is manufactured—not by advertising but by emulation of others with coveted lifestyles. Though some of the argument offered here is colored by Veblenesque thinking, the central idea is most informed by a fourth possibility: Campbell's own position. Seeing failings in all

of these approaches, Campbell believes consumer desire is fueled by imagination. For him, the marketplace entices individuals to fantasize about products in their mind's eye well before putting those products to what we might call "practical use." Desire is thus created by an insatiable and infinitely repeatable imaginative exercise.¹²

The tools for this kind of investigation—really an investigation of mental space—are broad. They might encompass advertisements and title pages—those kind of documents that were explicitly designed to affect the consumer's imagination. Such an investigation should also consider documents that were not necessarily designed to affect the consumer imagination but that might reflect systemic attitudes toward the acquisition of objects. For this study, the interlocutor has tried to encourage the object to do the messier work of examining such attitudes by way of a particular narrative tradition, one that can help us understand the nature of musical consumer desire in the eighteenth century.

In Which the Reader is Finally Told the Point of this Tiresome Silliness

As the reader may know, a curious genre emerged mainly in London in the early eighteenth century. Early examples include Charles Gildon's *The Golden Spy* (London, 1709) and Joseph Addison's *Adventures of a Shilling* (1710). Among the most popular were Francis Coventry's *The History of Pompey the Little*; or, *the Life and Adventures of a Lap-Dog* (1751), and Charles Johnstone's *Chrysal*; or, *The Adventures of a Guinea* (1760–65), which was anthologized in Ballantyne's *Novelists' Library* (1822).¹³ This type of novel, today known as the "it-narrative" or "novel of circulation," is widely discussed in scholarship on English literature,¹⁴ and is notable not only for its focus on nonhuman protagonists, but for its point of view. Such stories transform objects into subjects, focusing on the circulation of coins, animals, as well as clothing and technology. (Curiously, there are few such narratives about printed matter, save a handful of examples, mostly about the Bible and one musical number to be discussed below.¹⁵) These stories took their inspiration from a French tale, Alain René Le Sage's *Le Diable Boiteux* (1707), in which the devil spies on the inner-workings of houses from above by removing their roofs.¹⁶ Le Sage's tale was then translated as *The Devil Upon Two Sticks* and published in London in 1708.¹⁷

The English language examples that followed similarly focus on the everyday, but approach their perspective from below instead of from above. The more than one hundred stories published between 1710 and 1830 are nearly exclusively tales of circulation, not of production.¹⁸ Hardly resembling contemporary higher-brow fiction, they are shorter (between fifteen and two

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hundred pages—easily serialized over only a few periodical editions, but also substantial enough to stand on their own),¹⁹ and they are, in a word, incoherent. They begin sometimes with an explanation of the circumstances of the tale, excusing the unusualness of the narrator and explaining the miraculous reason that the object was able to dictate his, her, or its story to a human. The narratives then follow objects as they pass from owner to owner, sometimes purposefully, sometimes by accident, circulating between individuals of widely varying status, class, and profession.

In the nineteenth century, this narrative approach remained popular, and was increasingly used almost exclusively in children's novels, the most famous example of which might be Black Beauty by Anna Sewell (1877), in which a horse tells its own history. In fact, a great deal of notable children's entertainment still today is told from the point of view of talking pets and objects—as in the Toy Story franchise, for example.

On the Relation of this Tiresome Silliness to Music

The object returns. I left in excitement, and I return in upset. While I recall some of these titles with fondness (*Pompey* in particular), the lack of stories about printed matter or music is in fact the sad core of my inquiry about desire. In fact, I can restate that inquiry another way in light of this neglect: was no one interested in the narrative history of an object like me? The history of these novels suggests as much, but I have hope that further thought will reveal a different story, so to speak.

