



University  
of Glasgow

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*Emotion in the German Lutheran Baroque and the Development of Subjective Time Consciousness*

**John Butt**

Heinrich Schütz and J.S. Bach belong to similar cultural and confessional environments, but the century that separates them is perhaps one of the most significant in the development of what might loosely be defined as modernity. It was a period when new theories of the self, consciousness and emotion were mooted, many of which still have considerable relevance for our current practices. Does the music of Schütz and Bach tell us anything about historical conceptions of emotion that goes beyond what we might glean from contemporary writings? Does a comparison of these two composers imply similar forms of consciousness or some degree of historical change? Considering this music from the standpoint of its effect in performance provides an opportunity to pursue a line of enquiry that is rare in studies of musical emotion: how can the emotions that are evoked, represented or stirred by music function over time, and is the type of durational self that this might presuppose – through representation or perhaps through what is assumed of the listener - one that is recognisable to us? While there is no shortage of attempts to explain the representational aspects of this sort of music through the analysis of figures, themes or symbols, much must also lie in the actual sound of performance and the friction that voices and instruments bring, particularly in music that is patently dialogic.

Already it might be clear that my approach to issues of emotion and affect is primarily historical rather than universalist or empirical, but I am also keen to stress that historical or cultural particulars might have extremely broad applications, ones that

can be assimilated, learned or reworked in locations quite remote from their origins. If there is a universal connection between music and emotion, my guess is that this lies in the *associative* powers of music rather than in any specific content that somehow survives from one context to another. In other words, music might condition us to perceive or experience an emotion that we would not otherwise have had, but the actual range of emotions concerned might be surprisingly varied according to circumstances. This is a hypothesis similar to one that I have developed in relation to music and meaning – its hermeneutic perspective – which proposes that some music predisposes us to intuit a sense of ‘meaningfulness’ without necessarily forcing us towards any specific meaning.<sup>1</sup> Perhaps our intuition and assimilation of meaning and emotion in music are somehow connected, equally vague but surprisingly powerful once set in motion by the context or associations at hand.<sup>2</sup>

The associative perspective on emotion certainly has a long history, even if it is sometimes obscured by more palpable, mechanistic views of how emotion works, those approaches that underwent particular development during the seventeenth century. Nevertheless, even Descartes, and particularly Spinoza, stressed that one can often feel affection for something that was present when one experienced pleasure on a previous occasion – a sort of proto-Proustian association that is entirely contingent on the individual’s experiences. In this context, there is no intrinsic affect to be found

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<sup>1</sup> John Butt, *Bach’s Dialogue with Modernity – Perspectives on the Passions* (Cambridge, 2010), pp. 181-9.

<sup>2</sup> This assumption of a link between emotion and meaning immediately begs comparison with Leonard B. Meyer’s *Emotion and Meaning in Music* (Chicago, 1956), which does indeed share certain points with my study, such as my skepticism of a direct, quasi-linguistic relationship between music and external meanings and emotions, and the view that western music is not a natural universal requiring no experience to understand. On the other hand, Meyer’s approach is strongly based on mid-twentieth century psychology (and particularly on the model of expectation-deviation) and does not share the broad historical critique that I attempt here.

in an object, but its associative powers can be remarkably powerful in the right circumstances. As Daniel M. Gross has observed, Aristotle's definition of emotion in his *Rhetoric* is dependent on contextual, social issues: a king becomes angry because he suffers an insult from those he believes are inferior by birth, power and virtue.<sup>3</sup> Presumably, if the same man were to have been born into a different caste, such anger would never have arisen. Hume greatly develops this sense of the significance of context with his concept of indirect passions (which constitute in effect most of the emotions, since they are those experienced in conjunction with other qualities). These are encapsulated in his elegant description of the double relation required in the experience of pride: while a fine house will not by itself excite pride, if there is an object of the emotion (i.e. the self as possessor of the house), the house then becomes the cause of the emotion of pride.<sup>4</sup>

An awareness of the associative conception of emotion brings with it the sense that the human subject has at least the potential to influence the course of emotions, by changing some aspect of the relationship (to the degree that this is possible). In seventeenth century thought Spinoza perhaps comes closest to describing this, with his distinction between active and passive emotion. To him, if the mind has inadequate ideas, the passions (externally caused) dominate the self, while adequate ideas (internally caused) enable one to be more active. Thus, in contrast to the emerging view in the British empiricist tradition, for which emotions are the primary building blocks of experience, Spinoza's passions are, literally, a sign of passivity. Positive emotions are those that come from an awareness of one's active application

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<sup>3</sup> Daniel M. Gross, *The Secret History of Emotion: from Aristotle's Rhetoric to Modern Brain Science* (Chicago and London, 2006), pp. 1-3.

