Music, Phenomenology, and ‘the natural attitude’: Analysing Sibelius, Thinking with Husserl, Reflecting on Dennett

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Abstract

In this chapter I explore the intersection of music and phenomenology as potentially fertile ground for the study of consciousness. Taking the philosophy of Edmund Husserl as a touchstone, and the Violin Concerto, Op. 47 of Jean Sibelius as a case study, I consider how phenomenological concepts such as *epoché*, *noesis*, *eidos* and the transcendental subject all find resonances within a formal analysis of this musical work. I also juxtapose Husserl’s transcendental phenomenology and his critique of the ‘natural attitude’ against Daniel Dennett’s physicalist account of consciousness and Wilfrid Sellars’ concept of the ‘scientific image’. In negotiating a pathway between these positions, I consider whether music—and its determination of an autonomous aesthetic sphere—may offer a productive alternative perspective to the often competing claims of philosophy and science in our understanding of consciousness.

Keywords

Sibelius Violin Concerto. Phenomenology. Ontology. Music analysis. Aesthetic autonomy. Edmund Husserl. Daniel Dennett. Wilfrid Sellars. Natural attitude. Transcendental subject.

Introduction

In this chapter I proceed from an intuition that the intersection of phenomenology and music might offer fruitful ground for the study of consciousness. I juxtapose philosophical ideas from the likes of Edmund Husserl and Daniel Dennett with notions from aesthetics—not least the concept of the autonomous artwork, specifically the musical artwork, and still more specifically the Violin Concerto, Op. 47 of Jean Sibelius. While one of the motivations for an interdisciplinary inquiry of this kind is to generate new knowledge, this may also create a convergence of not necessarily compatible ideas and ideologies, authors and discourses, and objects and disciplines. In negotiating a pathway between these various positions, I will consider whether the sphere of the aesthetic may offer a mediating, or at least alternative, perspective to the often competing assertions of philosophy and science in relation to consciousness.

This multiplicity of elements reflects a personal history as well as a scholarly intent.¹ My subjective backstory includes: a longstanding sense of music as possessing some genuinely transcendent dimension; the quest for some authentically spiritual ground on which to live under Western secular modernity; and the contingent coincidence that the Sibelius Violin Concerto, one of the earliest works of Western music I ever studied analytically, was broadcast from the BBC Proms in the early Summer of 2017 as this chapter was gestating and at a time of personal bereavement. While disclosing these facts may push the boundaries of scholarly protocol, I do so to illustrate how, for consciousness studies in particular, both sides of the subjective–objective equation matter. As Husserl put it, ‘*Empirical or individual intuition can be transformed into essential insight*’ (2012: 11). It is a key precept of his phenomenology to transmute fact (in this case, of the biographical kind) into *essence*, through the process he termed *epoché*: the bracketing out of the particulars of the empirical or natural world. On

¹ I dedicate this chapter to the memory of my father. It forms a companion piece to my chapter in the first *Music and Consciousness* volume (Clarke 2011) and includes a further take on some of the concerns raised in my essay on consciousness for *The Oxford Handbook of Western Music and Philosophy* (Clarke forthcoming).

such a view, not only does subjective experience give ground for epistemologically sound knowledge, it also implies the reverse: whatever essential, generalizable, or objective knowledge arises out of such a process is meaningful to us *as subjects*, as beings in a subjectively animated world—that is, as subjects who are *conscious*. Consciousness, knowledge, and ontology are therefore shared, indeed inseparable, concerns—a notion that is key to this chapter.

Husserl developed phenomenology in an initiative that argued for the epistemological precedence of philosophy—and the ontological priority of consciousness—over the natural sciences and their objectivizing construction of the world. Other, physicalist epistemologies—including most famously Dennett’s account of consciousness—have argued the reverse. For reasons I will presently elaborate, wherever one stands in relation to this debate, there is no doubting its foundational status for consciousness studies: one cannot but search for a position. If music affords a potentially valuable alternative discursive space in this polemic, it is because the domain of the aesthetic represents its own, richly textured field of experience—one that is fundamentally sensory and embodied, and also autonomously formed.

The juxtaposition of these several terrains itself raises the question of how we are to negotiate between them. As well as arbitrating their different truth claims, we also face the problem that these spheres may not translate readily into one another. So, while exploring the question of how music, consciousness, and phenomenology might inform one another is a significant objective of this chapter, it is not simply the case that music can serve as an annex to philosophy or that there is an obvious way in which the methodologies of music studies can morph into phenomenological ones. In fact it will be a characteristic in what follows that different modes of discourse (philosophy, aesthetics, musical interpretation and technical description) and objects of knowledge (written texts, musical works) will want to remain autonomous. Hence the opening and concluding stages of this chapter will have a more strongly philosophical tenor, while its interior will be devoted to an analysis of the Sibelius concerto. I

undertake the latter in some detail because, if artworks really do lay claim to their own from of truth—to being legitimate sources of knowing—then this must surely be through the integrity of their own material formation, and this therefore needs discursive heft equivalent to the philosophical aspects of the inquiry.

A tale of two philosophers

Edmund Husserl (1859–1938) might be adjudged *the* Western philosopher of consciousness—not because he succeeded in conclusively defining or explaining it, but rather because he resolutely placed consciousness at the centre of the form of philosophy he invented—namely, phenomenology—and which he saw as the necessary foundation for all other forms of knowledge. While Husserl’s legacy also includes seminal critical responses to his work—most famously by Martin Heidegger, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Hans-Georg Gadamer, Emanuel Levinas, Jean-Paul Sartre, and Jacques Derrida—we are probably not yet done with the founder of the phenomenological movement himself. As the texts of Husserl’s *Nachlass* become increasingly available, and new readings of his work begin to displace the standard accounts (Welton 2003), Eugen Fink’s comment that ‘The *authentic* and *central* meaning of Edmund Husserl’s philosophy is today still *unknown*’ (Fink 1972: 6) does not look entirely exaggerated.

Emblematic of the way Husserl positioned phenomenology as epistemologically prior to the natural sciences is his critique of psychologism.² As Klaus Held, a key commentator on the philosopher, puts it, psychologism ‘replaces the question about the right kind of thinking with what is essentially a scientific, empirical description of thought processes—for example (in terms of today’s clinical psychology) the structure of the neuro-psychological circuits in our brain’ (2003: 11). Held’s example reminds us of reductionist approaches within present-day consciousness studies which argue that consciousness is merely an epiphenomenon of neural processes (in which case we may not need a term like ‘consciousness’), and is best studied within the formations of cognitive

² This was most notably articulated in the *Prolegomena to a Pure Logic*, the first volume of his *Logical Investigations*, first published in 1900 and 1901 (Husserl 2001).

psychology, neuroscience, and evolutionary biology (in which case we may not need ‘consciousness studies’ either).³

By contrast, and notwithstanding his enduring concern for psychology and esteem for the natural sciences, Husserl argued that, because of its foundational status, consciousness itself requires investigation in terms other than those of ‘the natural attitude’. He developed phenomenology as an alternative sphere from which to interpret and evaluate the ways in which the knowledge produced by naturalism and other empirical forms of experience is given to us. In the first volume of his *Ideas*, the text in which his mature phenomenology emerged, the passage to this territory is articulated as a progression from fact to essence. As Husserl puts it, “[a]n individual object is not simply and quite generally an individual, a “this-there” something unique: but being constituted thus and thus “*in itself*” it has its *own proper mode of being*, its own supply of *essential* predicables’ (2012: 11). At the same time, ‘the laws of logic ... do not hover in some platonic heaven of ideas’, as Held puts it. “The things themselves” ... only appear originally in the subjective process of intuitive self-givenness. These achievements take place in human consciousness’ (Held 2003: 12,13). Hence the route to the things themselves can only be through a contemplation of how they appear to us in consciousness; and this contemplation famously involves the suspension—*epoché*—of all empirical presuppositions about an object in order to reach its essence—or *eidos*. Significantly, however, this process also applies to the contemplating subject. Hence, beyond the eidetic reduction lies a further stage of phenomenological reduction intended to disclose a sphere of pure consciousness—a realm of ‘absolute being’ in which Being declares itself as transcendent (Husserl 2012: 146).