Reflections on the Musical “It”

First, there is one musical it–narrative: “Memoir of a Song,” published in *Fraser's Magazine* in 1849, and rediscovered by Hilary Porriss.²⁰ Here, an individual much like me serves as a medium for recounting human musical experience. It tells of the inspiration of the composer, the operatic roles of various performers, from choristers to divas, and describes the vocal quality and emotional lives of its possessors. Like others in its genre, this “memoir” is designed to affect the imaginative promenade²¹ of its readers; it might prompt them to envision the various characters who come into contact with similar printed music, and in the end might encourage them to aspire to imitate those characters in their own consumption of music.

Though this story stands alone, other sorts of texts anthropomorphized printed objects like me. In letters of dedication, some composers cast themselves as parents sending their musical offspring into the world for the first

time. An edition of string quartets suggests that Mozart wanted Haydn to serve as surrogate care-taker of his works:

A father, having resolved to send his children into the great world, considered it necessary to entrust them to the protection and guidance of a man very celebrated at the time, who by good fortune was also his best friend. In like manner, celebrated man and dearest friend, here are my six children.²²

I feel myself invited to imagine the works venturing into the “great world,” shepherded by Haydn, on a journey that might resemble some of the it–narratives mentioned above. I am also told of a public letter written from Maria Theresia von Paradis to Gottfried August Bürger, printed at the opening of her setting of his *Lenore* (1789):²³

Just note what a daring thing I did—I took it upon myself to send one of your most beautiful children out into the world, attired according to my taste. To be sure, your Lenore has already found many and great friends who clothed her; although any and all further attire is totally unnecessary due to her natural beauty. Yet without offending the merits of these worthy predecessors I nonetheless desired to clothe the good child according to my own whim. And I will be pleased if the fashion of my attire (for the child) is not completely rejected.²⁴

The famously blind Austrian composer may or may not have known Mozart’s example. It is possible she was inspired by it, and by an impulse or need to paint a picture of herself as woman with kind and motherly instincts. One also gets the sense that Paradis was an eccentric dresser.

A First Observation in the Negative, in Which the Reader Learns: a New Meaning of “Occasion”

Though I find this limited tradition of music-centered narrative heartening, it isn’t rich enough to help me understand why I was desired on the musical marketplace. I’d like to return, painful though it may be, to it–narratives in order to understand their structure and assess whether I would have communicated any similar narrative content to my audience.

While a great many things can be said—and have been said—about such stories,²⁵ there are three main observations relevant to my own object-history. In fact, because a *lack* of evidence is sometimes equally as compelling as its presence, two are observations of what these stories do *not* depict. First, as great friend of the it–narrative Liz Bellamy reports, while these objects may act narratively like subjects, they have little agency. I remember that Pompey the lapdog “made various attempts to open the door; but not having

the good fortune to succeed, he leaped upon the table, and wantonly did his occasions on the field—preacher’s memoirs, which lay open upon it.”²⁶ The poor pet cannot accomplish the actions he tries on his own behalf. In *Dick the Little Poney* (1799), the unfortunate creature doesn’t even have the power to stop physical harm against his own body: “Nature produced me a male, but my tyrants were not satisfied with her decrees, and they deprived me of all the privileges of my sex, except those of mere existence.”²⁷ These protagonists are amusing but have stymied power over their own lives; they lack the privilege to open doors or protect themselves, let alone affect the course of their own circulation. I myself was surprised to learn that, instead of *truly* anthropomorphizing the objects that are their focus, these stories use those objects to narrate the human interaction that each object facilitates. In a word, these stories are proto-anthropological.

A Second Observation in the Negative, Somewhat More Verbose Than the First

It–narratives also do not depict production. Rather, they focus on an economy of exchange that creates a post–market process of circulation. That mouthful of words, reported to me by my interlocutor, suggests that these stories show us the way in which objects accrue cultural value long after they have been made and sold on the marketplace. Mainly, this value accrues by virtue of the stories themselves, which demonstrate that objects don’t have owners as much as they have possessors. In fact, it is the sheer number of their possessors that motivates these stories; no object is owned by a single individual. On the surface of it–narratives, the “ideal career”²⁸ of an object appears to be a migratory one, and only through its migration does an object become valuable to its potential possessors.