<sup>4</sup> David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature* (1739-40), ed. with an introduction by Ernest C. Mossner (Harmondsworth and New York, 1969), pp. 328, 339-41.

of adequate ideas (thus the joy of the philosopher as opposed to that of the drunkard). In all, then, here there is the sense of a honed self, disciplined into seeking positive emotions through thought, something that obviously shares much with a religious practice.<sup>5</sup>

With Hume, writing in the first half of the eighteenth century, there is considerably less trust in reason and ideas (adequate or otherwise), but Hume's description of the sort of self-awareness and direction implied by Spinoza comes under the aspect of will. Will is what we become conscious of when we knowingly activate a new motion of the body or perception of the mind. While will is clearly an experience (after the event, as it were) rather than the act of a sovereign being, Hume allows that emotions can be increased or diminished through custom or repetition. Gradually, through habituation, the emotion brought by novelty dissipates and is replaced by a new form of pleasure associated with moderation, shorn of any painful affections. While this same process can work in reverse - pleasure often being converted into pain through habit - the overall effect of custom is to increase active habits at the expense of the passive.<sup>6</sup>

Given that religion, particularly in its Protestant forms, also promoted the notion of personal change and the iterative honing of the self, it is not surprising that the Lutheran tradition also clearly promoted a strong sense of the harnessing of emotions for positive effect. Daniel Gross traces this back to Philipp Melancthon's educational

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<sup>5</sup> Baruch Spinoza, *Ethics and on the Correction of the Understanding* (1677), trans. Andrew Boyle with an introduction by T.S. Gregory (London and Melbourne, 1986), pp. 84-5, 90, 125 and 148.

<sup>6</sup> Hume, *A Treatise on Human Nature*, pp. 447, 469-71.

programme for the new confession (*Elementorum*).<sup>7</sup> Melanchthon's neo-Augustinian view of human nature as inherently corrupt, because of original sin, meant that art had to be employed as a means of moving one away from the original state of nature. Rhetoric was to be employed not merely to aid general instruction but specifically to redirect the emotions and move the soul in the appropriate way. Thus rhetoric became one of the crucial means by which the Reformation engendered an early modern sense of the self as malleable and capable of inward change. In another way, Melanchthon's employment of art as a corrective to the natural state, has strong resonances with Thomas Hobbes's famous argument a century later for the necessary artificiality of the political commonwealth, into which the conflicting wills and natures of all its individuals are subsumed. Hobbes's 'nature' could be thought of as a secular, political translation of the doctrine of original sin, now controllable through artificial means and coupled with the archetypically modern view that social improvement was possible within world history.

While it is difficult to speculate as to how individual musicians might have controlled or redirected their own emotions it is interesting to observe some of those passages that J.S. Bach underlined in his copy of Abraham Calov's bible commentary (largely an anthology of writings by Luther himself). One telling annotation comes at the point that Luther tells us that God will punish us if we use our possessions and gifts badly, so we are therefore allowed – indeed exhorted - to express anger for the sake of our office (something that is assumed to be God-given).<sup>8</sup> Never should one show anger on

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<sup>7</sup> Daniel M. Gross, 'Melanchthon's rhetoric and the practical origins of Reformation human science', *History of the Human Sciences* 13/3 (2000), 5-22.

<sup>8</sup> Howard H. Cox (ed.), *The Calov Bible of J.S. Bach* (Ann Arbor, 1985), facsimile 218, p. 445.

one's own account 'no matter how severe the offence has been', but even small slights to one's office are worthy of rebuke. Bach surely experienced a whole range of emotions throughout his life, but perhaps passages like this suggest that he would have worked particularly hard at channeling his emotional impulses towards whatever was useful in supporting what he believed to be his God-given status as musician and director of music.

