Music Analysis, Cultural Morality, and Sociology in the Writings of August Halm

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Do today's music theorists consider the social or ethical impact of their writings? Given the variety and depth of specialization in contemporary music-theoretical research, what effect, if any, might theorists' work have on society? There is much talk nowadays about deteriorated "family values," with solemn exhortations about restoring them. Do we hear similar anxieties about deteriorated *cultural* values?¹ To judge by recent political assaults on funding of the arts, those worries surface only when cultural institutions and the humanities are threatened by economic policy. Otherwise, most humanists, theorists

¹Voices raised for multiculturalism are not the same as those raised for cultural values as discussed here. The multiculturalist agenda urges diversity in an effort to break the bonds of Euro- and ethnocentricity. By contrast, ''cultural values'' in this essay imply *unity*, in acknowledging, understanding, and appreciating (valuing) precisely those art works, their structural, stylistic, and aesthetic underpinnings, that multiculturalists insist must make way for art of non-European and non-western cultures. Some modern humanists might argue vehemently against the notion of cultural values as it appears here, might even deny that they are ''values'' at all. However, in the time-frame of this essay (pre-World-War I Germany), cultural values and their attendant, ethnically defined aesthetic attitudes were a vital concern. Understanding the significance of Halm's work requires that we temporarily set aside modern-day multicultural judgments in exchange for gaining from Halm's analytical insights and learning about his motivations.

included, pursue their research for its scholarly significance, not for its social or ethical import. Theorists do of course teach instrumentalists, who in turn deliver culture to the public as performed music. Surely some of what instrumentalists bring to a performance springs from their training in theory (and history). Such musically applied training benefits a listening public, but only indirectly, by providing intelligently performed music and, to some extent, by raising awareness and appreciation, though not necessarily the understanding, of music. Is there any further task for theorists besides broadening the perspectives of their instrumentalist students (and, of course, educating others for careers as theorists)?

Most avoid such questions because the answers can lead to uncomfortable images of academics concerned purely with scholarly interests, self-perpetuation (through students), and little else. Music educators at primary and secondary levels are responsible for conveying music-cultural knowledge and values to society, leaving the job of educating music professionals, with all the specialization, to the academy.² Under that plan, when operating effectively, music culture and its inherent values thrive and are transmitted between generations, each group of educators contributing at different levels to musically training and enculturating different segments of society.³ And when the plan does not work effectively and breaks down, when the awareness of and appreciation for art music declines to the point that assumed cultural values are jeopardized? What then?

This is the alarming circumstance which composer, critic, and educationist August Halm recognized around 1910, after teaching for

²Some of us teach courses for non-majors in the fundamentals of theory, often to large groups of students who will become, we hope, the audiences at concerts of music. However, few of us view such courses as territory for research and publication, and thus they naturally rank lower in priority. Frequently, such courses in theory fundamentals are assigned to graduate students, whose careers are not yet at stake.

³Curtailed funding for music education in primary and secondary schools, not to mention the elimination of many music programs, has taken its toll, as most of us have surely noticed, for example, in students' ever dwindling familiarity with even core items of the "standard" repertoire.

several years in a private country boarding school (*Freie Schulgemeinde Wickersdorf*) that belonged to the vanguard of the "New Education" movement in Germany. Soon after leaving the ideologically and socially programmed environment of a school designed for reviving a languishing culture, Halm wrote a provocative essay that laments the day's music-cultural disorders. As their cause, he pointed to the tendency in public taste and published criticism to listen to, appreciate, and judge music for its effectiveness as an emotional stimulant and as an expression of the composer's inner life of a personality, instead of as an intellectual and spiritual achievement. Halm struck at the heart of a common trend in music criticism and, further, in music education at the time: the trend toward poetic or programmatic "interpretations" of music. Halm railed against such musical hermeneutics:

We no longer talk about musical laws and artistic virtues but rather about the effect of music on our emotions and nervous system, or about the emotional and neural condition of which music is supposed to give evidence, about the sphere of mental images of which it is supposed to provide a reflection.⁵

⁴I have written on the subject of educational reform in Germany in "The 'New Education' and Music Theory, 1900-1925," in *Music Theory and the Exploration of the Past*, ed. Christopher Hatch and David W. Bernstein (Chicago-London: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 449-72.

⁵August Halm, "Unsere Zeit und Beethoven," *Die Rheinlande* 11 (1911), reprinted in *Von Form und Sinn der Musik*, ed. Siegfried Schmalzriedt (Wiesbaden: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1978), 152-53. Halm's letter of April 30-May 4, 1910, to Hilda Wyneken, whom he later married, indicates that he completed the essay on May 2. He had left Wickersdorf around April 1. I was able to glean many details of Halm's career from some 800 letters he wrote to Hilda between 1909-1928. The letters, uncataloged, are in the Württemberg State Library, Stuttgart. All translations in this essay are my own. Readers are encouraged to consult the German texts in order to get a sense of Halm's distinctive writing style. Halm's main writings, though relatively unknown in the U.S., are available in many research libraries. A number of his important essays are included in Schmalzriedt's *Form und Sinn*.

The inner life of the composer comes to the fore as the most important aspect of music, and the one which critics are supposed to address. The focus, then, is on the composer's mental state, his emotional and experiential mental content, and less on the music itself. The work of a music critic begins to resemble that of a psychiatrist, making aesthetic judgment impossible. Instead of judging the *music*,

only the interior experiences of the composer can be judged.

I take such an attitude as typical of the average for today's criticism. Almost no one will demand that I provide further examples of it. Anyone will find similar opinions written here and there and they are read, again on average, without suspicion.⁶

Halm inferred two conclusions from this condition. First, music criticism, its aesthetic foundations weakened, had gone awry and ceased to develop. Second, art music had become a mirror for self-reflection, and was thus judged "according to our cozy interior life." As a result,

we no longer really believe in art, and as a consequence of this non-belief we have the tendency to forget the desire for knowledge of the laws of art, for aesthetic standards and values.⁷

Fear of tackling genuine musical issues and a sense of helplessness had paralyzed music criticism, sent it into a tailspin from which it could

⁶Halm, "Unsere Zeit und Beethoven," *Form und Sinn*, 153. Or further: "Currently we are swarming with doubts in music journalism" ("Von der Faustischen Krankheit," *Die kritische Tribüne* 1 [1912]: 197; *Form und Sinn*, 73). The "Faustian syndrome" is the affliction of critics who portray music (e.g., of Bach, Mozart, Beethoven) as a futile and failed struggle with demonic forces, in analogy to the Faustian futility of science.