A Curious Third Observation, Presented Positively

Migration also offers a changeable experience to its potential possessors. Consider the following passage depicting the life of an atom:

Fate determined I should exist in the empire of Japan, where I underwent a great number of vicissitudes, till, at length, I was enclosed in a grain of rice, eaten by a Dutch mariner at Firando, and, becoming a particle of his body, brought to the Cape of Good Hope. There I was discharged in a scorbutic dysentery, taken up in a heap of soil to manure a garden, raised to vegetation in a salad, devoured by an English supercargo, assimilated to a certain organ of his body, which, at his return to London, being diseased in consequence of impure contact, I was again separated, with a considerable portion of putrefied flesh, thrown upon a dunghill, gobbled

up, and digested by a duck of which duck your father, Ephraim Peacock, having eaten plentifully at a feast of the cordwainers, I was mixed with his circulating juices and finally fixed in the principal part of that animacule, which, in process of time, expanded itself into thee, Nathaniel Peacock.²⁹

That is certainly a memoir I would rather read than experience! The way Tobias Smollet tells it, the emphasis is not so much on the movement of the atom as it is on the multiplicity of interactions that that migration facilitates. The force (and humor) of this text lies in the variety of ways each individual incorporates the atom into his person. A different experience of the object is available to the consumer at each stage of consumption.³⁰

In Which the Object Returns to Music

One commonality between the many theories of consumerism is their emphasis on the non-practical reasons why consumers are interested in products. This emphasis was actually news to me, as I had never considered that someone might wish to desire me for any reason other than that she liked my contents. Igor Kopytoff suggested that commodified objects have complex histories as they follow a course into and out of the marketplace, oftentimes repeatedly, their use-value changing with each stage of circulation. After long consideration of this idea in discussion with my interlocutor, I have realized that it-narratives demonstrate that consumers in my day may have *desired* objects with such complex “cultural biographies,” objects that offered a variety of experiences, and, crucially, advertised their appeal to a variety of types of audiences.

It is not a coincidence that these it-narratives accumulated on the market at the same general historical moment as biographies of individual humans, biographies that generally emphasize the social histories of their subjects. (In fact, it-narratives predate biographies of individuals, which did not commonly appear as monographs until well into the second half of the eighteenth century.) Once we understand migration and social history to be part of the object’s “ideal career” in the long eighteenth century, crowded English musical title pages—like mine—begin to take on new meaning. They demonstrate the histories of musical objects, the variety of hands that they passed through before meeting the consumers to whom they are ultimately directed in material form.

A Gesture Towards Multivalence

Certainly, musical title pages like mine serve many purposes at once. Title pages of songs in particular name many types of personalities—performers,

arrangers, dedicatees, engravers, and sellers—in order to assure the consumer of quality. Part of the method by which they accomplish this assurance is through implied narrative. These names provoke (and I might go so far as to say that they are designed to provoke) an imagined history of circulation parallel to the it–narrative. My title page, for instance, suggests that I have been in the possession of: the performers, Miss Field, Miss Abrahams, and Mr. Delphini (who played Signor Ritornello); the Drury Lane audience; the composer, Mr. Giordani; the publishers, Longman & Broderip; even the Royal Family, at one time or another; and finally, the reader or consumer, represented in print as the potential singer or player of several possible instruments listed, including harpsichord, violin, flute, and guitar. (See Figure 5 for none—too—immodest details of these parts of my façade.) On a different title page from mine, a dedicatee, too, might demonstrate an added moment of possession in an object’s circulation, as would the names in published subscription lists. With such a multiplicity of references on the title page, the composer (in my case, Mr. Giordani) becomes merely one participant in the circulation of an object.