Music might well have performed an important emotional role at a time when it was increasingly believed that one's emotional well-being could be cultivated from the inside. Indeed, the Lutheran context gave this role a specific focus – the 'appropriate moving of the affections' is virtually a commonplace in Lutheran writings from the post-Reformation era, well into the eighteenth century (although, I should stress, any consistent or deeply insightful 'theory of the affects' remains elusive). One of the most telling commentaries on music from the Lutheran perspective comes from Bach's contemporary Gottfried Ephraim Scheibel (1721), for whom the rich emotional range associated with opera and operatic music could profitably be transferred to church practice. Adopting a rather mechanistic approach to the affects, Scheibel suggests that one's basic affection in relation to any particular kind or piece of music is essentially consistent, and thus transferable; all that changes in moving this music from theatre to church is the *object*, the emotion adhering just as easily to a sacred text as it did to the secular one.<sup>9</sup> This might remind us of Descartes' gundog, trained to modify its impulse to run away when the gun fires by running towards the

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<sup>9</sup> Gottfried Ephraim Scheibel, 'Random Thoughts about Church Music in our Day' (1721), introduced and translated by Joyce Irwin, in *Bach's Changing World: Voices in the Community*, ed. Carol K. Baron (Rochester, NY, 2006), pp. 227-49.

partridge.<sup>10</sup> Joyce Irwin suggests that Scheibel's attitude is a departure from the orthodox Lutheran tradition, where the spiritual force of words from Scripture are meant to have a specific effect which the emotions follow, rather than vice versa.<sup>11</sup> But the emphasis on association, at the level of the object of the affect, is at least consonant with the tradition of turning the affects to good use. It would be interesting to consider whether Schütz and Bach might have differed in their view of emotion, mirroring a gradual historical change from a belief in 'correct' emotion emanating from Scripture, towards the emancipation of emotions into a free-standing realm, which only then can be co-opted for spiritual purposes. If there is indeed a change of emphasis, it must still be remembered that the free-standing view of the emotions had always been latent in the Lutheran tradition. While Scheibel's justification for using the most modern of secular musical styles in the sacred context was incendiary in the light of the contemporary debates (that had their roots in the Pietist antipathy towards complex music), there was a long tradition in adapting secular melodies for sacred use.

Co-opting the secular for sacred purposes is common to both Lutheran and Counter-Reformation traditions. One striking theme that long predates the Reformation is the relation between earthly love - profoundly emotional and patently erotic - and the spiritual necessity to feel love for, and from, the divine. The Song of Songs, which provides the text for Schütz's magnificent duet setting of 'O quam tu pulchra es' and 'Veni de libano' (*Symphoniae sacrae* I, 1629), also influences many of Bach's texts

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<sup>10</sup> René Descartes, *The Passions of the Soul* (1649), translated by John Cottingham, Robert Stoothoff and Dugald Murdoch, in *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, vol. 1 (Cambridge, 1985), p. 348.

<sup>11</sup> Joyce Irwin, 'Bach in the Midst of Religious Transition', in *Bach's Changing World*, pp. 108-126, esp. pp. 116-17.



that concern the relation of the believer to Jesus (such as Cantata 140, 'Wachet auf' and Picander's libretto for the Matthew Passion). Cantata 32, 'Liebster Jesu' belongs very much to the same world, although it doesn't quote the Song directly. These are the two pieces to which this study is directed

Although the Song of Songs has often been used more or less literally as celebrating the joys of human love within a spiritually permissible context, it has frequently been interpreted in a more allegorical fashion. In the Jewish tradition it would be seen representing the love between God and the children of Israel, as his bride. This then became associated with the love of Jesus for his Church from the early years of the Christian tradition (the bride-bridegroom relationship already being well established in latter books of the New Testament). These traditions already suggest an early sense of the transferability of emotion, the redirection of an urge for spiritual purposes. They also imply a flexibility of gender that might perhaps be surprising to those unfamiliar with the history of Christian practice: the human subject is in the feminine position whether relating to Jesus on the individual level or as part of the church. Given the 'song' epithet for this poem, there is perhaps a sense in which music had long had an association with the fluidity of this sort of process.