⁷Halm, "Unsere Zeit und Beethoven," *Form und Sinn*, 153. "Art should not place a colorful, magnifying mirror in the hands of listeners, so that they can let their vanity luxuriate in the contemplation of the self" ("Musikalische Erziehung I," *Neue deutsche Schule* 1, no. 2 [1906]: 61; in *Form und Sinn*, 203).

not, and apparently did not wish, to recover. This circumstance, unhappily coupled with the usual, widespread expectation to be "moved and stirred" by music and to have such interior motions verbalized as concepts or images, was in Halm's estimation the "hallmark of our public and criticism." For Halm the sign of the times was, regrettably, withdrawal and resignation by the public. And the distressing problem was not so much hermeneuticists' fancies but the credence given them. He characterized the consequence as a musical non-culture (*Unkultur*). "Just a little more knowledge of music, a little more belief in it, and light and sun would never even have let the worms breed."

The public's and critics' preoccupation with psychological matters distracted from what Halm considered the most important basis for understanding and appreciating music, from that which, ultimately, is music's sole communicable aspect and hence the only ground for criticism—form:

The remedy against this [focus on inner life and emotions] is no secret: it is the cultivation of musical form, the consistent if often also self-denying willingness to recognize the will of music and to adhere to it alone.¹⁰

⁸Halm, "Unsere Zeit und Beethoven," Form und Sinn, 154, 159; "Musikalische Erziehung II," Die Tat 5 (1913-14): 1262. Halm published three articles entitled "Musikalische Erziehung," one in 1906 (in Neue deutsche Schule 1, no. 2, 58-62, cited above; in Form und Sinn, 200-3); another in 1914 (cited here); and a third in 1924 (in Deutsche Kunstschau 1, 308-11, in Form und Sinn, 204-10). Following Schmalzriedt, editor of Form und Sinn, I have distinguished the three essays by adding roman numerals to the titles, even though they do not appear in the published titles.

⁹Halm, "Von der Faustischen Krankheit," 199; in Form und Sinn, 75-76.

¹⁰Halm, "Unsere Zeit und Beethoven," in *Form und Sinn*, 160. In his appraisal of form, Halm follows Kant, whose *Kritik der Urteilskraft (Critique of Judgment*, 1790) considers the form of an object the universally communicable element (§ 48), and the "form of finality" (*Form der Zweckmäßigkeit*) the basis of a judgment of taste (*Geschmacksurteil*, § 11). Halm may have become familiar with Kant's ideas through Gustav Wyneken, who co-founded the Wickersdorf school, and whose sister Halm married. Wyneken's doctoral dissertation was on Hegel's critique of Kant.

Halm identified a few writers, among them Hermann Kretzschmar, a "pioneer of the error," for diverting attention from the centrality of form toward murky hermeneutics with his popular concert-hall guides. In two essays on musical hermeneutics, which derive from the approach of the guides, Kretzschmar dismissed "logical formal development" as a "fat morsel from the pig-Latin of aesthetics," and advocated in its place a revival of the doctrine of affections. Ignoring the difference between "form" and "forms" that goes back to Heinrich Christoph Koch and Adolf Bernhard Marx, Kretzschmar understood form too mechanically, as the exterior order of a work, the mere "husk and shell" for the essential interior, music's spiritual content. This content he determined to be a series of affections, which hermeneutics aimed to reveal. 12

Halm's view of form and its spiritual content has nothing to do with affections. For him, musical form is "objective Spirit" (objektiver Geist), where Geist embraces the notions of human intellect and soul or spiritual essence, and objective Geist, following Wilhelm Dilthey (1833-1911), refers to manifestations of Geist: in language, ethics,

¹¹Halm, "Von der Faustischen Krankheit," 198; *Form und Sinn*, 74. Kretzschmar published his first *Führer durch den Concertsaal* in 1886. It went through numerous editions and was quite popular in the early 1900s.

¹²Hermann Kretzschmar, "Anregungen zur Förderung musikalischer Hermeneutik," *Jahrbuch der Musikbibliothek Peters* 2 (1902): 51; "Neue Anregungen zur Förderung musikalischer Hermeneutik," *Jahrbuch der Musikbibliothek Peters* 5 (1905): 84: "The task of hermeneutics is to distill the affects from the tones and to translate the structure of their development into words." Koch distinguishes between form as a source of beauty in an art work and form as the exterior shape of a work in his *Kurzgefaßtes Handwörterbuch der Musik für praktische Tonkünstler und für Dilettanten* (Leipzig: Johann Friedrich Hartknoch, 1807, s.v. "Form" [156]). Marx discusses the difference between form and abstracted, generalized "art forms" (*Kunstformen*) in *Die Lehre von der musikalischen Komposition*, vol. 2 (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1842, 5). Kretzschmar explains in a preface to *Gesammelte Schriften aus den Jahrbüchern der Musikbibliothek Peters* (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1911, v) that the articles on hermeneutics grew out of his concert guides. My essay, "Hermeneutics and Energetics: Music-Theoretical Alternatives in the Early 1900's" (Journal of Music Theory 36, no. 1 [1992]: 43-68), discusses Kretzschmar's ideas.

political and social institutions, religion, and art.¹³ Halm characterizes musical form as a "spiritual achievement," the "purpose of the intellectual effort" in biblical language, "musical spirit becomes flesh." As a manifestation of *Geist*, form provides an opportunity to study and value the intellect's innate rationality and logical powers:¹⁴ "The achievement of form is the victory of the spirit of art; recognizing and admiring the victory is enjoyment of art." Reducing musical form to a series of affects trivializes music, ignores its intrinsic cultural value as an instance of objective Spirit, and so deprives the folk of a source of strength and unity. For Halm views music, and art in general, as an important means of building and sustaining a nation:

As a part of intellectual life, art necessarily belongs to the continuous building up of a folk.