So, perhaps the title page invites the consumer to construct a narrative that looks something like Figure 6. Here, the consumer might be motivated to purchase the object because of this invitation to see himself as one possible end–point of a haphazardly ordered string of possessions. The types of stories that I quoted above demonstrate, however, that teleology³¹ may not necessarily have been a part of an object’s imagined history. Particularly those title pages that reference performers and performances directly may therefore set forth a unique kind of it–narrative, one wherein the object can be in the possession of multiple individuals at once. Figure 7, as a model of circulation, aims to represent a musical score’s history of simultaneous possession, and perhaps more accurately reflects the imaginative exercise encouraged for the consumer: by purchasing the score, he or she is given the opportunity to emulate the musical experience of any number of individuals. In fact, this diagram highlights that the object, much like those in it–narratives, offers a different interaction to each type of individual that encounters the score.³²

In Which the Object, Attempting to Present a Proper Memoir, Reflects Selfishly

Furthermore, my title page emphasizes that not only have I been in the possession of a number of individuals and institutions; I am also their preferred object. An overlooked phrase on my title page signals that I am a “favorite.” Of whom? Well, certainly the Drury Lane audience enjoyed their experience, as I received “universal applause,” but I could just as easily be the implied favorite of everyone else in the narrative, suggesting a kind of broad consensus on taste. (See Figure 8.)

Figure 5: Giordani, "Favorite Airs in the Critic," with highlighted title-page participants.

THE
Favorite Airs
in the
C R I T I C
Sung with universal Applause
by Miss Field
Miss Abrahams & Sig. Delpino
at the
THEATRE ROYAL DRURY LANE
adapted for the
Voice, Harpsichord, Violin,
German Flute & Guittar
By
SIG. GIORDANI
Price 1/6
LONDON Printed by **LONGMAN and BROTHERS** No 26 Cheapside
Music Sellers to the **ROYAL FAMILY**

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Figure 6: Possible narrative flow-chart: diachronic