Husserl’s transcendental phenomenology occupies a diametrically opposite pole to Daniel Dennett’s characterization of consciousness as ‘an evolved user-illusion’. In *Consciousness Explained* (1991), Dennett argues, with comparable resoluteness, that consciousness arises only in the brain out of the

³ Thomas Huxley has been attributed with being the first commentator to construe consciousness as an epiphenomenon (see Robinson 2015).

unconscious churn of multiple drafts of parallel cognitive processing and a plethora of ‘mindless’ interacting sub-processes. On this view, the experience of being a unified subject is the froth on the top of what is essentially a computational process with no centre. As he puts it in *From Bacteria to Bach and Back*: ‘We don’t see, or hear, or feel, the complicated neural machinery churning away in our brains but have to settle for an interpreted, digested version, a user-illusion that is so familiar to us that we take it not just for reality but also for the most indubitable and intimately known reality of all’ (2017: 345).

In this statement, Dennett plies a dualism borrowed from philosopher Wilfrid Sellars, predicated on a distinction between an ontology of everyday life and an ontology of science—what Sellars (1963) terms the *manifest image* and the *scientific image* of reality. The latter would very obviously correspond to Husserl’s ‘natural attitude’, while the former chimes with what Husserl in his late work came to call the *life-world* (a notion subsequently central to Heidegger’s phenomenology). Dennett’s attitude towards the manifest image—our everyday, intuitive construction of how things are in the world—is (following Sellars) subtle and pragmatic. ‘Even scientists’, he writes, ‘conduct most of their waking lives conceiving of what is going on in terms of the manifest image’ (Dennett 2017: 62). Yet he notes that (implicitly since the Western Enlightenment) we have seen a gradual ousting of terms from the manifest image and their replacement with terms of the scientific image: ‘out went the witches, mermaids and leprechauns, and in came the atoms, molecules and germs’ (ibid.). Under Dennett’s application of Sellars’ binarism, the route to understanding consciousness requires similarly decanting more and more preconceptions from the manifest image and replacing them with purely scientific arguments founded on evolutionist principles. On this view, the subjective ‘feel’ of consciousness belongs to the former category and need not be part of what philosophers have to explain about consciousness—first-person phenomenology can be simply eliminated from the picture. Once you have provided a scientific explanation for the quasi-computational brain processes that are associated with consciousness

in the manifest image, there is nothing left to do; there is no 'pure' or 'transcendental' consciousness 'in itself'.

If Dennett's eliminativist position turns the explanation of consciousness into an ostensibly manageable problem it also has some questionable consequences. For if scientific naturalism is ultimately the only game in town for the legitimate explanation of anything that matters, then everything has either to be exhaustively susceptible to its paradigm or accorded only some unspecified significance (as not-important-except-in-vaguely-anthropological-terms) within the manifest image. But not everything outside the scientific image has the diminished veridicality of mermaids and leprechauns. Music and the arts are a case in point. As it happens, Dennett seems to agree—kind of. His work is important because, among other reasons, it recognizes the significance of culture ('Bach' is after all name-checked in the title of his 2017 monograph). Except that, under his own schema, culture can only form the basis for any truth claim by being assumed into the scientific image—which means assimilation into a universalizing (arguably totalizing) extension of Darwinism. Now this is not to deny the evolutionary origins of culture, or the role of culture in human evolution: given our social being as a species this is entirely uncontroversial. The question is whether art might point to something in our species-being that transcends our evolutionary origins and terms of reference, and might therefore represent a form of knowing that has an epistemological significance and legitimacy beyond that of leprechauns. If so, then this might require some other form of 'image'—not scientific, not manifest; maybe aesthetic?

There is no apparent space for this last sphere on its own terms in Dennett's schema, whose vehicle for the explanation of cultural forms is Richard Dawkins' Darwinist notion of 'memes'—gene-like replicators or units of imitation (which philosophers and everyday folk would just call 'ideas').⁴ But to fail to acknowledge such an other space not only means the end of aesthetics within our epistemic repertory, but also writes the aesthetic out of human ontology. For

⁴ I discuss this point further in Clarke forthcoming.

if the only thing we can say about art is that it is there to serve the transmission of genes (or even memes), then it may as well not exist: humankind could probably get along fine without aesthetic ‘memeplexes’; and on what epistemological basis could we judge whether or not it matters that we might be less human as a result?

Music, phenomenology, the arts, and the *epoché*

On the other hand, phenomenology would appear to have stronger affinities with the aesthetic, and both offer a comparably different take on consciousness. Furthermore, the contemporaneity of Husserl and Sibelius (1865–1957), and of their respective *oeuvres*, suggests a more specific affinity. (For all that Husserl’s philosophy looks to the universal, the absolute, and the ideal, it nonetheless arises under the contingencies of history.) We could conjecture that in the experience of composing, performing, and listening to Sibelius’s work there inheres a particular form of subjectivity that was also Husserl’s quarry, and that we might equate with a particular historical moment of modernity. This is the moment in which the early twentieth century contemplated and mutated the legacy of subjectivity and feeling bequeathed it by the nineteenth—an experience of selfhood that still seems to have currency in the West (and beyond), albeit now amidst a welter of alternative constructions and deconstructions of subjectivity.⁵ In Sibelius’s case we might posit this is an avatar of subjectivity in which the subject is experienced as autonomous—as seeking to constitute its selfhood within the social, cultural, and natural world in the face of (modernizing) forces that challenge that very order. Its resonances with Husserl’s form of phenomenology lie in its particular focus on the self-constituting, first-person

⁵ Within musical modernism these alternatives include the ruptures and discontinuities of form in Mahler that enact the travails of constituting a coherent personal and cultural self; the lapidary formal blocks of Stravinsky and their ‘frozen’ temporalities that put notions of subjectivity at a critical distance; and the indeterminate compositions of Cage with their aspirations to freedom from subjective agency altogether.

nature of consciousness.⁶ Perhaps this is nowhere more dramatically conveyed in Sibelius's oeuvre than in his Violin Concerto (completed in its final version in 1905), which puts the soloist as an individual subject against the backdrop of an orchestrally constituted soundscape that forms the work's horizon of consciousness.