¹³Dilthey adopted the term objective *Geist* from Hegel, whose metaphysics postulates subjective, objective, and absolute *Geist* as three stages in the evolution of *Geist*. (*Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse*, Part 3 [1817]). Dilthey distinguishes his notion of "objective *Geist*" from Hegel's in *Der Aufbau der geschichtlichen Welt in den Geisteswissenschaften, Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 7 (Leipzig-Berlin: Teubner, 1926; original essays 1905-9), 146-51. Rejecting Hegel's metaphysics, Dilthey interprets objective *Geist* empirically and includes art in its sphere, while Hegel had included it in the category of absolute *Geist*, along with religion and philosophy. Rudolf Makkreel discusses Dilthey's use of the term objective *Geist* in *Dilthey: Philosopher of the Human Studies* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1975, 1992), 305-9.

¹⁴Halm, Einführung in die Musik (Berlin: Deutsche Buchgemeinschaft, 1926), 77. Von zwei Kulturen der Musik, 3rd ed. (Munich: Georg Müller, 1913; reprint, Klett: Stuttgart, 1947), 36. (All references to Von zwei Kulturen are to the third edition, which includes an introduction by Gustav Wyneken. There are no substantial differences between the first, second, and third editions.) See "Musikalische Erziehung I," 61, in Form und Sinn, 203; and "Rationale Musik!," Der Kunstwart 41, no. 1 (1927-28): 153, in Form und Sinn, 79.

¹⁵Halm, "Musikalische Erziehung I," 61; in Form und Sinn, 203.

We call music an excellent force for building the folk. . . . With the help [of music] we want a folk to arise where up to now only a state has existed. 16

Learning about and appreciating the lofty powers of *Geist* through musical form is reason enough for society to involve itself closely with music. But Halm goes further by identifying music as an autonomous cosmic force for which the folk bears moral responsibility. Contrary to popular opinion that music exists for the sake of our entertainment or self-reflection, Halm held that we in fact exist for the sake of music, to cultivate and serve it:

Culture, understood properly, is a religious concept. We of course speak of fruit-cultures too, but cannot speak of a culture of fruit. We must thus . . . decide whether we can speak of a culture of music in such a religious sense . . . or whether we want to settle for music-culture. That means nothing other than the need to decide whether we want to view music as existing for the sake of humanity . . . , or to view humanity as existing for the sake of music, as well as for the sake of art generally. . . . If we want to say that we ennoble, cultivate ourselves as personalities through music, that activity will soon enough call for a decision and will require clarification of what we understand by it. It can mean that we consume music in some higher fashion, . . . that we extract the pure juices from music

¹⁶Halm, "Unser Musikleben: Volkskunst oder Luxuskunst," *Die Tat* 9 (1917-18): 146. "Die Musik in der Volksgemeinschaft," *Das hohe Ufer* 1 (1919): 120. The hope for cultural-social unity to replace an imposed, and since failed, political unity was a common pre-World War I sentiment, which the War's terrible outcome only intensified. George Mosse (*The Crisis of German Ideology: Intellectual Origins of the Third Reich* [New York: Schocken Books, 1981], 2-4), Fritz Stern (*The Politics of Cultural Despair: A Study in the Rise of the Germanic Ideology* [Berkeley-Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1961], xxviii-xxx), and Fritz Ringer (*The Decline of the German Mandarins: The German Academic Community, 1890-1933* [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969], 1-3, 10-11, 14-15, 42-43) explore the social and intellectual history of the times.

for this better "I," the way the enjoyment of apples purifies our blood; or, it can mean that through duty to music, or through our participation in its existence and welfare, we declare ourselves as belonging to a humanity obligated to the spiritual dimension, that we acknowledge human dignity, the fact of being human, in the labor for the sake of spirit.¹⁷

Given such a view of music, it is no wonder that Halm should find it irresponsible—we might say "culturally unethical"—to lower music from its exalted height to the level of common human affects through hermeneutic poetization, and then to peddle the results to an unknowing, uncultivated public. And given the popularity and widespread acceptance of such poetization, it is no wonder, further, that Halm should anticipate strong reactions to the indictment of music criticism in his 1911 article "Unsere Zeit und Beethoven" ("Our Times and Beethoven"), quoted at the beginning of this essay, because of its aesthetic and moral implications. Hermeneutics, as practiced by Kretzschmar and others, became for Halm a battleground for the survival of music-cultural morality and values in the folk. The battle cry was "Music as a spiritual power!"

¹⁷Halm, "Musikalischer Schülerkursus," *Die freie Schulgemeinde* 2 (1911-12): 128; partially reprinted as "Gegensätze," in *Musikalische Jugendkultur*, ed. Fritz Jöde (Hamburg: A. Saal, 1918), 56.

¹⁸In the letter to Hilda Wyneken, cited in n. 5, Halm concluded the paragraph about finishing the essay by remarking that it was sure to initiate a "show" owing to its implicit aesthetic criticisms and moralizing tone. From subsequent letters it is clear that Halm had trouble finding a journal that would accept "Unsere Zeit und Beethoven." Even the editor of *Die Rheinlande*, which published the essay, found it necessary to include a three-column *apologia*, entitled "Bildung und Kritik" ("Cultivation and Criticism"), along with the essay as a way of cushioning its blow.

¹⁹Halm, "Leben und Kunst," *Der Wanderer* 11, nos. 7-8 (1917): 171: "Music as an art came into the world but once; closing oneself off from its light is simply no longer possible. . . . We can no longer imagine a German folk without music (but please: music as art, as a spiritual power)." See *Form und Sinn*, 240-41 ("Musik als geistige Macht").

