

## *Romantic Modernism: Bach, Furtwängler, and Adorno*

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In very different ways, Wilhelm Furtwängler and Theodor W. Adorno stand as two of the twentieth century's most important and most controversial musicians. Both were profoundly marked by the experience and aftermath of the Third Reich. Moreover, both were composers, and, although neither is remembered primarily for this, their understanding of composition enabled them to understand musical works "from the inside." Furtwängler remains for many the greatest conductor of that century, unsurpassed—perhaps never equaled—in the central German Romantic repertoire of Ludwig van Beethoven, Johannes Brahms, Anton Bruckner, and Richard Wagner. His so-called subjectivism may be contrasted with the more "timely" and "objective" anti-Romanticism of the *Neue Sachlichkeit* movement associated with such musicians as Paul Hindemith and Otto Klemperer and, most celebratedly, with the score-bound literalism of Arturo Toscanini. Adorno, having studied composition with Alban Berg, became the preeminent theorist of musical modernism and its dialectical adversary, the "culture industry." He provided much of the intellectual underpinning for the postwar serialism of the Darmstadt school of Pierre Boulez, Karlheinz Stockhausen, and others, and his unabashed modernist elitism has inspired and infuriated ever since.

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At first glance, Furtwängler and Adorno might seem to have had little in common. While art historians, philosophers, and literary critics have long acknowledged the strong connections between Romanticism and modernism, this has arguably been less so in the writing of musical history. Few would deny the debt the Second Viennese School owed to Wagner and Brahms, yet there has been a tendency to take at face value certain pronouncements of that school's successors, especially the claim of a year zero, a definite rupture with the contaminated past, more or less coincident with the end of World War II. The apparent contrast may have been heightened by the marked lateness of late Romanticism in music. For instance, 1948, three years after the deaths of Anton Webern and Béla Bartók, witnessed not only the completion of Boulez's second piano sonata, a work intended to obliterate the very idea of the sonata, but also the composition of Richard Strauss's determinedly valedictory, unmistakably "Romantic" *Four Last Songs*. Strauss would die the following year and Furtwängler in 1954, having conducted the 1950 premiere of Strauss's farewell. Whatever the internal differences, Strauss, Furtwängler, and their "late Romantic" generation might well seem to have nothing to do with the furious modernist avant-garde of the Darmstadt Summer Schools, Boulez at its helm and Adorno its intellectual elder statesman.

This was a time during which American-led hostility had symbolically tied Furtwängler to the Nazi regime, a scapegoating contested, in Berlin at least, by a popular and ultimately successful Soviet-backed campaign.<sup>1</sup> His denazification had proceeded painfully slowly, in startling contrast to that of many artists who had actually supported or at least acquiesced in National Socialism. Not until 1947 was he granted leave to conduct once again, and it would take another five years before he resumed office as principal conductor of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra. Most notoriously, he was—in some quarters, still is—maligned for "failing" to leave Germany during the 1930s, as if this were the only possible course of action for anyone other than a collaborator or worse. It is as if, in Peter Palmer's words, "the posthumous denazification of Furtwängler were doomed to run to all eternity."<sup>2</sup>

Moreover, Adorno would certainly have considered Furtwängler's dissociation of art from politics—a far more plausible charge than that of Nazi sympathy—as naive in the extreme. For Furtwängler, it would have been to capitulate to barbarism *not* to write poetry after Auschwitz. Whereas Adorno

1. On the Soviet campaign, see Elizabeth Janik, "'The Golden Hunger Years': Music and Superpower Rivalry in Occupied Berlin," *German History* 22 (2004): 90–92.

2. Peter Palmer, "Review," *Tempo*, no. 184 (1993): 35.

urged that the Bayreuth Festival, sullied by its National Socialist associations, should not reopen, Furtwängler followed Wagner's 1872 laying of the foundation stone by conducting Beethoven's Ninth Symphony as the first "New Bayreuth" performance in 1951. How "new" Bayreuth had become was vigorously debated. Furtwängler resisted public pronouncement yet, interestingly, declined postwar invitations to conduct Wagner there, preferring to allow Beethoven's music to speak for him. He had perforce acted similarly during World War II, reserving his most biting political criticism, at least in verbal terms, for his notebooks. Furtwängler's nationalism, however "cultural" and "apolitical" its nature, would have been ideological anathema to Adorno—although this did not prevent Adorno from considering the great German musical tradition superior to any other. They shared what Robin Holloway has with reference to Adorno called "the serious Teuton's contempt . . . for lack of grounding in the loamy musical culture of central Europe."<sup>3</sup> That Hans Sachs's *heil'ge deutsche Kunst* (holy German art) dare not quite freely speak its name in Adorno ultimately lessens for him neither its holiness nor its Germanness.