For all this, we have no accounts by Husserl himself about works of music. Yet, while he was a philosopher from first to last, he was by no means oblivious to art and its relationship to his philosophy. In an important letter to Hugo von Hoffmansthal, dated 1907, he wrote of his 'particular interest' in the way that art, mirroring a precept of his own, 'demands an attitude towards all forms of objectivity that fundamentally departs from its "natural" [scientific] counterpart', namely the 'strict suspension of all existential attitudes' (Husserl 2009: 2). This is the *epoché*—the bracketing out of the assumptions of the natural attitude—which Husserl had decisively clarified to himself the previous year as the cornerstone of his phenomenological method. It must be said that Husserl expresses his affinity in terms that suggest a Kantian view of art in which, as Sven-Olov Wallenstein puts it, 'pure aesthetic judgments must suspend, if not entirely undo, the relations of the faculties of knowledge and desire The idea of a pure art and a pure phenomenology in this way remain closely tied together' (2009: 4).⁷ As I will aim to show, successive iterations of the *epoché* on a work like Sibelius's Violin Concerto may ultimately lead us equivocate around the idea of disinterested purity, and it may be that the more worldly imbrications of phenomenology in Husserl's late work have a stronger resonance. However, what remains salient in the letter to Hoffmansthal is the notion that art itself performs an *epoché* on the empirical world. In that sense, then, art's interventions are already

⁶ This is not to say that such a construction of subjectivity is not also challenged within Sibelius's music. Daniel Grimley (2011: 397) speaks of the symphonic poem *Tapiola*, Op. 112 (1926) as a work that in its final bars 'obliterates its perceiving subject'.

⁷ Wallenstein's commentary on Husserl's letter also provides a helpful outline of wider artistic resonances in Husserl's philosophy.

phenomenological, albeit in ways that may not, *pace* Husserl, be precisely coterminous with those of philosophy.

In the case of works of classical music (but also other forms of music and art) this is achieved through a principle of aesthetic autonomy. Through its own immanent principles of organization, the work can be understood to bracket out the empirical world and engender its own formation of consciousness, organized around its own essence. This is perhaps a notion no more or less ideologically contentious than phenomenology itself—the two are arguably mutually implicated. To consider music phenomenologically implies the suspension of a whole range of contextualizing cultural and historical features. Importantly, however, this does not mean their cancellation. As Husserl says of the factual knowledge discovered by positivistic science, ‘*I may accept it [but] only after I have placed it in the bracket*. That means: only in the modified consciousness of the judgment as it appears in disconnexion’ (2012: 59). In other words, what can be known through the natural attitude remains available to us, but it is only within the *epoché* that we can get to the essence of what this means to us.

By analogy, in a work such as the Sibelius Violin Concerto, historical data such as the composer’s involvement in (and appropriation by) Finnish nationalism (Huttunen 2004), biographical information such as his own thwarted aspirations to be a concert violinist, and musicological information such as the existence of the work in an earlier version prior to its final revised form can all be seen to bear on the music’s meaning; yet all of these significations would be of no significance (indeed would be inaudible) were they not mediated within a core stratum of the work that underwrites its own ontology as an intentional object—to use the characterization deployed by Husserl’s student Roman Ingarden (1986: 116–22).⁸ It is through possessing such an ontology that the work is able to

⁸ On Ingarden’s view, the musical work ‘never attains the status of concrete sounds because these sounds are spatially and temporarily individual and temporarily individuated objects, whereas a musical work is a supraindividual and supratemporal structure, its individuality being purely qualitative [It is] a purely intentional object with its original source in a specific real object and its ground of continued existence in a series of other real objects’ (1986: 120).

bracket out the natural world (which for human beings also means the socially constructed world) and seek to capture what lies beyond appearance.

Methodologies

With what kind of methodologies, then, might we pursue a phenomenology of music? Ingarden's account of the musical work as an intentional object has already been mentioned; Don Ihde's emphasis on the sonic dimensions of music in approaches influenced by both Husserl and Heidegger is also suggestive (Ihde 2007); but here I will make my point of departure Thomas Clifton's 1983 monograph *Music as Heard*. There is a Husserlian ring to Clifton's definition of the term 'phenomenon' as 'a nonempirical, intuitively grasped essence whose meaning is (1) validated by a consciousness absorbed in the experience of living-through that meaning, and (2) independent of any particular actualization of it' (: 38). But we should note an interesting tension—a structural ambiguity, even—between these two attributes, which perhaps also lies at the heart of Husserlian phenomenology, and which also makes its mark on what follows. For 'the experience of living-through' can surely take place only in the phenomenal here and now; on the other hand, 'independent of any actualization' points to something essential, abstract, supratemporal, perhaps even ideal—Husserl's *eidos*—from which the contingencies of lived experience are bracketed out.

A similar ambivalence is evident in Clifton's attitude towards the sonic: 'the object of interpretation is the *sense* of the sounds: the meaning act, as well as the object of the act' (1983: 39, emphasis added). Yet he argues that '[t]rying to discover what is phenomenal, or essential, about a musical event is difficult because of the sedimentation of learning that covers the basic stratum of intuitive self-givenness' (: 19). And this bears on his view of musical notation and music theory in any phenomenological analysis: '[t]he sounds, the techniques, and the notation are all vastly important aspects of music, but they are not music itself' (: 37). However, Clifton's stance is not to reject theory and analysis, but to address 'the problem of redirecting this acquired layer back toward the basic stratum, so that both can be better understood' (ibid.). Hence categories such as pitch,

interval, harmony, and melody are translated into experiential terms. Tonality, for example, 'is the result of neither a simple stipulation, nor an objective examination of tonal functions as syntax, but the presence of the body behaving in and with the musical situation' (:35).

My approach here will similarly be not to abandon existing techniques of musical analysis (for these are intended to model the autonomous stratum of the musical work on its own terms), but to prosecute these with a phenomenological attitude. In Clifton's words again: 'the theoretical act will consist not only of observing the music, but also of observing the self observing the music. If music theory wishes to be objective, it can do no better than to ground objectivity in the act of experience' (: 37). Following the spirit rather than the letter of Clifton's thinking, I include technical analysis paradoxically in order to bracket it out. I would describe this process as a kind of *co-articulation*: a drawing out of what is subjective in analytical findings that arise from the objectification of the musical work. I will in particular seek to co-articulate such findings with key notions from Husserl—*epoché*, as already discussed; also *noesis*, *eidos*, and transcendental ego.

Sibelius, Violin Concerto: the life of tones

In the ensuing exploration of the first movement of Sibelius's Concerto I will make several passes at the musical material, each from a different aspect and on a different section of the movement's sonata-form structure. I begin at the work's opening, where the violin soloist is unequivocally in the foreground. The layout of Figure 1 is organized to foreground the many thematic and motivic interrelations that are generative for so much of what follows in the movement. However, I shall save discussion of that aspect for a subsequent analytical iteration and focus here on the very melodiousness of the melody: the life of its tones as formative of a subjective act over and above the transmission of pitch data.⁹

⁹ Cf. Heinrich Schenker: 'We should get used to the idea that tones have lives of their own, more independent of the artist's pen in their vitality than one would dare to believe' (1954: xxv). While Schenker saw this as a 'biological factor' the point seems closer to a phenomenological one,

<Figure 1>

My trigger is Donald Tovey's astute observation that '[n]othing is more characteristic of Sibelius than the austere diatonic dissonance of the [soloist's] first note, with its rhythmic position just as far off the main beat as its harmonic position is off the chord' (1936: 212). In fact, this tone, G, set against the prolonged, coolly fluctuating tonic D minor triad of the orchestral upper strings (see system i of Figure 1),¹⁰ is subjectively apprehended as neither quite a consonance nor a dissonance, and kind of both; and further subtleties lie in emerging gradations within this ambiguous space as the music unfolds. Technically speaking, the solo violin's G does not resolve downward to the third of the triad like an *appoggiatura* would, and its actual upward continuation in bar 5 to a consonant A is so fleeting as to leave the imprint of a G identify as predominant in our mental retention of this moment.