Not long after Halm published the essay on Beethoven reception, a weighty tome on the composer and his works appeared: *Beethoven*, by Paul Bekker, music critic for the *Frankfurter Zeitung*. Already in the essay Halm had registered grave misgivings about his contemporaries' understanding of Beethoven. Bekker's monograph, replete with poetic and anthropomorphic readings of Beethoven's music, alarmingly confirmed the diagnosis Halm had made shortly before the book's appearance:

Precisely in music, in that art which before any other would permit an objective judgment because it has the most pronounced forms, because it can most often be "absolute art"—precisely in music, oddly, we encounter this ill-circumstance most often. And the name of the reigning power in music that is borne nowadays on the frontmost banner, the name Beethoven is enveloped by this false shimmer. The fame of effect irradiates him, not the fame of achievement.²¹

Typical for Bekker's approach to the music is the title of Book 2, "Beethoven the Tone-Poet," whose first subsection, "The Poetic Idea," claims that for Beethoven the poetic idea is the "uppermost form-giving principle" and that the "content of the tone poem [Tondichtung] emerges from knowledge of the musical affect." Halm's and Bekker's approaches to the music are diametrically opposed, as is clear from Bekker's belief that, with Beethoven,

²⁰Paul Bekker, *Beethoven* (Berlin: Schuster und Loeffler, 1911); trans. M. M. Bozman (London: Dent; New York: Dutton, 1925). Bekker (1882-1937) built his reputation as music critic for the *Berliner Neuste Nachrichten* (1906-09) and the *Berliner Allgemeine Zeitung* (1909-11) before joining the *Frankfurter Zeitung*. He also published several well-known monographs: (1) on music in Germany (1916), (2) on the history of the symphony from Beethoven to Mahler (1918), (3) on Franz Schrecker's music (1919), and (4) on Mahler's symphonies (1921), to mention a few.

²¹Halm, "Unsere Zeit und Beethoven," Form und Sinn, 155. In an incisive formulation, Halm contrasts a misconceived "Ruhm der Wirkung" with a more proper "Ruhm der Leistung."

the painting in old program music, which adheres to external images, has been spiritualized to become a free painting of sensation [*Empfindung*]. A new principle of program music has been found. It has been revealed to Beethoven the aesthetician.²²

Such language was for Halm a sure sign that, disappointingly, Beethoven's music certainly was not the subject of investigation but rather his personality as expressed through the music. In a neo-idealistic age when essences, not particularities, were the concerns of aesthetic research, Bekker's focus on the music as a vehicle for personal expression seemed regressive to Halm. Many musical interpretations in the book "read like the draft of a drama or even of a psychological novel," he charged, where we follow mental states, with too little said about the interior musical drama staged by musical characteristics, than enacted by the musical characters of Bekker's rather anthropomorphizing imagination. The crucial issue of musical form in Beethoven's music does arise, but as a way of navigating "stations on psychological paths" instead of as a way of understanding the meaning of intrinsic musical processes. Therein lie music's cultural values, in its logical organization as conceived by the rational mind, not in attributed personal expressiveness or in emotional impact. Realizing that Bekker is capable of better, as evinced at certain points in the book, Halm concluded that the author lacked both the courage to go beyond popular taste and the necessary critical stamina to sustain the probing analytical investigation required, and merited, by Beethoven's music.²³ Bekker's work and its like, in sum, represented unethical criticism, rooted in a corrupted cultural morality.

Halm's first monograph, Von zwei Kulturen der Musik, which established his reputation as a major figure in music aesthetics and criticism, devotes a lengthy section to Bekker's interpretation of

²²Paul Bekker, *Beethoven*, 2nd ed. (Berlin: Schuster and Loeffler, 1912), 77, 78, 84. Bekker's hefty book of over six hundred pages was an immediate success, going into a second edition only six months after the first.

²³Halm, "Beethoven. Von Paul Bekker. Rezension," *Die Rheinlande* 12 (1912): 175-78; in *Form und Sinn*, 170-75.

Beethoven's "Tempest" Sonata (op. 31, no. 2). Halm takes Bekker to task for misleading the public with a wrong-headed and even self-contradictory dramatization of the sonata's exposition. The date of the book, 1913, indicates that Halm worked on it at roughly the same time as the Beethoven reception essay (1911), the Bekker review (1912), and the article about the "Faustian syndrome" (1912), all cited earlier. Furthermore, the above-cited articles (along with a few others) about the dangers of hermeneutics, the erosion of music-cultural values, and the need to shift attention from affects and personal expression to musical form also fall in the same period. Halm's concerns in the articles and review no doubt escalated into the extended revisionist critical study that we find in *Von zwei Kulturen*.

The context for Halm's critique of Bekker is a discussion of sonata form as differentiated from the fugue, sonata being a multithematic structure whose essence is the integration of opposing elements, and fugue by contrast being a monothematic structure whose essence is the working out of a single idea. These two formal types are the two "cultures" of music, a sociopolitical interpretation in which the fugue represents individuality, sonata form the cooperation of many individuals, as in a state. Beethoven's sonatas, with their vivid themes and associated motives, their distinctive local and global harmonic features, their grand synthesis of contrasting materials, exemplify for

²⁴Letters to Hilda Wyneken of 1910-12 often mention essays intended as a "Beethoven book," but which turned out to be *Von zwei Kulturen*. Halm's first book was a perceptive, if small, *Harmonielehre* (Leipzig: Göschen, 1900), often mistakenly cited as dating from 1905, which is a second reprint (first reprint, 1902). Halm's last book was, in fact, entitled *Beethoven* (Berlin: Hesse, 1927), commissioned for the centennial of the composer's death.

²⁵Halm, "Musikalische Erziehung I" (1906); "Musikalische Erziehung II" (1913-14). Others are: "Musikalische Bildung," *Wickersdorfer Jahrbuch 1909-10* (Jena: Diederichs, 1911), 48-73, in *Form und Sinn*, 211-27; and "Die Musik in der Schule," *Die Freie Schulgemeinde* 1 (1909-11): 11-18, 45-52, in *Form und Sinn*, 228-39.

²⁶Halm, *Von zwei Kulturen*, 33. Book 1, on form, is in two sections, the first on fugue, the second on sonata form. Book 2, on "Language and Style" ("Sprache und Stil"), deals with rhythm and dynamic structure, symmetry, and thematic structure.

Halm the first genuine realization of sonata form's potential. Owing to their vividness and dynamic impact, Beethoven's works invite programmatic interpretation, and in some cases are even demonstrably linked with extramusical ideas. Nevertheless, such programs, reputed or real, can only ever be a starting point for investigation, since ultimately musical works must be understood technically, as the logical unfolding of harmonic and thematic structural functions. Halm uses Bekker's fanciful dramatization of the "Tempest" to illustrate the dangers of hermeneutics, and as a foil for a structural analysis that relies on intramusical dynamics rather than on extramusical dramatics.