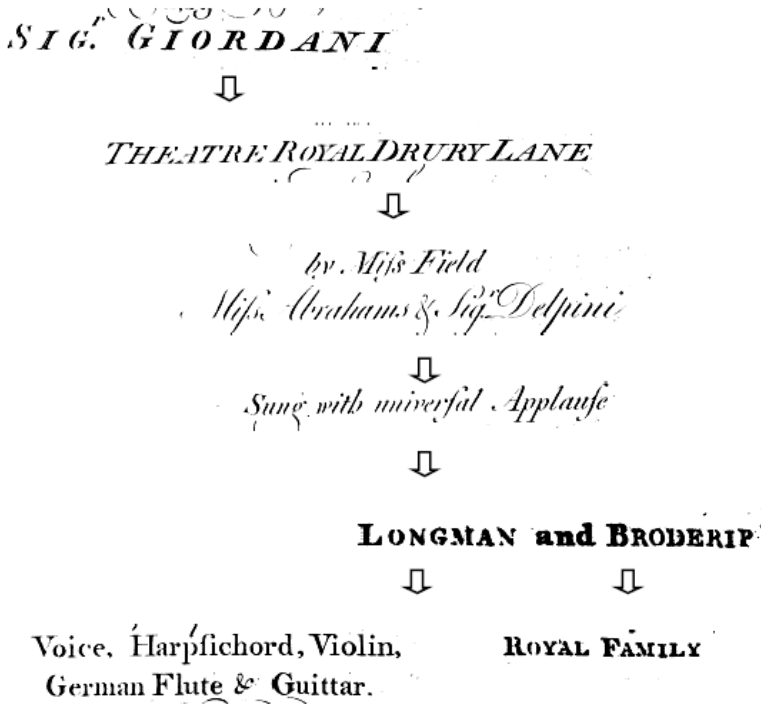


Figure 7: Possible narrative flow-chart: synchronic

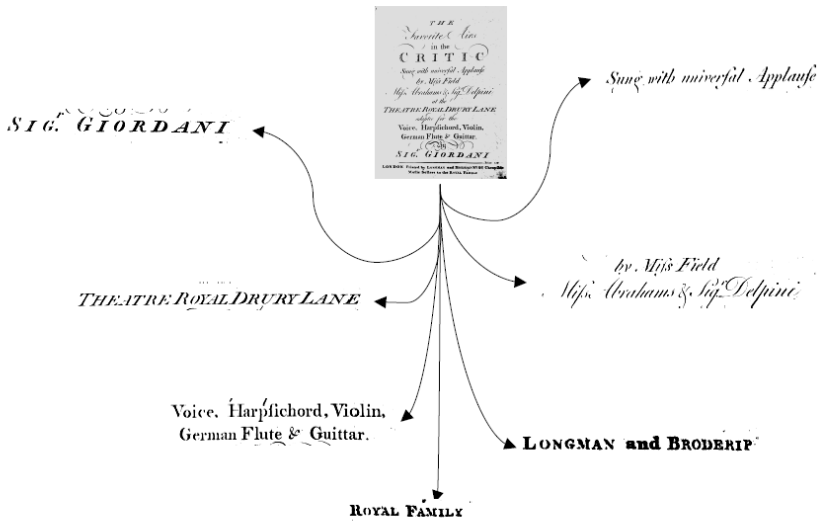
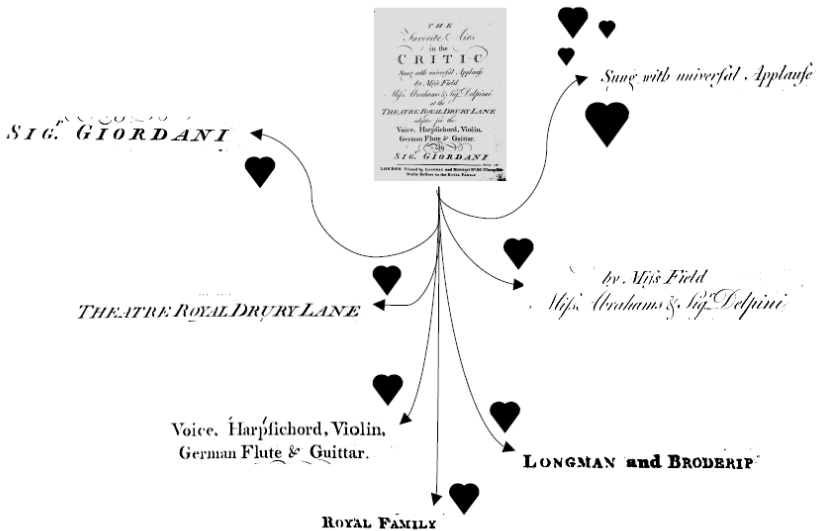


Figure 8: Whose favorite?



A Moment of Irony

My diegetic listeners would not have shared in that consensus. In their original dramatic context, my contents are ironic set pieces. The full title of the play is *The Critic, or A Tragedy Rehearsed*, and these songs were performed as a part of the rehearsal process represented in the plot. Specifically, they were sincerely presented by Signor Ritornello and his Italian cohort, in the hopes of securing the group a place in a staged production, but were critically received. In response to the performance of the songs, Mr. Dangle explodes with praise in muddled Italian (“Bravissimo! Admirabilissimo!”), and asks his friend, “Where will you find such as these voices in England?” Mr. Sneer, whose lines are mostly insincere, responds, “Not easily,”³³ which can either be praise or, as likely uttered with the facial expression that is the character’s namesake, relief at the rarity of a type of singer that he judges to be poor. Further, my contents (see Figures 2–4) may be deliberately simplistic, painting the performers to be dull and providing ample room for comedy in Sneer’s sarcastic remark.³⁴ In print, however, my contents are sincerely presented, in the hopes of being sincerely received; my title page suggests that these songs were truly preferred by all characters involved in their initial presentation. If the resonance between my two modes of presentation—print and stage—is not ironic, then perhaps my paper brain misunderstands the term. If it does not, then it seems that, in addition to being received by multiple types of people, my contents may be multiply interpreted.