With this notion, 'retention', we move over into the phenomenological parlance of Husserl, invoking his theory of internal time consciousness.¹¹ More than formal *abstracta*, the tones of Sibelius's melody extend through time (into the past as retentions, towards the future as protentions), and as such shape our subjectivity as a flow. Hence, whereas the accompanying string sonority of concerto's opening is felt as inert, the soloist's G burgeons with life, and is not only retained in immediate memory after it is quitted, but also protends towards the immediate future and some way beyond.

As the soloist's phrase continues (b. 8^{ff.}), the G mutates into a G<sharp>. This happens only fleetingly at first, in the guise of a more conventional lower-neighbour note to A (see Figure 1, systems ii and iii). But then G<sharp> assumes a stronger presence in bb. 14–15 in the second phrase of the theme

alluding to the *noemic* property of tones, their life in consciousness—a notion discussed in the next section.

¹⁰ Here and in all subsequent musical Figures, dynamic markings and hairpins are omitted in the interests of visual clarity.

¹¹ I discuss this aspect of Husserl's phenomenology at greater length in Clarke 2011.

and its succeeding evolution (system v). Now the sustained tone is clearly felt as a prolonged chromatic appoggiatura, yet while unequivocally a dissonance, its agency as such is also complex. What was protentive in the earlier G<natural> is intensified: the prolonged G<sharp> is experienced as a yearning into the upcoming future; is not spent by the implied voice-leading motion to A half way through b. 16 (system v); and is renewed at b. 18 (system vi), after which its energy flows on into the further evolution of the theme. In lieu of resolution, then, the G<sharp> builds up an association with the notes A and D in this passage, in a middleground mutation of the generative motif *a*¹, shown in system v—also reflected in the foreground features (see end of systems ii, v, and vi).

<Figure 2>

This complex of ideas is further transformed at bb. 25ff.—see Figure 2)—where G natural now returns to ascendancy, and where C<sharp> now becomes the yearning protentive tone. In the ensuing melodic unfolding, this tone again declines to resolve, and in turn accumulates an array of augmented and diminished intervals around it (C<sharp>—G; C<sharp>—F, C<sharp>—B<flat>). These effect a mutation of the initial diatony, part of a process of increasing tension and agitation.

Process, mutation, transformation, intensification, feeling, yearning, tension, agitation: these are the dynamics of what ‘we’—meaning phenomenal subjects—experience in this opening. Nonetheless, these signifiers are intimately bound up with the technical, ‘notey’ talk—the language of chromatic appoggiaturas, augmented intervals, prolongations, semiquavers, and so on—with its orientation toward the musical object. That the two sets of descriptive terms are utterly co-implicated is consistent with Husserl’s concept of *noesis*—a notion developed in his *Ideas*, and which, as a vehicle for further theorizing the relationship between technical analysis and phenomenology, warrants a short excursus.

Intentionality, *noesis*, and the *epoché*

For Husserl, following his mentor Franz Brentano, consciousness is *intentional*—meaning that ‘in every one of its acts, consciousness is *consciousness-of-something*’ (Held 2003:13). But, as Held puts it, ‘[c]onsciousness cannot be imagined as an empty beach, with the ocean washing random objects ashore. It is not a container indifferent to what fills it.’ Rather, it arises through intentional *acts* ‘whose character is determined by a corresponding type of objectivity, an objectivity that appears exclusively to consciousness in the manners of givenness appropriate to it’ (ibid.). In other words, this is a relationship of intimate correlation. As Ihde writes:

Within experience overall there is that which is experienced, that called the *object-correlate* or *noematic* correlate. And, in strict correlation with the *noema*, there is the act of experience or the experiencing that was the ‘subject-correlate’ or the *noetic* act. Here, as a correlative rule, it is maintained by intentionality simply that for every object *of* experience there is an act or ‘consciousness’ that apprehends that object, and for every act there is an ‘intended’ correlate. (2007: 35)

While this may seem to reproduce the logic of subject–object as a dualism, the more profound, existential implication of Husserl’s conceit is the mutual determination of self and world.¹² In similar vein, my analysis of the Sibelius concerto has so far encompassed both a technical account of the musical object and the beginnings of narrative description of how this is subjectively apprehended (soon to be expanded); but, as Ihde points out, it is the correlation of the two, ‘the *relationality* of the intentionality[,] which must be maintained if phenomenology is to remain phenomenology proper’ (ibid.).

¹² This notion is arguably not incompatible with theories of extended mind—as treated elsewhere in this volume—which are similarly posited on a premise of radical non-separation of self and world.

So, to revisit our earlier analytical thread, and to move from the *noemic* (object) to the *noetic* (subject) side of Husserl's equation: consider again the remoteness of the orchestral string accompaniment as suggested by its *pianissimo* dynamic, and its internal oscillation of tones and overlapping of phrases across the divided orchestral violins. This seems constructed to convey simultaneous stasis and movement (see Figure 1, system i, second stave), just as the soloist's entry on the fourth scale degree captures an amalgam of neutrality and desire. A cultural-historical hermeneutics sensitive to the politics of nationalism might justifiably consider whether what is given in the opening sounds is specifically a Finnish subjectivity portrayed in a Finnish landscape. Yet under the *epoché* this might appear as a no-less potent phenomenal stratum that tells more universally of a subject acting in an environment ... situation ... world.¹³ Significantly, Daniel Grimley notes Eero Tarasti's description of this opening as 'the impression of a bare landscape without a living soul' (Tarasti 2001: 13), and comments that 'the entry of the soloist is precisely the element that attempts to humanize the music' (Grimley 2004: 105).

The soloist-protagonist sounds as a subject fully engaged in being. The rhythmic characteristics of the melody, along with all those other so-called secondary (i.e. non-syntactic) parameters of dynamics, articulation, timbre, register, and phrasing are also essential to this impression as the music flows on in this first episode. Sustained notes, legato conjunct motions, ornamental cantilenas, more aggressive semiquavers and accented tones *sul G*, arpeggiated flights into the upper register, all contribute to the complexion of this extended *noetic* act, this voicing of inner consciousness. The evolving orchestral palette and repertory of gestures evoke the darker hues of the world this subject

¹³ Also pertinent here is Tomi Mäkelä's critique of attempts to project 'Finnishness' onto Sibelius. Drawing on Adorno's notion of extra-territoriality (paradoxically, given Adorno's critique of Sibelius), Mäkelä points to Sibelius's wider belief in the philosophical capacities of art (2010: 364), and invokes Arthur Schopenhauer's claim that '[n]ot only philosophy but also the fine arts work fundamentally in order to solve the problem of Being' (Mäkelä 2010: 364, citing Schopenhauer 1977: 479).

inhabits: the eerie mythopoeic qualities of the countermelody played in the chalumeau register of the clarinets and endorsed in the primordial, buzzing lower register of the bassoons (at rehearsal no. 1); and soon after (at rehearsal 1^{+13ff.}), the more menacing triplets in the lower strings, and strident, subsequently confrontational gestures in dotted rhythms in the lower wind, brass, and timpani which draw an increasingly volatile response and eventually an extensive cadenza-like moment from the soloist (leading up to rehearsal no. 2). This is both an active and contemplative journey through a spectrum of experience and feeling, a self deeply implicated in time and motion. And we know this not because of an arbitrary subjective projection onto the musical material, but because as subjects we can read out from what is embodied in the material as it is given to us *noetically*.