With its suspenseful, fantasia-like opening and abrupt changes of tempo, rhythm, register, and dynamic levels, the mood of the "Tempest" is fertile ground for an imaginary drama (see Example 1). Bekker takes full advantage. He stages a ghostly scene in which a mysterious apparition rises threateningly (mm. 1-2), causing eighth-note figures to flee in terror and resistance (mm. 3-5), until they reach a calm at the *Adagio* (m. 6). Entertaining enough, Halm admits. But such a scene could be replaced by many others, he points out, by one at sea, for instance: a pre-storm stillness followed by howling wind and an ensuing "tranquility," which is anything but calm. Already Bekker's stage direction is confused. After the "violent" outburst in mm 3-5, surely m. 6 does not convey a sense of calm. On the contrary, the tension has escalated beyond that of the opening. Failing to take this into account, Bekker further confounds the drama when he narrates, "But the phantom returns. . . ." Was it ever absent, Halm inquires?

... the "But" [doch] ... signifies nothing better than one of the many, many examples that contemporary music journalism offers us: false dramatization, artificial contrivances of conflicts on the part of the interpreter, who misjudges the actual drama, ... and projects it on a stage that he himself invents such that

²⁷Bekker, *Beethoven*, 151. Bekker's interpretation of the "Tempest" is on pages 151-52 in the second edition (1st ed., Berlin: Schuster and Loeffler, 1911, 118-19). Halm, *Von zwei Kulturen*, 40.

Example 1. Ludwig van Beethoven, Piano Sonata in D minor, Op. 31, no. 2, mm. 1-30



. . . the picture becomes distorted through the projection. . . . Alas it is indeed literally a *camera obscura*, through which reality is forced to pass!²⁸

Bekker's staging goes from bad to worse. After the apparition returns "more earnestly and exhortingly" (mm. 7-8), the terrified eighth-notes react more violently than before, "mounting up" to F6 (mm. 9-13), then "plunging into the depths," where the storm is unleashed. The phantom (mm. 21-22, left hand) now "surges upward." But it was already "up," Halm reminds us, twice in fact (mm. 1-2, 7-8). It never descended in Bekker's staging. The only descent was the recent plunge by the fleeing eighth-notes. Once again, confusion and inconsistencies corrupt the drama.

When I said earlier that something . . . was not right . . . , it is certain that the adherents of such poetization are ready with the answer: "one should not stretch the images too far." Should we not? Oh, yes, we may and we should. . . . Our imagination requires it. It does not dally but rather operates; it creates according to its own laws, not according to extraneous caprice. . . . [I]n no case does the imagination allow us to play games with it [or] allow us to jockey it back and forth and distort it, at least not when it is vivid.²⁹

Halm chides Bekker not only for inconsistent staging but also for using language inappropriate for describing musical processes. Musical figures cannot mount up (auffahren), which in Bekker's context translates as bolt up in fear. Actors, people, supernatural beings—they can mount. But musical figures? They go up, ascend (hinauffahren), rise, but cannot mount. Halm rejects Bekker's language as distortive because it transforms inanimate elements into animate beings. He endorses instead language suited to the things being described: musical

²⁸Halm, Von zwei Kulturen, 41.

²⁹Ibid., 46.

phenomena.³⁰ Halm's recommended verbal shift from mounting to ascending highlights his principal disagreement with musical hermeneutics: attributing human traits, such as mental affects or physical actions, to musical events. Music should be described and portrayed as music, which represents forces, not feelings, dynamic characteristics, not dramatic characters:

The more we leave behind all materiality in the sense of some thing, some person, and have approached the action itself and function, which is the ordered, the organized action, the closer we have gradually come to that actuality. We have a drama of forces before us, not a drama of persons or personifications.³¹

No imaginary drama, no matter how convincing, can disguise or excuse flaws in poorly constructed music. And well-constructed music does not improve through an effectively worked out dramatic staging—let alone through one poorly worked out, as in Bekker's ghost scene. The only purpose of creating a drama is to acquaint untrained listeners, through analogy, with musical processes and logic in familiar, non-technical language. But the analogies must be carefully developed in order to preserve musical sense, and the language suitably formulated in order to avoid trivializing anthropomorphisms. And even then, the result remains only an analogy, not "actuality," only a preliminary step toward investigating the underlying music-structural bases:

The objective is to demonstrate that in all important and determinative processes Beethoven proceeded according to musical considerations. . . . We should seek out the values in this D-minor sonata . . . above all in the construction, in the organization.³²

³⁰Ibid., 41-42.

³¹Ibid., 50.

³²Ibid., 48.

Halm's structural analysis of the Tempest's first movement is extensive, interwoven with the Bekker critique and several lengthy digressions.³³ We can get the sense and significance of the analysis through a discussion of those parts that deal with the exposition only, with references, where enlightening, to other sections of the work. Halm's main concern is how to understand the recitative-like passages that usher in the recapitulation (mm. 143-158). That question leads him to interpret the character of the related passage, the movement's opening, and the dynamic conditions which it engenders in the subsequent music. He approaches the question obliquely, by explaining what does happen based on something that does not happen.

What would be the result, he asks, if the opening measures, which contain the material for the recitatives, were omitted, if the piece began where the "first theme" appears, in m. 21? "Flat," he replies. Why? Because the musical effect of that measure, lacking preparation, would be lost. The force of m. 21, where Bekker's storm is unleashed, relies on what precedes. Its poignancy does not issue from a self-sufficient power but from *evolved* power. The theme's "destructive force" (Bekker), which annihilates the chromatic "turn" motive after mm. 22-24, 26-27, is not autonomous. It derives from the succession of events leading to m. 21:

a piece in which the succession of events . . . is the main concern cannot be understood through the narrative content of the individual processes but rather through the knowledge of the artistically ordered succession. I do not understand a drama when I perhaps correctly note that one Someone kills another Someone on stage. . . . I understand when I know why and with what artistic authority the poet works with the impression of a violent act precisely at this point.³⁴

³³Ibid., 38-79.