Schütz may well have known Monteverdi's famous 1610 setting of a closely related text from the same poem, 'Pulchra es', which is also a duet (for high voices), with alternations of duple and triple times. In the context of Marian devotion, an extra layer is added to the sense of this text, by which the object of adoration becomes Mary, who is also associated with Jerusalem (and thus again with the Church itself). Two things are immediately obvious from Monteverdi's setting: the composer, in his

*seconda prattica* mode, typically makes the words ‘the mistress of the harmony’, the two together thus setting out to fulfil the Platonist imperative to follow and enhance the disposition of the soul. Secondly, we as listeners are surely moved though the sympathy we feel for the emotions undergone by the characters of the singers, exactly as would happen in secular monody or opera. We witness the object of their desire and awe through the sound of their voices and thus assimilate their subject position. Perhaps one of the greatest (re)discoveries of the *seconda prattica* era was that an emotional gesture in performance can create an analogous feeling in the listener; this is similar to what modern neurobiological studies outline with the concept of ‘mirror neurons’: animals are observed to undergo the same mental processes as those of their fellows engaged in specific activities.<sup>12</sup>

What was a performance of Schütz’s ‘O quam tu pulchra es’, written about two decades later, meant to achieve? It is difficult and surely wrong to assume precise purposes, but it presumably had the unimpeachable Lutheran aim of presenting a biblical text clearly and giving the listener the opportunity to recall it, meditating on its meaning and broader implications. Just as in the Monteverdi, the voice of the ‘male’ lover is split into two, but it is also frequently mimicked and reinforced by the wordless, but surprisingly eloquent, lines for violins. But without Monteverdi’s Marian context, the most likely allegorical interpretation would be to consider the male voice of the Song of Songs as that of Jesus addressing the church or the individual believer as lover. While splitting the voice of the godhead into multiple voices was something that Schütz did elsewhere (most memorably in the motet textures of ‘Saul, Saul, was verfolgst du mich?’) what is striking here is that it is the

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<sup>12</sup> See Barbara Maria Stafford, *Echo Objects – The Cognitive Work of Images* (Chicago and London, 2007), pp. 75-104, esp. p. 77.

listener who is the potential object of adoration. A Christian might thus be predisposed to be appropriately 'seduced' by this music, the duetting of the voices already demonstrating a sense of intimate partnership, doubling that between performers and listener, and the imitation from the violins perhaps providing a sort of 'blank' that the listener is enjoined to fill. There is the possibility, then, that the listener fills a different subject position from that implied by Monteverdi's setting and the concerns of the early *seconda prattica*.

As Bettina Varwig has recently shown, it is entirely appropriate to relate Schütz's activity as a composer to rhetoric, but traditional scholarship has been too narrow in its concentration on the individual, localized, figures and their possible meanings. By acknowledging the rhetorical tradition stemming from Erasmus, Varwig suggests a much broader and more powerful conception by which the meaning of a text is amplified through repetition, rearrangement and formal patterning.<sup>13</sup> In this way, Schütz's music is far more interesting and subtle in its structure than analysts have commonly believed. Indeed, the form of each piece is uniquely derived from the way the composer develops the implications and shape of the text and it is thus unlikely to be appreciated if formal conventions are assumed in advance. Moreover, the music achieves at least some of its effect through its own self-sufficiency; if it were entirely subservient to the text it would surely become dispensable to some extent (not that one could ever consider Monteverdi's music dispensable). Its components are developed, expanded and connected in a manner parallel to the way a rhetorician might work with a verbal text - the suggestion of development is far more potent than the outlining of precise semantic components. Most productive of all in Varwig's

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<sup>13</sup> Bettina Varwig, "Mutato semper habitu": Heinrich Schütz and the Culture of Rhetoric', *Music and Letters* 90/2 (2009), 215-239.

Erasmian approach is her consideration of the memory and expectations of the listener, something that seems of a piece with the way the composer has presented and ‘unwrapped’ the material. The reception of the audience is, after all, the goal of all rhetorical procedures and, we might assume, a composer well versed in this sort of process was building directly on his own experiences as a listener.

Building on my earlier observations on the role of emotions in rhetoric, might it be that the sort of amplification that musical rhetoric really achieves relates more to the feelings surrounding the text - and whatever theological context accompanies it - than to the actual meanings it might evoke? Perhaps any meaning we intuit in music, spiritual or otherwise, is secondary to this emotional substrate. But either way, if the music has the potential to evoke feelings – or more precisely – to help put one in the state of mind to feel feelings, it must somehow relate to the way our consciousness can work in time. This is the area that is least covered in historical discussions of music, so actual pieces of music might provide a particularly valuable area of evidence.