Thematic process and *eidos*; form and synthesis

From the foregoing, we might ponder whether the translation of pure musical experience into text is not itself another kind of hermeneutics. If there is indeed a hermeneutic dimension that remains under the *epoché*, this is perhaps in the spirit of Ihde's thought that 'the Husserlian search for a "pure" phenomenology is not so much the exclusion of "common sense" and science as it is the gradual discovery of the possibilities of a genuinely *descriptive ontology*' (2007: 22). At the same time, we need to remain cognizant of Clifton's reminder that 'description of phenomena is something other than a blow-by-blow account of technical trivia ... and also other than dreamy-eyed embellishments around a musical object pressed into the uncomfortable role of narcotic' (1983: 38). What makes phenomenological description more than an emotional read-out of isolated musical gestures is the awareness that these are embedded in larger-scale processes whose effect is *synthetic*, and whose correlate is a synthesis of subjective consciousness—a matter again germane to Husserlian phenomenology. Musically speaking, these synthetic musical processes include the thematic and formal, and I shall examine these in turn in further analytical iterations. In one sense this requires methodologies no more complex than those

already in the analyst's basic tool-box. Once again, a subsequent moment of phenomenological reinterpretation is needed—either through reflecting on what is already phenomenological in an analytical method or by performing an *epoché* on its findings.

<Figure 3>

Given Sibelius's lifelong preoccupation with a symphonic thematic logic, it is not surprising to find such processes also evident in the Violin Concerto. Figures 1 and 2 have already begun to detail these in relation to the first group (theme 1); Figure 3 undertakes a similar process for the transition (theme 2), second group (theme 3) and closing group (theme 4). Both Figures employ two common analytical conventions. Cellular motives are abstracted (phenomenologically speaking, reduced out) from their manifest thematic content, shown underneath it on a separate staff, and labelled (*a*, *b*, *c*, etc.). Additionally, themes are segmented and their components realigned to disclose their underpinning invariant features along a paradigmatic axis.¹⁴ The former technique tends to help identify *inter*-thematic connections—for example, the gradual transmutation of motif *c* from the first group (Figure 1, system vii) via its quasi-inversion in the transition (Figure 3, system v), into motif *f* of the second group (Figure 3, system vii), and eventual incarnation as the head of theme 4 in the closing group (Figure 3, system viii). The latter technique—paradigmatic alignment—tends to foreground *intra*-thematic connections, akin to Schoenbergian developing variation—such as the gradual evolution of theme 1 out of variants its motif *b* (Figure 1, systems ii–ix), or unfolding of the transition theme, 2, through successive variants of its headmotif *e* (Figure 3, systems i–iv) which eventually becomes that of the second group theme, 3 (Figure 3, systems vi–vii).

If the wider principles here are reminiscent of Schoenberg's technical and aesthetic preoccupation with the musical *idea* (amplified in the critical theory of Adorno), there are also significant resonances with Husserl's *eidetic reduction*.

¹⁴ This latter technique hails from the musical semiology of Jean Molino, Jean-Jacques Nattiez, and Nicolas Ruwet (see for example Nattiez 1975).

Husserl presents this as an important step in the larger phenomenological reduction 'by which the philosopher moves from the consciousness of individual and concrete objects to the transempirical realm of pure essences and thus achieves an intuition of the *eidōs* (Greek: "shape") of a thing—*i.e.*, of what it is in its invariable and essential structure' (Editors of the Encyclopædia Britannica 2017: n.p.). Under Husserl's technique, 'one forms a multiplicity of variations of what is given, and while maintaining the multiplicity, one focuses attention on what remains unchanged in the multiplicity; *i.e.*, the essence is that identical something that continuously maintains itself during the process of variation' (Biemel and Spiegelberg 2017: n.p.).

The 'formation of a multiplicity of variations' is likely to have been a key part of the act of composition for a composer such as Sibelius. His creative labour, we might surmise, would have involved tapping into his inner image of the work in order to synthesize a manifold of developing variants. Under such a process, the idealized *eidōs* of the work and the increasingly manifest musical material would be in a state of continual mutual clarification.¹⁵ For listeners, the task is to remain sensitive to the essences disclosed by the manifold thematic interconnections—to which end, techniques such as those shown in Figures 1 and 3 have a heuristic value. While limitations of space preclude further detailing of the movement's inter- and intra-thematic subtleties, these can be readily traced through the Figures.

Significantly, the veracity of the thematic interconnections shown in such analyses stands or falls by their self-evidence: you will grasp them as either valid or not from your own musical intuition, just as I have presented them drawing from mine. Empirically speaking, this would assume a level of pre-reflective cognition, and this is consistent with Husserl's characterization of the eidetic reduction as intuitive. As Ihde writes, 'the procedure of locating and determining existential possibilities is not argumentative in the usual philosophical sense of a deduction or ... hypothetical deductive reasoning The detection and

¹⁵ For an account of the creative genesis of the Violin Concerto, see Tiilikainen 2004.

descriptive analysis of some feature of experience may be thought of as an *intuitional demonstration* (Ihde 2007:32).

Figures 1 and 3 serve as an indicative evidence base for a set of material processes that effect a larger synthesis across the work. To say that such a synthesis takes place ‘in’ consciousness would be simplistically to imply that the synthetic object was just there waiting to ‘enter’ a passive, pre-constituted self. Rather, under the principle of *noesis*, the musical object and listening (or performing) subject become co-constituted and synthesized in the same phenomenological *act*. As Husserl puts it in his *Cartesian Meditations*:

The ‘object’ of consciousness, the object as having identity ‘with itself’ during the flowing subjective process, does not come into the process from outside; on the contrary, it is included as sense in the subjective process itself—and thus as an ‘*intentional effect*’ *produced by* the synthesis of consciousness. (Husserl 1999: 42)

And of the different aspects of the perceived object, he writes:

Their unity is a unity of synthesis: ... a *connectedness that makes the unity of one consciousness*, in which the unity of an intentional objectivity, as the ‘the same’ objectivity belonging to multiple modes of appearance, becomes ‘constituted’. (: 41–2)

Husserl’s example in this discussion is a simple worldly object like a die with its various facets, not a symphonic, concerted sonata-form movement whose manifold aspects appear across an extended time span. However, the difference is one of degree—even simple physical objects cannot be apprehended all at once.