Multiplicity Addressed and a Limb Embraced

I understand from my interlocutor that the notion of “multiple audiences” for musical works that might encode mixed stylistic features is not new.³⁵ I would like to suggest that the reader think more about the ways in which a single printed musical object such as myself might attempt to seduce, through its paratexts, multiple consumers in its circulatory life, both domestically and publicly. Surely, for instance, I was designed to be pleasing to a number of types of people, including singers (solo, duet, and trio), pianists, and guitarists.³⁶ I would also like to suggest that publishers and, interestingly, consumers may have *desired* material things that claimed broader appeal to multiple audiences, particularly given what we know, by virtue of it–narratives, of the circulation of other sorts of objects.

Certainly publishers and other agents of advertisement had reason to emphasize the potential for an object’s “multiple reception” in their attempts to use a single document, like an announcement or title page, to appeal to as broad a public as possible. Perhaps multiple advertisement

also sought to appeal to that public by making the breadth of the audience evident, validating the potential consumer's taste, and proving to him or her that various arbiters, including performers, publishers, and other audiences, chose a particular item as a "favorite." Title pages such as mine might ultimately entice the reader with claims of intersubjective agreement about taste. The insatiability of desire is thus fueled by an acceptance of the obligatory migration and multiplicity of objects and their appeal.

The Object's Final Thoughts

If you believe that what I have said here regarding circulation and consumer desire has any merit (or even if you don't), I encourage you to startle your own objects of study into verbal discourse. After all, it seems that much musicological inquiry already attempts to make scores, documents, instruments, and buildings reveal the records of musical culture, engaging with them as one would agents of a lost narrative. The goals of the it-narrative—to give voice to the material in order to understand the human—are likely not new to you; as I retreat to the solitary vacuum of the Beinecke collection, it may be time for you to make your investment in them more apparent.

Notes

1. Emily H. Green, the facilitator of this silly tale, would like to dedicate her efforts to her mentor and friend James Webster, a man whose chuckling specter proved a productive muse for this labor in particular. (An earlier version of this paper was presented at "The History, Theory, and Aesthetics of the Musical Canon: A Festival and Conference Honoring James Webster" at Cornell University in October 2013, and at "Consuming Music, Commodifying Sound, 1750–1850" at Yale University in the same month.) She would also like to thank the American Council of Learned Societies for its support, in the guise of a New Faculty Fellowship, of her research, career, and indulgent writing.
2. *The Life and Adventures of Toby, the Sapient Pig* (1817), published in *British It-Narratives, 1750–1830*, vol. 2, ed. Mark Blackwell (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2012), 226.
3. Bill Brown, "Thing Theory," *Critical Inquiry* 28.1 (2001): 4.
4. Francis Ponge, "My Creative Method," *The Voice of Things*, trans. and ed. Beth Archer (New York, 1972), 93; quoted in Brown, "Thing Theory," 2.
5. Some readers might be reminded here of eighteenth-century attitudes to other subjects-as-objects, namely slaves. The parallels between slave narrative and it-narrative have been explored elsewhere. See, for instance, Markman Ellis, "Suffering Things: Lapdogs, Slaves, and Counter-Sensibility," in *The Secret Life of Things: Animals, Objects, and It-Narratives in Eighteenth-Century England*, ed. Mark Blackwell (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 2007), 92–115.
6. See Martin Heidegger, "The Thing," in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York, 1971), 174–82; Boris Arvatov, "Everyday Life and the Culture of the Thing (Toward the Formulation of the Question)," trans. Christina Kiaer, *October* 81 (Summer 1997): 119–128. (Orig. published 1925). See also Christina Kiaer's introduction to the Arvatov piece: "Boris Arvatov's Socialist Objects," *October* 81 (Summer 1997): 105–18.

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7. See in particular Bill Brown, “Thing Theory,” *Critical Inquiry* 28.1 (2001): 1–22. In fact, the entire August, 2001, issue of *Critical Inquiry* is devoted to Thing Theory, and led to the publication of *Things*, ed. Brown (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), with essays by, among others, Bruno Latour, Peter Schwenger, and Charity Scribner. See also Stephen M. Best, *The Fugitive’s Properties: Law and the Poetics of Possession* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004); Geoffrey Batchen’s “Ere the Substance Fade: Photography and Hair Jewelry,” in *Photographs Objects Histories: On the Materiality of Images*, ed. Elizabeth Edwards and Janice Hart (London: Routledge, 2004), 32–47; and *Things That Talk: Object Lessons from Art and Science*, ed. Lorraine Daston (New York: Zone Books, 2004), esp. contributions by Daston and Peter Galison.