Absolutely central to the study of pre-modern subjective time is St Augustine’s meditation on time in his *Confessions*.<sup>14</sup> Augustine was puzzled by the way his conscious identity seemed to persist if the present is clearly without duration, the past irretrievable and the future unknown. His solution was to suggest that past, present and future cohere within the mind, as the present of past things (memory), the present of present things (direct perception) and the present of future things (expectations). He used the example of reciting a psalm (something that immediately conjures up the

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<sup>14</sup> St Augustine, *The Confessions*, trans. R.S. Pine-Coffin (Chicago, 1990), pp. 119-25.

potential for musical performance) by which the expected future steadily passes into the past as the point of reading moves forwards. He overcame the problem of the pinpoint subjectivity of the present (i.e. the fact that our consciousness at any particular moment is gone as soon as it comes) by noting the persistence of the mind's attention and how it is through this that what is expected passes into the memory. Before beginning a psalm, his faculty of expectation engages the whole, but, as he begins to recite, this future expectation pours through the consciousness into the memory (perhaps rather like the sand in an egg-timer). Augustine had the intention that this exercise in distending the soul through broadening the individual moment, with its expectations and retentions, could enable us to direct ourselves towards eternity; but there is surely the potential for development in the secular realm too, by which one's sense of being can become deeper, more thoroughly grounded in worldly time. This is precisely one of the aims of those who later developed the sense of a self as no longer simply embedded in a given order but potentially able to develop, perhaps in unpredictable ways, during one's lifespan. The Reformation certainly played a part in this early modern development, but so surely did changes in listening to - and thus composing and performing - music.

Andrew Bowie suggests that a new emphasis on the role of music in delineating the time and subjectivity of the listener might be evident in Descartes' early treatise *Compendium Musicae* (1618), where the philosopher suggests that hearing the end of a song reminds us of its beginning and of what happened in between.<sup>15</sup> While this does not represent much more than an adaptation of the Augustinian view specifically

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<sup>15</sup> Andrew Bowie, *Music, Philosophy, and Modernity* (Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 52.

to music, it may well be that the increasing autonomous structuring of music in the seventeenth century betrays an acute conception of the development of individual consciousness in time, something sustained and reinforced through the emotional associations that could be prolonged in musical time. Certainly, in his last treatise, Descartes sees the benefit of passions as lying in the fact that they can help to prolong those thoughts that it is good for the soul to preserve and which might otherwise have been erased.<sup>16</sup> Hume suggests something tantalizingly close to a musical connection when he relates the human mind and its passions to a stringed instrument, on which vibrations remain after the stroke has ceased, gradually and insensibly decaying. Thus when something provokes a succession of emotions, each will somehow be mixed with the others, the overall emotion sometimes being determined by those that predominate or perhaps by some sort of amalgam of the two.<sup>17</sup>

Nevertheless, there is little in the German Lutheran environment to suggest much of an intellectual development of subjective time consciousness. The entry on 'Zeit' in Zedler's *Lexicon* presents time as essentially cosmological, marked by the movement of stars, which is then simply further divided into the standard human measurements of time; one thing simply and regularly succeeds another.<sup>18</sup> This mechanistic attitude tends to reaffirm the traditional, essentially cyclical, view of time, which the human enters and leaves as if joining and alighting from a carousel. The nature of our understanding is such that we can peg the cumulative duration of our inner *Nun* to the regular and measurable progress of outer, cosmological time. Each moment that

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<sup>16</sup> Descartes, *The Passions of the Soul*, p. 354.

<sup>17</sup> Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, pp. 487-8.

<sup>18</sup> Johann Heinrich Zedler (ed.), *Grosses vollständiges Universal-Lexicon aller Wissenschaften und Künste*, 64 vols. (Halle and Leipzig, 1732-50), vol. 61, columns 725-858.

passes is a shortening of what remains of our duration, leading to the moralising conclusion that one should use the time at one's disposal well, following God's will and practising due diligence.