³⁴Ibid., 53.

Sounding Husserlian, Halm seeks to understand the "now" (das Jetzt) of m. 21 and how it evolves, just as Husserl and, before him, William James had analyzed the present as a blend of accumulated memories and anticipations. Doing music analysis thus requires retroauditive and proauditive acts (retentive, protentive), which together with the "now" experience constitute the musical present. Halm characterizes the dynamic condition at m. 21 based on musical characteristics embodied in Bekker's two characters—the apparition (mm. 1-2, 7-8), and the fleeing eighth-notes (mm. 2-3, 8-20)—and then explains how those characteristics unfold over mm. 1-20.

Neither character is what it seems to be; both have, so to speak, split personalities. The opening arpeggio seems quiescent, evident in the slow tempo (*Largo*) and leisurely rolled chord, the slow rhythm, the *pianissimo*, and the concluding fermata. However, the deliberate, if unhurried, ascent conveys a sense of pressing forward, of latent energy. The fleeing eighths seem frantic, evident in the repeated notes, the recurrent motivic pattern, staccato accompaniment, and dramatic *crescendo* to a *sforzando* accent. Yet, beneath the mobility lies its opposite, immobility (restraint), indicated by the framing pitch, A4, which anchors the passage at its beginning and end, and is repeated throughout mm. 2-6. In the one case striving cloaked in tranquility, in the other tarrying with a façade of haste.³⁶

³⁵Edmund Husserl spoke of "retentive" and "protentive" time consciousness in *The Phenomenology of Internal Time Consciousness*, ed. M. Heidegger, trans. James S. Churchill (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1964), 44ff (retention), 76ff (protention). *Internal Time Consciousness* was originally a series of lectures delivered in 1904-5 and other lectures between 1905-10. William James describes the "specious present" in chapter 15 of *The Principles of Psychology* (1890): "... the practically cognized present is no knife-edge, but a saddle-back, with a certain breadth of its own on which we sit perched, and from which we look in two directions into time."

³⁶Halm, *Von zwei Kulturen*, 58. We can confirm Halm's interpretation of mm. 2-6 by showing how A4 is prolonged through the stepwise descending fifth to D4 (mm. 2-4), and by its upper neighbor B ♭4, prolonged through a stepwise descending third to G4), and the resolution back to A4 in m. 6, preceded by a dissonant G♯. Note how this middleground configuration foreshadows the motives in, among other instances, mm. 22-24 and 55-57.

The second arpeggio motive (mm. 7-8) occurs a minor third higher, a sign of intensification. The ensuing eighths assimilate the escalation, break free of the A4 anchors, and rise to F6, accompanied this time by less predictable, off-beat chords. In Halm's ear, the latent energy of the arpeggio emerges in the emancipation of the eighth-note figure, previously intervallically confined. That figure achieves full potential through the characteristic of its companion motive. Similarly, when the arpeggio theme returns at m. 21, after the plunge, momentary registral plateau, and chromatic sweep, it absorbs the intensified energy released by the now liberated eighths. The kinetic force of the eighth-note motive coalesces with the potential force of the arpeggio motive, producing the "warmth and fulfillment" of the "now" in m. 21.37 On hearing that measure we do indeed sense an important arrival, as though the piece had finally "found itself" after two extended anticipatory gestures. The coalescence of the two motives' opposing traits imbues m. 21 with its special dynamic quality. Halm cites Beethoven's statement, quoted in Schindler's biography of the composer, about "two principles" that "thousands fail to grasp" in this regard.³⁸ A dramatic staging, if self-consistent, can by imaginative analogy confirm the intrinsic music-structural properties that produce the "now," but it cannot explain them, and hence cannot be a basis for understanding or, crucially, for critical judgment.

³⁷Ibid., 58, 76.

³⁸Ibid., 79, and *Die Sinfonie Anton Bruckners* (Munich: G. Müller, 1913), 27, refer to Beethoven's "two principles." Anton F. Schindler, *Biographie von Ludwig van Beethoven* (Münster: Aschendoff'schen Buchhandlung, 1840; 3rd ed., 1860; reprint, *Anton Schindlers Beethoven-Biographie*, ed. Alfred C. Kalischer [Berlin: Schuster und Loeffler, 1909]), 570; *Beethoven As I Knew Him*, ed. Donald W. MacArdle, trans. Constance S. Jolly (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1956; London: Faber and Faber, 1956), 406. Beethoven's comment about "thousands" failing to grasp the two principles is in the second edition of Schindler's biography, of 1845, which was unavailable for review. In the third edition, remarks about "two principles" also appear on page 719 (trans., 499). The musical reference in both cases is Beethoven's op. 14. Arnold Schmitz investigates the significance of the two principles—essentially opposites of one kind or another—in *Beethovens* "zwei Prinzipe": Ihre Bedeutung für Themen- und Satzbau (Berlin-Bonn: Ferdinand Dümmlers Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1923).

The musical drama of forces surrounding m. 21, specifically the restraining force expressed by the A4s that bound mm. 2-6, has echoes and structural ramifications for the work. The repeated A4s reverberate in mm. 22-24 and 26-28 where, couched in the agitation of the rolling triplets and heightened dynamic plateau, their restraining quality is even more pronounced than in mm. 2-6. The repeated A5s in mm. 38-40, an octave-intensification, convey yet greater urgency in the suddenly stalled harmonic rhythm on the volatile vii°7/V (in A minor), all of which propels the music into the second theme. Further restraining forces involving repeated As occur at mm. 55-59 (cf. mm. 22-24!), 87-90 (calming), and 121-33 (pseudo-calming). In fact, much of the action of the piece depends on repeated notes alternating with arpeggios, which in Halm's ear does not add up to much melodic material. The lack of any full-blown melody, together with the prominence of restraining forces, explain the recitative passages in mm. 143ff.