More trenchantly, a musical work, an example of artifice, may illustrate better than everyday life the truth of Husserl’s claim that ‘the *whole of conscious life is unified synthetically*’ (: 42). It is a commonplace within present-day

reductionist views of consciousness to argue that quotidian consciousness is in actuality a fragmented set of perceptions and intentions: the unified feel of a commanding subjecthood may be an illusion, a story we tell ourselves. For example, under Dennett's multiple drafts model of consciousness, uttering a sentence emerges out of an unconscious 'pandemonium' of numerous competing parallel versions of its elements (Dennett 1999: 231–42). By contrast, in a composed work, the drafting is done outside the real time of performance, and the work is delivered to its recipients in a pre-synthesized state.¹⁶ In such a form, the working of the work enables it to *set up a world* (to use a Heideggerian conceit). And such a world constitutes a field of *noesis* (to revert to Husserlian parlance) within whose horizon the performing or listening subject is constituted in a form perhaps more cohesive, in certain respects spiritually richer, or at least more whole, than in everyday life.¹⁷

Form and subjectivity: the second thematic group

The immanent world of Sibelius's Violin Concerto is synthesized and sustained not only through its thematic processes, but also, unsurprisingly, by its larger-scale formal structure. While the sonata-form design of its first movement is not

¹⁶ Assuming the creator has done his or her job well. Interestingly, in the case of the Sibelius Violin Concerto the initial version of the work, as performed in 1904, was not a success and was immediately withdrawn by the composer; within a year he had re-fashioned the now authoritative version. That the latter has been, until relatively recently, the only one publically known, may explain why the original version (made available by the Sibelius estate, and recorded by Leonidas Kavakos and the Lahti Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Osmo Vänskä in 1991) sounds radically less satisfactory, however fascinating as a case study in the compositional process (Tiilikainen's account includes a discussion of the revision process (2004: 75–9)). If the later version really is the better one, this may also be because it represents a better synthesis of its elements, a more effective constitution of its *eidōs*.

¹⁷ Significantly Husserl goes on to claim that '[t]he *fundamental form* of this universal synthesis ... is the all-embracing consciousness of internal time' (: 43). I discussed this matter in Clarke 2011, and showed how different intentional modalities of time consciousness such as retention and recollection play out in highly structured ways in music (where time is literally of the essence), and in sonata form in particular (again, perhaps more perfectly than in empirical life).

subjected to the kinds of fracturing found in the contemporaneous soundworlds of Mahler (with its correlative fissuring of subjectivity), it does not completely follow the dialectical Hegelian model associated with Beethoven either. In a formal structure of some originality, the relationship between parts and whole in the first movement of Sibelius's concerto is in fact somewhat elusive. Sections are clearly demarcated—as shown in Figure 4—and each can be functionally identified with the various elements of a sonata form structure. Yet they are also episodic in nature, a fact that is in part due to the general alternation of solo and orchestral episodes that is superposed onto the sonata design (an aspect of the concerto genre, though clearly a world away from its eighteenth-century *galant* origins).¹⁸

Phenomenologically these episodes are apprehended more as tableaux that project and blend subjectivities associated with various dramaturgical and poetic forms. For example, the sense of 'journeying' enacted by the developing variation process of the exposition's transition (rehearsal nos. 2–3) also feels like an epic narration. Conversely the extended solo cadenza that occupies the place of the development section performs a dramatic soliloquy, while elsewhere the soloist sings in lyric mode. The closing group is the most dramatic of all, accelerating towards a point of crisis or even catastrophe—a not uncommon trope in Sibelius.¹⁹ This moment is revisited and (partially) tamed in the recapitulation, in its re-worked transition and in the final denouement of its closing group. Both occasions highlight the implicit connections between the 'crisis' material and the concerto's opening theme.

¹⁸ The solo episodes are indicated with shading in Figure 4. Interestingly the alternation of solo and orchestral passages is mapped somewhat differently onto the sonata-form structure in the recapitulation. One aspect of this process is the re-versioning of the closing group into a denouement in which both protagonists have equal salience—a moment experienced simultaneously as synthesis and agon.

¹⁹ See for example Hepokoski's account of the finale of the Sixth Symphony (Hepokoski 2001: 328 (Figure 1.1.), 346–7), and Jackson's reading of the close of the Seventh (Jackson 2001: 267–72).

<Figure 4>

A phenomenological account would seek to bracket out what is shown formalistically, to draw out the way that the material is known experientially and subjectively. Formally speaking, we have a carefully proportioned sonata-style structure, which Figure 4 maps out approximately to scale. This shows the exposition and recapitulation as ‘rotations’ or cycles of a strategically organized sequence of materials—a principle James Hepokoski identifies with Sibelius’s symphonies (see for example, Hepokoski 1993, 2001). Phenomenologically, the supratemporal design of the formal architecture is not necessarily experienced as such in the lived temporal moment of perception, not least because of the episodic qualities of the material, as just described. Hence while the movement’s formal centre is the extended, deliberative cadenza, which is stated just once, its emotional centre burgeons up in the rhapsodic second group, whose core theme, 3, is heard in both the exposition and recapitulation (see Figure 3, systems vi and vii, and Figure 5 respectively). Formally speaking, the recapitulation version effects a large-scale tonal resolution of the original D<flat> key centre of its exposition forebear to D, the prevailing tonic of the movement as whole. But, phenomenologically speaking, both avatars of this section independently effect an emotional resolution within their own boundaries. In other words, their local phenomenal salience—as the ‘stand out’ affective moments of the movement—exceeds their larger formal function. How is this achieved?

<Figure 5>

The expressive heart of the second group, the double-stopped theme, 3, in the solo violin, has its own introduction and ‘outro’ which offset it from the surrounding proceedings (these formal subdivisions are shown in Figure 4). The introductory material (at rehearsal nos. 3 and 10⁻¹¹) thematically adumbrates the contours of the antecedent phrase of the soloist’s principal melody (theme 3); while the outro material (at rehearsal nos. 4⁻⁷ and 11⁻¹⁰) is first heard as an echo of its consequent, but is now future-oriented as it effects a transition back to the surrounding dramatic narrative. Phenomenologically, these transitional moments set up a musical clearing for the core theme, 3, which occupies an extended

moment of stability that gives (carefully measured) space for an outpouring of feeling.

The 'big tune' wants to tarry with the tonic chord, its passionate double-stopped line prolonging D<flat> in the exposition and D in the recapitulation. The phrase structure—an antecedent–consequent formation at both the two- and four-bar levels—also contributes to this stability. The theme's expressive power comes in no small part from the parallel sixths played in the violin's upper register over a repeated ii–V–I cadence in the first four bars, and from the triple-time mensuration whose *largamente* quality is made palpable by the quadruple time of the countermelody against it. (Interestingly, the exposition and recapitulation apply complementary notational conceits for this mensural counterpoint—cf. Figures 3 and 5.)

However, the theme's emotional character is ambivalent. In its *affetuoso* answering phrase, the parallel sixths turn into more austere octaves, and major becomes minor phrase (at rehearsal nos. 3⁺⁹ and 10⁺¹⁴, quoted in Figure 3, system vi and Figure 5, b. 380). This seems to explore a darkness already discernible in the poignancy of the earlier effulgent sixths. Beneath positive feelings like joy or love, the music seems to say, lies melancholy at their worldly transience. This ambivalence is literally played out and resolved in the orchestral viola line which dialogues with the violin soloist in the latter stages of the theme (see Figure 3, system vii; Figure 5, bar 383 ff.). The viola's contours poignantly capture the change to the minor mode, but eventually this reverts to major (tonic major in the exposition, relative major, or a prolongation of III, in the recapitulation), and everything relaxes. In a single short time span we experience (more than merely observe) the passage from grief to consolation, and each as implicit in the other.