8. One could argue, however, that the object’s choice to speak for itself is nevertheless a move inspired by Thing Theory.

9. Kenneth Galbraith, *The Affluent Society* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1958); discussed in Colin Campbell, *The Romantic Ethic and the Spirit of Modern Consumerism* (Basil Blackwell, 1987), 41–57.

10. See mainly Neil McKendrick, John Brewer, and J.H. Plumb, *The Birth of a Consumer Society: The Commercialization of Eighteenth-Century England* (London: Europa Publication, 1982).

11. Vance Packard, *The Hidden Persuaders* (London: Longmans, 1957).

12. In this model, marketplace purchases are mostly pre-meditated. In other words, it does not explain impulse buys. That kind of purchase might be governed by an accelerated imaginative exercise, or by an entirely different process of decision-making.

13. Blackwell, “Introduction: The It-Narrative and Eighteenth-Century Thing Theory,” in *The Secret Life of Things*, 10.

14. See Liz Bellamy, *Commerce, Morality and the Eighteenth-Century Novel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 119–128; Jonathan Lamb, “Modern Metamorphoses and Disgraceful Tales,” in *Things*, 193–226; Deirdre Lynch, “Novels in the World of Moving Goods,” in *A Concise Companion to the Restoration and Eighteenth Century*, ed. Cynthia Wall (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), 212–43; Paul Collins, “You and Your Dumb Friends,” *Believer* (March 2004) (http://www.believermag.com/issues/200403/?read=article_collins); Lynn M. Festa, *Sentimental Figures of Empire in Eighteenth-Century Britain and France* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 2006); Michael Gamer, “Waverly and the Object of (Literary) History,” *Modern Language Quarterly: A Journal of Literary History* 70.4 (2009): 495–525; Leah Price, “From The History of a Book to a ‘History of the Book,’” *Representations* 108.1 (Fall 2009): 120–138; Christina Lupton, *Knowing Books: The Consciousness of Mediation in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012); and all contributions to Mark Blackwell’s volume, *The Secret Life of Things*, including articles by Barbara Benedict, Jonathan Lamb, Deirdre Lynch, Markman Ellis, Liz Bellamy, Aileen Douglas, Christopher Flint, Hilary Jane Englert, Ann Louise Kibbie, Bonnie Blackwell, Nicholas Hudson, Lynn Festa, John Plotz, and Blackwell himself.

15. The history of the bible in this context is discussed in Price, “From The History of a Book to a ‘History of the Book.’”

16. Liz Bellamy, *Commerce, Morality, and the Eighteenth-Century Novel*, 119.

17. Caryl Clark has considered the significance of Le Sage’s tale in the context of depictions of Jews in literature and on stage. See *Haydn’s Jews: Representation and Perception on the Operatic Stage* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), esp. 14–23.