Halm interprets the recitatives as the final appearance of an otherwise absent, lyrical element. In their broad, melodic unfolding through m. 158, the recitatives represent a liberation of melody and a respite from the foregoing turbulence. Formally, they forestall the arrival of the second theme, which has been anticipated, Halm proposes, ever since mm. 119-20, the formal analog of mm. 38-40, which led to the second theme. The delay tactic is confirmed by the repeated notes at mm. 159-60, 163-64 (A4s!), and 167-68, which recall the restraining forces of earlier passages (mm. 38-40, 22-24, and all the way back to mm. 2-6). However, the sense of restraint first begins at mm. 159-60, allowing us to enjoy the lyrical relief of the recitatives. It is as if the "spell" were broken, as Bekker suggests, and the apparition had begun to speak, although Halm substitutes a dynamic interpretation for Bekker's extramusical one. 39

Halm realized that pieces may have extramusical motivations. He knew of Beethoven's advice to Schindler about reading Shakespeare's "Sturm" ("The Tempest") to discover the "key" to op. 31, no. 2,

³⁹Bekker, *Beethoven*, 151. Halm interprets the section of the movement described in the preceding two paragraphs in *Von zwei Kulturen*, 59-66.

because he knew Schindler's biography.⁴⁰ Halm even conceded that this sonata in particular appeared to have a program, though he did so only to stress that, despite extramusical references, he aimed to show

the musical dimension, the technical element, the artistic is the more interesting thing here since it is the essential and genuine aspect . . . even here, the musical dimension is by far the more important one.⁴¹

Further, immediately following the "Tempest" analysis, Halm dealt at length in *Von zwei Kulturen* with the development of the "Pastoral" symphony, an oft-cited model for nineteenth-century program music, and he addressed that symphony's explicitly scenic aspects in a brief article published shortly after the book. Clearly, he was aware of the programmatic dimension of Beethoven's music.⁴²

Nevertheless, Halm averred that the only way to gain true knowledge of music and to appreciate it fully as objective *Geist* was through structural analysis of form: specific harmonic and thematic functions, the dynamic processes in which they engage, and the distinctive way these processes unfold in a work:

Knowledge of music depends on knowledge of musical processes, of the function of musical forces as they operate in

⁴⁰Anton F. Schindler, *Biographie von Ludwig van Beethoven*, 570; *Beethoven As I Knew Him*, 570.

⁴¹Halm, *Von zwei Kulturen*, 39. The emphasis is Halm's.

⁴²Halm analyzes the development of Beethoven's "Pastoral" Symphony in *Von zwei Kulturen*, 84-107. My article, "Beethoven's Formal Dynamics: August Halm's Phenomenological Perspective" (*Beethoven Forum*, forthcoming) discusses the analysis. Halm's short article on the "Pastorale" is entitled "Szene am Bach" (*Der Kunstwart* 27, no. 3 [1913-14]: 15-18).

chords, chord progressions, in forms, i.e.[,] in the laws of life and development in melody and larger [musical] organisms.⁴³

The sense of a musical work, then, resides *in the work*, not in something it "contains" or conceals "behind" it. But can such an assertion be upheld in light of Beethoven's own words about some relationship, albeit unspecified, between the sonata and Shakespeare's play? Arnold Schering (1877-1941), a student of Kretzschmar's and the best known advocate of extramusical references for Beethoven's works, answered "no." He pointed to many statements indicating that Beethoven commonly expressed "poetic ideas" or described events and scenes in his music. And what of the works that have original programmatic titles or subtitles? Schering dismissed Halm's efforts as failed.

Halm died in 1929 and so could not refute Schering's claims, made in 1936. No doubt he would have stuck to his structuralist guns, despite all of Schering's documentary evidence. A poetic idea, even if

⁴³Halm, "Reden bei Gelegenheit musikalischer Vorträge," Wickersdorfer Jahrbuch 1908, ed. Gustav Wyneken (Jena: Diederichs, 1909), 62. The Wickersdorf yearbooks contain expanded, published versions of talks Halm gave at the school. For Halm, harmonies, local and translocal harmonic progressions, and motives are "material of an action or of being acted upon, of a mechanical activity, . . . tokens and testimonies of a dynamic condition, . . . symbols of force!" (Von zwei Kulturen, 77).

⁴⁴Arnold Schering, *Beethoven und die Dichtung* (Berlin: Junker und Dünnhaupt, 1936). A 115-page introduction lays the conceptual and historical groundwork for Schering's extramusical interpretations of Beethoven's music, and several appendices offer additional evidence, some of it from Beethoven's time, of his theories. An index of identified poetic sources for Beethoven's instrumental works appears on pages 560-61. Owen Jander's recent article "Beethoven's 'Orpheus in Hades': The Andante con moto of the Fourth Piano Concerto," *19th Century Music* 8, no. 3 (1985): 195-212, continues the tradition of speculation about programs for Beethoven's music.

⁴⁵Schering, *Beethoven und die Dichtung*, 44. Carl Dahlhaus, who also questions Halm's "Tempest" analysis, attributes the extraordinary qualities of the work to Beethoven's intention, expressed around 1802-3, to break with tradition and strike out on a new path (*Ludwig van Beethoven und seine Zeit* [Laaber: Laaber-Verlag, 1987], 34-35).

provable, remained for Halm no more than a general precompositional element, the exterior "what" of a work. Halm's interest lay in the interior "how" and "why" of an idea's structural manifestation, without which an extramusical content could not stand up to critical judgment and, therefore, could not lay claim to artistic validity:

. . . will anyone make me believe that some medication from the realm of magic and fairytales can help a musically faulty passage?

The poetic idea is therefore useless. Even if it were legitimate in itself, it does not aid in understanding. For to understand action means nothing other than to recognize its causes, its reason and purpose.⁴⁶

After analyzing the "Tempest" at length based on dynamic conditions, Halm asked rhetorically whether understanding musical functions was everything. He answered with an unqualified "yes." Cultural value in music lay in its form, specifically in its formal dynamics, not in poetic ideas, in structural realization, not in extramusical motivation.