To interpret the emotional correlates of the musical material in this way is again to recognize the intimate unity of the *noemic* and *noetic*—the co-manifestation of object and subject in experience, and their quintessential incarnation in the lived moment of performance. To reinvoke Clifton's sentiments, 'certain terms which are normally descriptive of tonal functions (such as

prolongation, progression, tension, resolution, cadence, etc.) are meaningful because they are known by the body' (1983: 35). Ostensibly secondary features such as articulation and expression marks disclose their true significance in this light. Innocent-looking performance indications such as *largamente* and *affetuoso* in fact point to something beyond what is musically formalizable in terms of structure or syntax. The prevalent stress marks over the soloist's melody are an index of the physicality of limbs and muscles needed to project the expressive force that is its essence and that self-evidently exists only beyond the written page of the score. With this, then, we effect another kind of *epoché* of the formalistic details though which we pass over to the body of the performer.

<Figure 6>

Going further along these lines, consider the freeze-frame image of violinist Boris Belkin in Figure 6, taken from a performance of the Sibelius concerto with the Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra under Vladimir Ashkenazy. This still shot comes from Christopher Nupen's two-part 1984 documentary on Sibelius, and captures Belkin near the close of the second group in its recapitulation version.²⁰ It is probably not accidental that, for this most passionate and tender passage from the work, the director chooses to film the soloist face-on and in close up. The composition of the image—framing face, bow, and violin strings—affords the listener an intimacy with the performer not normally available in the concert hall, and also conveys the latter's own intimacy with his instrument; he and it are one. Belkin's physiognomy is striking: his cheek bones chiseled, his face serene, his eyes just discernible beneath a mop of shaggy hair. He looks outward (or is it inward?) as it were into the infinite distance; he appears in a different range of phenomenal experience.

Belkin's altered state of consciousness seems congruent with an aesthetic of inwardness often attributed to the autonomist art music of the Romantic era. Yet this sensibility may not be quite so historically and culturally circumscribed. It

²⁰ I am indebted to Christopher Nupen for his assistance with the reproduction of this image and for permission to use it here, and would want to reciprocate by commending the didactic and research value of his documentaries.

would be perfectly possible to imagine alternative versions of this image—featuring a rock star, say, or a soul singer, or a *qawwali* vocalist—each of which would carry different inflections of what would still be recognizably a common ‘strong experience with music’ (to borrow a term from Gabrielsson 2011). This exercise of imagining variants from which we might intuit an invariant essence is, as we have seen, a technique recommended by Husserl in the execution of the eidetic reduction. The essence disclosed on this occasion is in some sense the experience of *transcendence*—a reach of subjectivity beyond that of the mundane and of the natural attitude, and indeed attained by an *epoché* on the performer’s part that brackets out the manifold material contingencies (biographical, historical, financial, organizational, technical) that have led up to the immediacy of this moment. But how are we to interpret transcendence? How do we define it, and what is its significance?

Transcendental phenomenology—with and beyond Husserl

We have now reached the far end of an epistemological arc that began biographically with the decision to reflect on the Sibelius Violin Concerto; that extracted various formalized analytical representations of the work from the listening experience; drew out from those representations their associated formations of subjectivity; and, finally, reflected on how those formations, when instantiated in performance, are based on a possibly transcendental dimension of subjectivity. While these different moments might not be precisely coterminous with the several stages of reduction described by Husserl—phenomenal, eidetic, transcendental (a sequence that he in any case revised continually throughout his career)—we might justifiably see them as the result of successive applications of *epoché*—reiterative distillations of subjectivity from the music’s objective particulars in a quest for ever further reaches of consciousness. Or as Husserl might have put it: ever *purser* reaches of consciousness. For him the transcendental ego represents a domain of distilled consciousness that is the ultimate goal of phenomenology. In this final meditation, then, I will consider whether what is being performed in such moments of musical transcendence—

as exemplified by the image of Belkin—is commensurable with Husserl’s transcendental reduction and his notion of a transcendental phenomenology.

Much turns on what Husserl meant by the term ‘transcendental’; how he interpreted that sphere in relation to the empirical, ‘natural’ world; and to what extent his view mutated during the course of his *oeuvre*. He did not conspicuously use the term to define strong experiences of art. Rather, in his philosophy, the transcendental subject is transcendental in the Kantian sense of a condition of possibility. On this view, it would be specious to ask whether the transcendental subject exists empirically; it is rather the very condition of possibility of empirical subjectivity: that which makes it possible to ask the question and to evaluate the ontological status of all other formations of subjectivity and of knowledge obtained under the natural attitude. Husserl’s claim for phenomenology as ‘first philosophy’, that is, as epistemologically prior to the natural sciences, turns on this distinction. As he puts it in his *Cartesian Meditations*, ‘[n]atural being is a realm whose existential status [*Seinsgeltung*] is secondary; it continually supposes the realm of transcendental being’ (1999: 21). The transcendental ego, then, is unlikely to be visible in an MRI scanner.

The possible idealist implications of such a position have not been lost on Husserl’s critics and followers (Roman Ingarden among them—see Sawicki n.d.: §2). But Husserl’s stance is not without its productive ambiguities. In the *Cartesian Mediations*, for example, he argues that the transcendental subject is entirely connected with the empirical world, albeit that it is achieved through placing that world under the *epoché*:

By my living, by my experiencing, thinking, valuing, and acting, I can enter no world other than one that gets its sense and acceptance or status ... in and from me, myself. If I put myself above this life and refrain from doing any believing that takes “the” world straightforwardly as existing—if I direct my regard exclusively to this life itself, as consciousness of “the” world—I thereby acquire myself as the pure ego, with the pure stream of my *cogitationes*. (1999: 21).

Merleau-Ponty levered along this possible fault line in Husserl to prise out a more worldly phenomenology. As the former writes in the introduction to his *Phenomenology of Perception*:

Phenomenology is the study of essences ... But phenomenology is also a philosophy which puts essences back into existence ... It is a transcendental philosophy which places in abeyance the assertions arising out of the natural attitude ... but it is also a philosophy for which the world is always 'already there' before reflection begins—as an inalienable presence (2002: vii; quoted in Schmidt 1985: 35).

Perhaps reading against the grain, Merleau-Ponty claimed a shift in Husserl's thinking, in which he believed the latter moved from a 'rigorous distinction' between phenomenology and the empirical sciences to a position which entertained their 'reciprocal envelopment' (a reading summarized by James Schmidt (1985: 45)). For all that Merleau-Ponty's reading is selective and idiosyncratic, there are certainly some suggestive avenues in his adaptation of Husserl. The ethos of a 'reciprocal envelopment' of different epistemes (rather than the prioritizing of one over the other) has been repeatedly evidenced in this chapter's account of the Sibelius Violin Concerto, where phenomenological, hermeneutic, cultural, and technical-analytical readings have gone hand in hand. And Merleau-Ponty's pursuit of an embodied phenomenology has obvious resonances for a performance art like music. Again Belkin's image focuses the point: we see his (in some sense) transcendent subjectivity in embodied form—on his face, and in his physical relation to his instrument and to the surrounding space. This embodiment is shaped by the production of sounds determined by, and instantiating, musical structures audible in the music's physical, i.e. sonic, manifestation.