One can imagine many ways in which music might traditionally have supported Augustine's conception of time, accompanying the expected verses of a psalm with a recurring tone that has its own syntactical expectations parallel to the form of the individual verses. The Lutheran chorale tradition would have had a similar role for music, a repeated, recognizable musical form that brings its own protentions and retentions, working in parallel to the expected text, but in a faster 'gearing' as it were. Turning to Schütz's Song of Songs setting, one might imagine a biblically competent listener anticipating the successive verses abstracted from the poem, that cumulatively describe in near preposterous terms the attributes of the beloved – the eyes like a dove, the hair like goats, the teeth like freshly washed ewes, right up to the breasts as two young roes. Schütz obligingly employs a sort of chant for these sections, a regular recitation in the modern Italian style that, at least in its first appearances, generates a sense of regularity.

But what makes Schütz's setting so compelling lies in the ways he modifies this basic process of expectation and memory. It is surely here that the emotional element might come into play since, instead of a steady flow of music-supported text, the music forces us to remain with different parts of the text in different ways. We might thereby learn that there is more than one way by which we can persist in time, however much our pinpoint of consciousness might proceed with uncontrollable regularity; certain sensations might well last longer than others. In typically rhetorical

fashion, the piece begins with a basic topic that is immediately enforced through amplification; the text begins with the essential flattering statement ‘O how fair thou art’, set with the suitably expressive interval of the diminished fourth, and this statement is itself embellished with the sequential, cumulative music for ‘my love, my dove, my lovely, my immaculate one’.

### **Example 1**

This complex is presented three times, first as a solo, then as a duet and finally for the violins alone. Repetition, embellishment, amplification and suitable musical figures are all standard fare with Schütz and his Italianate contemporaries. But what is particularly interesting here is the way the opening, flattering statement is lengthened: the bass’s first four bar entry is lengthened by one bar on its second appearance (b. 15), and the tenor immediately inaugurates a duet version which is also five bars long (19-23); when the violins copy this (from b. 33) this section is six bars long.

### **Examples 2-3**

Interestingly the intervening sequential sections (‘my love, my dove’ etc.) are always the same length. If we were to think of this as a form of consciousness-stretching, Schütz seems to be accustoming us to a relatively short presentation of the idea, emotion or sense for ‘O how fair thou art’ and then stretches this into progressively longer durations. By separating these lengthening spans with the sequential list of loving epithets he is exercising this discipline in a way that capitalizes on our lack of a continuous consciousness. On returning to the key phrase we perhaps realize that the trace of the sensation it evoked is still with us, and not a memory that is ‘restaged’ (like, for instance, our memory of the opening of Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony, recalled right at this very moment of reading).



I am already adopting here the language of a much later theory of time consciousness, that of the phenomenologist Edmund Husserl,<sup>19</sup> but my claim here is that Schütz is developing something of this sort of conception in the early modern context of the seventeenth century.<sup>20</sup> For Husserl, retentions stream out behind one rather like a comet's tail, but rather than being a continuous form of consciousness, the retentions overlap with one another in a sort of tiling effect. Thus the expanding of the 'O quam tu pulchra es' sensation is partly contingent on its being interleaved with something else (otherwise, at least according to this way of conceiving time consciousness, it would be unmanageable). The returns teach us that the 'O quam tu pulchra es' has not entirely faded from our consciousness, and each lengthening repetition extends the period during which we are directly conscious of it. As the piece proceeds with its sections in duple time, adding more pictorial details to the lover's view of the beloved, the triple-time 'O quam tu pulchra' returns, now in regular five-bar cells, as if only a regular reminder is now needed.

Obviously, emotion is one indissoluble component of a broader complex of consciousness but there is the specific sense that whatever emotion might be conjured up by the text - its flattering implications, its theological resonances and the expressive musical intervals, together with the way they grate across the singer's voice - is seeded and successively regenerated and prolonged. This is little short of a musical seduction, by which a lover repeats a flattering exclamation interspersed with similes that on their own might seem preposterous. If successful, our reciprocal

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<sup>19</sup> Edmund Husserl, *On the Phenomenology of the Consciousness of Internal Time (Zur Phänomenologie des inneren Zeitbewusstseins, 1893-1917)*, trans. John Barnett Brough (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1991).

<sup>20</sup> Something of a precedent is hinted at in Hume's approach to human consciousness, as I suggest above (note 15), the British empirical tradition providing a major precedent for Husserl's phenomenology.

feelings sink in over time, as if even love must follow rhetorical principles. Following Hume, we might develop the ‘correct’ emotion (say a sense of loving) only once we recognize ourselves as the object of the emotion (and, to complete the religious circuit, Jesus or the Godhead as its cause). The intervening texts (all but the last taking up similar spans around five bars) display the sorts of word-painting that is so often associated with Schütz, but, I would suggest, the crucial function of these is to provide a foil for the seductive refrain, as if the return to this is being both ‘tested’ and coloured by the pictorial imagery.