Halm's criticisms of Bekker's scenic narration were aimed at its aesthetic premise as well as at its practice. The drama interprets its characters unidimensionally and, owing to shallow musical hearing, misconceives the intrinsic dynamic processes symbolized by the drama. Music is objective *Geist*, a sonic expression of the mind's rationality and logic. To present these as irrational or illogical is to cast doubt on the integrity of *Geist* itself! For Halm, journalists like Bekker represented the collapse of critical ethics and the corruption of music-cultural morals as mandated by *Geist*. Not long after Halm, the composer-critic Hans Pfitzner also denounced Bekker's work in the caustically titled volume *The New Aesthetics of Musical Impotence* (1920), which vehemently attacked Bekker's *Beethoven*. For Pfitzner,

⁴⁶Halm, Von zwei Kulturen, 48, 52.

⁴⁷Ibid., 70.

as for Halm, the "new aesthetics" raised serious questions of cultural morality. The lack of talent, Pfitzner charged, is "the immorality of art."

Although Halm thought of himself primarily as a composer, his main influence turned out to be in the domain of music criticism, its ideology and methodology, as well as its standards and goals. As suggested in the title of this paper, his outlook on, and for, music criticism was closely linked to cultural and social issues. The state of music criticism and the sociocultural condition of the folk were for him interdependent and reciprocally influential. Inferior, popular criticism that explained music as an extension of composers' personalities or of listeners' emotions lowered music to a vehicle for psychological release. As a result, criticism was reduced to unverifiable statements, rooted in an ill- or undefined psychology, about the "content" of music, whose core—objective Geist—was bypassed altogether, and with it its cultural value as an exemplification of Geist. Judgment was impossible. The reinforcement of self-definition and integrity that a folk might gain from its national music was thereby weakened. Decadence and cultural collapse were at hand.

The answer? Music education, the other domain in which Halm's writings had considerable influence. Its goal went beyond raw instrumental skill, elementary vocal training, acquaintance with folk music, and passing familiarity with standard "classical" repertoire—the day's usual music-educational fare. The goal was genuine music-cultural literacy, demanding acceptance of the cultural importance of, and the social responsibility for, art; the recognition of the role of music as an embodiment of objective *Geist*; the ability to grasp the spiritual essence of a musical work, its form; and to think critically and evaluate a work, for, as Halm put it, "We serve *Geist* through our critical activity":

⁴⁸Hans Pfitzner, *Die neue Aesthetik der musikalischen Impotenz* (Munich: Süddeutsche Monatshefte, 1920), 5. Halm, *Von zwei Kulturen*, 70: "Bekker is one of the best representatives . . . that I know of the mistaken approach."

Evaluating and gauging is the task of the human intellect. Equipping the intellect with the courage, caution, and reflectiveness for that task is the job of early instruction.⁴⁹

Utopian goals, to be sure, but these were the ideals of the Wickersdorf school, a self-proclaimed utopian institution, and the ones that Halm championed throughout his career. The themes are woven into his numerous essays, reviews, lectures, and five major books. Through abundant writings he endeavored with missionary zeal to restore the aesthetic autonomy of music by redefining its function from entertainment to bearer of cultural values and to reorient public musical involvement from, in Adorno's terms, that of bourgeois "cultural consumer," whose atomistic hearing "lies in wait for . . . beautiful melodies [and] grandiose moments," to that of "good listener," the cultivated amateur, who through mastery of music's immanent logic "hears beyond musical details . . . and judges for good reasons, not just by categories of prestige and by an arbitrary taste." "50

Amid increasingly visible political and social seams in late Wilhelmine Germany, the years prior to World War I were heady times. During the twilight of an expiring order, the proposals and polemics of intellectuals such as Halm, Pfitzner, and their adversary, Ferruccio Busoni, are fervent expressions in the aesthetic domain of erupting political and social forces.⁵¹ Had Halm lived into the mid-1930s, he might have recognized the dangers of the conservative music-

⁴⁹Halm, "Musikalische Bildung," 69, 67; in *Form und Sinn*, 224, 223. "We hope from the very beginning to lay the foundation for independence, which is the goal of instruction" ("Musikalische Erziehung I" [1906], 20; *Form und Sinn*, 202). "Music education means teaching how to recognize responsibility; cultivation means equipping [students] to bear the responsibility" ("Musikalische Erziehung II" [1913-14], 1255).

⁵⁰Theodor W. Adorno, *Introduction to the Sociology of Music*, trans. E. B. Ashton (New York: Seabury Press, 1976; orig. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1962), 5-7, 39.

⁵¹Marc A. Weiner discusses the significance of the Pfitzner-Busoni polemic as part of the larger musical scene in Germany in *Undertones of Insurrection: Music, Politics, and the Social Sphere in the Modern German Narrative* (Lincoln-London: University of Nebraska Press, 1993), 33-71.

cultural ideology he promulgated during the politically volatile 1920s. Living in an idyllic village in an isolated corner of the Thüringen Forest, could he have known that such ideas, coupled with ardent nationalistic sentiments, would escalate into the National Socialist agenda, and that the cultural "values" in Beethoven's music would soon be propagated in a book dedicated "To Young Germany" ("Dem jungen Deutschland")?⁵² The spirit of an art work remains "unchanged in value through changing times," as Busoni declared in 1907.⁵³ The same cannot be said, alas, for the human spirit, which Halm had insisted was duty-bound to serve the spirit of art.

⁵²This is the dedication of Schering's book *Beethoven und die Dichtung*, cited above. Two years before the book, in an article entitled "Zur Sinndeutung der 4. und 5. Symphonie von Beethoven" (*Zeitschrift für Musikwissenschaft* 16 [1934]: 65-83, specifically 77-83), Schering published a politically tendentious analysis of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, which he interprets as a national struggle to throw off the yoke of tyrannical rule, and as an appeal for a "Führer" to bring salvation and victory ("Sieg und Heil"). Pfitzner, who died in 1949, not only failed to recognize the dangers but, to his discredit, allowed his aesthetic philosophy to become political ideology by cooperating with the Nazis and becoming a national cultural figure in the Third Reich.

⁵³Ferruccio Busoni, Entwurf einer neuen Ästhetik der Tonkunst, 2nd ed. (Trieste: Schmidl Verlag, 1907; reprint, Leipzig: Insel-Verlag, 1916), 5; "Sketch of a New Esthetic of Music," trans. Theodor Baker, in *Three Classics in the Aesthetic of Music* (New York: Schirmer, 1911; reprint, New York: Dover, 1962), 75.