The ambiguities Merleau-Ponty teases out of Husserl suggest the latter as a figure who is not simply superseded by subsequent developments in

phenomenology, but who warrants ongoing reconsideration alongside them. For all that Merleau-Ponty's insistence on a worldly, carnal phenomenology is salient, this may not completely dislodge Husserl's corresponding insistence on the primacy of a transcendental phenomenology. For while it is one thing to reinstate the body into philosophical discourse, what, in the final analysis, is it that the body knows? While the transcendental reduction was a limit point in Merleau-Ponty's affinities with Husserl, this again hinges on how we read him. Of a piece with the ambiguities already discussed is the fact that Husserl, unlike Kant, did not regard the transcendental ego as a purely theoretical postulate. As Joel Smith puts it, '[o]n Husserl's view, the *I* plays this structuring role, but is also given in inner experience. ... Husserl says that it is, "a *transcendancy within immanency*" (Smith n.d.: §5c, citing §57 of Husserl's *Ideas*). This would suggest that this *I* is in some way directly knowable to consciousness—potentially knowable as an absolute level of consciousness, even though, as transcendent, it cannot be empirically described.

For Husserl, this knowing could only arise through intense intellectual meditation, precisely in the form of the *epoché*; and in his uncompleted final work, *The Crisis of the European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology* (first published posthumously in 1954), he expressed this in portentous terms:

the total phenomenological attitude and the epoché belonging to it are destined in essence to effect, at first, a complete personal transformation, comparable in the beginning to a religious conversion, which then, however, over and above this, bears within itself the significance of the greatest existential transformation which is assigned as a task to mankind as such. (Husserl 1970: 137)

Smith underscores how the radical implications of Husserl's thought were further foregrounded by his assistant and collaborator Eugen Fink, who fleshed out Husserl's thinking in visceral terms—as in this assertion:

the phenomenological ‘epoche’ is anything but a noncommittal, ‘merely’ theoretical, intellectual act; it is rather a spiritual movement of one’s self *encompassing* the *entire man* and, as an attack upon the ‘state-of-motionlessness’ supporting us in our depths, the pain of a *fundamental transformation down to our roots*’ (Fink 1972: 9).

‘We blast open captivity-in-acceptedness’, as Fink elsewhere put it (1995: 41)—a moment of being shaken out of everyday reality that sounds as epiphanic as the attainment of *samādhi* states of Eastern meditation or the *kenshō* experience of Zen Buddhism.

The register of these experiences (‘a complete personal transformation’, ‘existential transformation’, ‘pain’, ‘down to our roots’) sounds not unrelated to strong experiences of the aesthetic, even though the experiences are not identical with each other. As we earlier noted Husserl himself observing, the aesthetic brackets out empirical reality as experienced under the natural attitude; it affords other experiences of subjectivity and through this a different take on the everyday. For anyone involved in aesthetic practice, it is less easy to be ‘captivated in acceptedness’ of the empirical world: what is fundamental to Being is grasped from a critically different place.

Towards a conclusion

If music converges with phenomenology in this regard it is because many forms of art are in their essence concerned with alternative articulations of the subject, the world, and the relationship between them (in Husserlian parlance, *noesis*). They are able to do this with an epistemological plausibility commensurable with that of empirical science because of how they contemplate and organize their own materials. Hence, an important part of this chapter has been to give commensurable presence to a musical artwork and a technical description of its organization—as one step in a series of reductions intended to disclose various phenomenological levels or modalities.

That these have been couched differently from Husserl's purely philosophical phenomenology is probably as it should be, given the different essences of these modes of inquiry. As Andrew Bowie reminds us in his own discussion of music and transcendence, '[i]f art is philosophically important, art's significance need not be thought of in terms of a philosophical account of that importance, but may actually be understood in terms of what art reveals that is not sayable in philosophy' (2015: 214). For Bowie, any approach to the practice of art based on '[e]xplaining it in terms of something else ... gets it the wrong way round by prioritising what can be objectified in a theory over the prior participatory practice. In Heidegger's terms it prioritises "entities" over "being".' Forms of theorizing more appropriate to artistic practice 'rely on a deeper, ineliminable connection with things that can easily be obscured by an objectifying stance' (: 219).

This is why alternative epistemic spaces matter. This is why Husserl matters, why phenomenology matters, and why art—not least music—matters. If we grant ethical and epistemological necessity to such spaces, then Sellars' dualistic schema of scientific and manifest images, which also underpins so much of Dennett's universal-Darwinist theory of consciousness (and culture), becomes open to deconstruction. This is emphatically not to dismiss what is self-evidently constructive in the natural sciences (for no amount of transcendental phenomenology will build a skyscraper—though what such phenomena mean to us in the life-world is another thing). But it is to suggest that the scientific image, or the natural attitude, may not hold an aprioristic monopoly on our fundamental understanding of Being—of consciousness in its most transcendental sense.

While this would make a suitable provisional stopping point, I do want to accord some space to the alternative viewpoint. For Sellars (and Dennett in his wake) was himself not dismissive of the manifest image, and ultimately sought epistemological unity: a 'stereoscopic vision, where two differing perspectives on a landscape are fused into one coherent perspective' (Sellars 1963: 4). At the same time, Sellars holds fast to the 'the primacy of the scientific image' (: 32ff.) in his desire to create a 'synoptic view' that would unify both images and their

respective ontologies. He writes: ‘by construing the actions we intend to do and the circumstances we intend to do them in scientific terms we *directly* relate the world as conceived by scientific theory to our purposes’ (: 40). His synoptic vision includes a model through which conceptual thought as well as sensory consciousness can be reduced to a point of identity with neurophysiological processes (: 37). This would be consistent with a physicalist standpoint that pervades much of contemporary scientific consciousness studies; but it would also represent a return to the psychologism whose critique generated Husserl’s mature phenomenology in the first place.

To discuss Sellars’ philosophical programme at greater length is beyond the scope of this chapter. But the sophistication of his philosophical deliberations is enough to caution against any premature foreclosure or resolution of these debates. The questions remain nonetheless: Are we to follow Sellars and Dennett in requiring that any knowledge derived from the manifest image—including knowledge about consciousness, and knowledge derived aesthetically—is finally to be absorbed into the scientific image? Or is a better model that of ‘reciprocal envelopment’ of the scientific and phenomenological spheres, as posited by Merleau-Ponty in his quest to reconcile the tension between empirical and transcendental psychology that he traced in Husserl—perhaps isomorphic with the co-articulated technical and phenomenological analyses of the Sibelius Violin Concerto in this chapter? Or was Husserl correct in assuming consciousness as the final, transcendental, ontological sphere that forms the condition of possibility of all other knowing—a sphere so abstract that it seems close to impossible to capture it in linguistic or conceptual terms at all, but to which (as we have begun to entertain) musical and aesthetic practice might offer, in Bowie’s words, a ‘deeper, ineliminable connection’?

Even though we cannot resolve them here, these vital questions map out the different epistemological landscapes that we need to navigate and arbitrate between in a properly grounded account of music and consciousness. I hope that this chapter has shown not only how aesthetic forms such as music (in all their particularity) might offer valuable experiential resources in exploring such

questions, but also why any adequate theory of consciousness must contain an equally adequate account of culture within its ontology.

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Allegro moderato

Vn solo

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viii

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Vn solo
sul G

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sul G

Allegretto