Whatever the interplay of the two types of metre and their associated poetry, the piece takes on a dualistic nature that is also underlined by the fact that the violins usually only play in the triple time ‘O quam tu pulchra’ sections. Such dualism is of course of a piece with a type of subjectivity that arose specifically in the seventeenth century, which sees the beginnings of a definition of the subject as being contingent on the object. It is certainly not implausible that one could hear the triple sections as relating to the listener’s iterative subjectivity (itself the object of the amorous, if divine speaker), the duple ones as a more objective pictorialization, which the listener can take or leave. However, the final duple section, over twice the length of the previous ones, is striking in that only here do the violins participate, in dialogue with the text (‘Thy two breasts are like two young roes, roes that are twins’). The object thus becomes doubled, by which the violins seem to depict what the singers suggest; of all the images so far depicted this is the one that participates in the duality that informs the piece on so many levels (e.g. the pairing of speaker and listener, the pairing of the singers, of the singers with violins, of metres, of levels of consciousness). It is perhaps this sense of culmination that means that the closing ‘O quam tu pulchra es’

is quite different from the previous ones. The original violin presentation of the opening, extended to six bars at the outset is now preceded by a new two-bar tag, which is extended yet further when the voices have it, and all this is reworked in the final bars of the piece. While this certainly reminds us of the opening there is surely the feeling that things have changed, that the insistent rhetorical pacing of the piece has resulted in a new state of affairs (most obviously transformational is perhaps the violins' reintegration of the diminished fourth into an upward arpeggio, creating an augmented triad, bb. 130-1).

#### **Example 4**

The type of consciousness implied by Schütz's setting is not unlike that intuited Augustine, by which the music tends to follow the progress of the text in a time frame similar to that of reading. Yet the insistent repetitions of the opening line and its cumulative effect also suggest a thickening of one particular aspect of the text, as if a single moment of consciousness is developed in concentric circles, interleaved with the expected linear progress of the text. The listener seemed encouraged to prolong the 'useful' emotion conjured up by the seductive refrain. Music thus helps to 'strengthen and prolong thoughts in the soul which it is good for the soul to preserve and which otherwise might easily be erased from it', as Descartes said of emotion in general.<sup>21</sup>

Turning to Bach, particularly in the type of music most distant from Schütz's, namely his highly developed aria forms, it is this cyclic and iterative form of consciousness that is emphasized at the expense of the moment-to-moment progress of recitation. What was a small flexible unit for the title line of Schütz's 'O quam tu pulchra es'

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<sup>21</sup> See note 16, above.

often becomes a much larger ritornello, a piece of music that is usually syntactically complete in its own right. If we listen to the opening instrumental section of 'Liebster Jesu, mein Verlangen' we are in no doubt that the music evokes a particular mood or emotion, one that is perhaps more intense in its immediate presentation than what we hear in the music of Schütz's generation. The basic figurations and accompanimental devices are more static and regular than the repetitive elements in Schütz, but they are thereby more saturated. The oboe melody, at least, follows familiar rhetorical principles of repetition, elaboration and intensification. One thing that is especially striking is the fact that while this 8-bar stretch is clearly all of a piece, all one affect (something which is virtually a cliché in descriptions of Baroque music), it also conveys a sense of direction and almost has its own form of narrative. We are perhaps encouraged to assimilate one specific mood over a period of time (seemingly longer than the seventeenth century subject of Schütz's music) but also to witness its progress and development, in a way analogous to how our own feelings emerge and develop over a span of time. With Bach's cyclic but often unpredictable structures music seems to have taken over something of the atmosphere of religious ritual, but coupled with the immediacy and emotional intensity of personal experience. In this respect it could almost be considered an idealization of how Lutheran worship was meant to work in practice.

### **Example 5**

If it's clear that the music both evokes and tracks a sort of subjectivity that is close to what we might call a 'modern' kind here – one sustained by the consciousness of oneself enduring over longer stretches of time - it is surely also the case that we so far have no specific idea as to what the emotion actually is, or what this music is about.