18. For a catalogue of examples in print between 1701 and 1900, see Liz Bellamy, "It-Narrators and Circulation: Defining a Subgenre," in *The Secret Life of Things: Animals, Objects, and It-Narratives in Eighteenth-Century England*, ed. Mark Blackwell, 134–44.
19. The reader will be happy to know that the narrative presented here is on the shorter end of this range.
20. Anonymous, "Memoir of a Song," *Fraser's Magazine* 39 (January 1849): 17–28; repr. in Porriß, *Changing the Score: Arias, Prima Donnas, and the Authority of Performance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 189–203. For an introduction and analysis, see Porriß, 169–188.
21. The object misremembers Colin Campbell's phrase "imaginative exercise." See Colin Campbell, *The Romantic Ethic and the Spirit of Modern Consumerism* (New York: Basil Blackwell, 1987), 89.
22. The object means the quartets K. 387, 421, 428, 458, 464, and 465 (Vienna: Artaria, 1785). This new translation of Mozart's epistle appears in full in James Webster's "One More Time: Mozart's Dedication to Haydn," *Beethoven Studien*, forthcoming.
23. For more on the history of this metaphor, see Patricia Fumerton, *Cultural Aesthetics: Renaissance Literature and the Practice of Social Ornament* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 59–62; cited in Mark Evan Bonds, "The Sincerest Form of Flattery?: Mozart's 'Haydn' Quartets and the Question of Influence," *Studi musicali* 22.2 (1993): 367. More than two hundred years before Mozart and Paradis, Merulo offered his first book of madrigals to Ottavio Farnese, Duke of Parma and Piacenza (1566), and mixed metaphors by referring to his works as "offspring," much like "fruit." "If by ancient law we are held always to offer to God the first fruits of the earth, by age-old and praiseworthy custom we are also obliged to give to great princes the first offspring of our creativity that we send forth into the light. But if anyone was ever bound by this honored custom, so much more am I constrained to present to your most illustrious Excellency these my madrigals set to music, the first offspring that I ever produced in the public theater of the world, since my career and my life are owed to your generous and truly most illustrious goodness towards me, shown many times with great evidence of affection." (Claudio Merulo, *Sixteenth-Century Madrigal*, vol. 18, ed. Jesse Ann Owens (New York: Garland Publishing, 1993), xi.)
24. Trans. in Maria Theresia von Paradis, *Lenore*, ed. Hidemi Matsushita (Fayetteville, Arkansas: CarNan Editions, 1989), ii.
25. See note 14 above.
26. Francis Coventry, *The History of Pompey the Little: Or, The Life and Adventures of a Lap-Dog* (1751), 68; quoted in Bellamy, 122.
27. *Memoirs of Dick the Little Poney*, (London: E. Newbery, 1800); 17 reprinted in *British It-Narratives, 1750–1830*, vol. 2, ed. Mark Blackwell (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2012), 175.
28. The object jumped at this phrase, as it enjoyed the idea that its life could be considered a career. In fact, the words are Igor Kopytoff's, from "The Cultural Biography of Things: Commoditization as Process," in *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, ed. Arjun Appadurai (Cambridge University Press, 1986), 66.
29. Tobias Smollet, *The History and Adventures of an Atom* (London, 1769); repr. and ed. O. M. Brack, Jr. (Athens: U of Georgia Press, 1989), 7; quoted in Christopher Flint, "Speaking Objects: The Circulation of Stories in Eighteenth-Century Prose Fiction," *PMLA* 113.2 (1998): 217.
30. The object repeats an argument made by Christopher Flint in "Speaking Objects."

31. The object's vocabulary improves as it gains confidence with its voice.
32. While this kind of experience is not necessarily conspicuous, the central role of emulation in Figure 7's model does owe something to Thorstein Veblen.
33. Robert Brinsley Sheridan, *The Critic* (London, 1797), 19.
34. The BBC production available through Alexander Street Press also fittingly takes the opportunity for increasingly elaborate vocal cadenzas at the end of each verse of the "French Trio."
35. The object is only fleetingly aware of this scholarship, and neglects to mention that the notion of "multiple audience" has not been taken up quite as readily as it merits, aside from Elaine Sisman, "Haydn's Career and the Idea of the Multiple Audience," in *The Cambridge Companion to Haydn*, ed. Caryl Clark (Cambridge University Press, 2005), 3–16.
36. In fact, some composers and publishers attempted to make this kind of broad appeal yet more apparent. More than a generation before Longman and Broderip, Telemann published a preface to his chamber sonata collection, *Die Kleine Cammer-Music* (1716), in which he claimed to have "endeavored to present something for everyone's taste." See Steven Zohn, *Music for a Mixed Taste: Style, Genre, and Meaning in Telemann's Instrumental Works* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 217.

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