We might hazard a guess that it could relate to longing, love, perhaps loss and sadness

too; and it is certainly a deeper emotion than the norm, both the musical structure and its sonority are likely to ‘hook’ us (emotional intervals, a vocalizing oboe - the list is potentially endless). But whichever it is could depend on a very broad range of contextual issues, relating both to the environment in which we hear this and to our own presuppositions. Indeed, the suspicions that some scholars have had that this piece might have started out as part of a different cantata, perhaps a secular congratulatory one from the Cöthen era, immediately reminds us that this music is indeed extremely adaptable. Scheibel’s belief in the transferability of emotion, in his case from opera to church, is thus amply substantiated.

In the event, the range of possible emotions – say from love to sadness – fits the eventual text perfectly: in Christian terms we now hear the partner of the speaker we heard in ‘O quam tu pulchra es’ – the soul of the individual believer expressing intense love for ‘Beloved Jesus’; yet there is also the idea that Jesus has somehow been lost and is no longer sensed close by. Reading the Gospel for the day (Luke 2: 41-52), this notion of loss becomes even clearer, since this relates the story of the twelve-year-old Jesus eluding his parents and eventually being found in the Temple, ‘my father’s house’ (Jesus’s voice refers to this in the succeeding recitative). So the feeling of panicked loss is turned into the loss the believer feels whenever she believes her spiritual partner to be absent.

The aria as a whole plays out something of the dynamic that is seeded in the ritornello: a sense of consistent movement and affect but with a degree of intensification in the vocal part towards the end (particularly for the line, ‘my refuge, give me joy’). This aria is more bound to its ritornello than even the norm with Bach,

with the majority of the bars being a direct transposition: after the two-bar 'motto' opening, we have the first five bars of E minor, then a complete ritornello in B minor, the first five bars again in F-sharp minor, a complete ritornello in A minor, three bars transition, and finally a complete ritornello in E minor. In other words, the ritornello and the sort of trajectory it implies is almost always there, as if the hidden pattern that the singer seems to lose and - after the ecstatic coloratura on the words 'erfreue mich' - to find again for the final complete reiteration. Melodically she is constantly intertwining with the oboe part, in a sensual dialogue with a wordless partner that to the Christian might say even more than the text can possibly express alone. To us as listeners – even if we are not immediately aware of the repetitions and transpositions of the ritornello – there is perhaps a sense of the constant unfolding of something we knew or felt already, an increasing uncanniness. We might feel invited to identify with the singer, losing and finding the instruments, or even to feel ourselves as a further part of the counterpoint. Our retentions of the past are regenerated and deepened, but rendered continuous through the polyphonic aspects of the experience. If much of the mechanism here is similar to that employed by Schütz, Bach's achievement seems to be something closer to the more modern sort of subjectivity that is deepened through its very sense of alienation; one's self is intensified through the acknowledgement of its possible effacement. The simultaneous finding and losing of Jesus implied by the text seems to be paralleled in the very music, by which the voice successively finds, loses and finds again the oboe line, a line which itself seems to evoke incomparable beauty and joy simultaneously with loss and despair.

Have I been able to identify anything specific about emotion in the context of German Lutheran music? Almost certainly not, since my approach has been to suggest that the

insight this music provides is that musical emotion is primarily associative rather than something that can be picked out and held up with a triumphal 'here it is!'. I suggest that this music is of a piece with historically conditioned forms of sustained consciousness and that emotions can play a significant part in the way the increasing stretches of time are filled. Both composers write music that is patently formulaic and 'second hand' in terms of its basic materials, but Schütz's pieces are put together in a way that is entirely particular to its text and the way this interacts with the musical development. Bach's are equally particular although here the independent musical development is much more detachable from the text. But it is this very detachability that makes its association with the text and theological context so potent. This idea of autonomous musical development actually increasing the potential scope of the music in serving its original purpose seems to me a specifically modern aspect of Bach's achievement. It parallels some of the ways modern subjects develop in time with a sense of increasing autonomy, a sort of autonomy that permits a broad range of applications and directions beyond any received context. The idea of stirring up an emotion, sustaining and developing it, and turning it to a specific purpose, is absolutely central to thought on the development of the subject in early modernity, to the honing of will (whether in the name of 'correct' orthodox religion or for utterly worldly purposes). But perhaps it is music that gives us the most palpable picture of how this might have been applied in practice.