Indeed, when the opportunity presented itself to return to Frankfurt in 1949, Adorno jumped at it. He was returning to a Germany defeated in war yet still culturally proud. The occupying forces had especially encouraged music as an allegedly apolitical, "absolute" art, untainted by National Socialism. Paul Höffer wrote in 1946 that "by nature, absolute instrumental music is wholly incapable of declaring itself for or against a political direction. Outside of songs like *La Marseillaise*, political music as such cannot exist."<sup>4</sup> This from the composer of the cantata *Olympischer Schwur* (*Olympic Vow*), written for and performed at the 1936 Berlin Olympic Games. Such were the convenient fictions Adorno would vigorously contest, fictions that nevertheless had firm roots in German Romantic tradition—in Bach reception in particular. This had extolled the sainted "Thomas Kantor" as if his duties had been primarily to produce instrumental rather than liturgical music, with the great, monumental exception of the *Saint Matthew Passion*, a redemptive music drama utterly transcending mundane concerns.<sup>5</sup> Carl Dahlhaus delineates the dialectic at work in the Romantic "Bach renaissance": "Works that had originally been conceived in answer to external purposes became open to appreciation (and indeed were appreciated) as *exempla classica* of self-contained musical

3. Robin Holloway, "Customised Goods," in *On Music: Essays and Diversions, 1963–2003* (Brinkworth: Claridge, 2003), 336.

4. Quoted in Janik, "'Golden Hunger Years,'" 79.

5. Most of Bach's cantatas were known only to a small circle of initiates and could not be said to have entered the repertoire.

structures. The idea of absolute music was formed, paradoxically, on the basis of works that first had to be reconstrued before they could even suit the category, a category whose full significance was, in turn, revealed to the nineteenth century only by these very works."<sup>6</sup>

Furtwängler may have been aware of Adorno, but there is no particular reason to believe that he was, still less for him to have shown any great interest. Adorno's Marxist theorizing was utterly foreign to him. As Yehudi Menuhin remarked in a memorial broadcast, Furtwängler was "no intellectual, but rather an inspired mystic in the mediaeval German tradition."<sup>7</sup> Furtwängler himself wrote that Bruckner had been "in fact, not a musician. This musician was, in truth, a successor to the old German mystics: [Meister] Eckhart, Jakob Böhme, etc."<sup>8</sup> This then was certainly a tradition of which Furtwängler was aware. It is this mystical tendency rather than philistinism, of which such a cultured and generous man could never justly be accused, which led him on several occasions to disparage intellectuals or intellectualism. "There is," he wrote, "a profound distinction to be drawn between thinking and living, to which [latter] art belongs." This distinction he employed against the *philosopher* Friedrich Nietzsche, in favor of the *artist* Wagner.<sup>9</sup> A practical example, germane to what is to follow, comes from his notebook in 1929: "To conclude, from the fact that there are no expression marks in Bach, that one must sacrifice all individual interpretation is . . . the most wrongheaded thing that one can do. . . . And to believe that, because Bach did not prescribe it, there is no *espressivo* is already of a level of naïveté such that it could only have come from an intellectual to whom art was foreign."<sup>10</sup>

Adorno, the intellectual par excellence, was certainly aware of Furtwängler and far from unsympathetic to him. On more than one occasion, Adorno contrasted Furtwängler favorably with Toscanini. In a generous 1968 tribute, Adorno lauds "what Furtwängler possessed in the highest measure: the organ of musical spirit [*musikalischer Sinn*], as opposed to mere *Funktionieren*," which mechanical operation he ascribes to Toscanini, darling of the American

6. Carl Dahlhaus, *Foundations of Music History*, trans. J. R. Robinson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 28.

7. Yehudi Menuhin, memorial broadcast, RIAS Berlin, December 7, 1954, in *Furtwängler Recalled*, ed. Daniel Gillis (Zurich: Atlantis, 1965), 41.

8. Wilhelm Furtwängler, "Anton Bruckner," in *Ton und Wort: Aufsätze und Vorträge, 1918 bis 1954* (Wiesbaden: Brockhaus, 1966), 111. All translations are mine unless otherwise noted.

9. Wilhelm Furtwängler, "Der Fall Wagner, frei nach Nietzsche," in *Ton und Wort*, 150–51.

10. Wilhelm Furtwängler, "Über Bach und die Interpretation alter Musik überhaupt," in *Aufzeichnungen, 1924–1954*, ed. Elisabeth Furtwängler and Günter Birkner (Wiesbaden: Brockhaus, 1980), 50. Hereafter cited as "Über Bach" and A, respectively.

culture industry. From Adorno's first, youthful encounter with Furtwängler's *Tristan und Isolde*, he had known the young Mannheim *Kapellmeister* to be the very opposite of a virtuoso conductor (*Dirigiertvirtuose*).<sup>11</sup> Elsewhere, Adorno expresses a guarded preference for Furtwängler's Brahms Fourth Symphony over Toscanini's, which he tears to pieces, a preference nevertheless mitigated by the caveat that "all sorts of objections can be made" to Furtwängler's interpretation, too.<sup>12</sup>

The music of greatest concern to Adorno was that of his own time, especially that of the Second Viennese School. Once again, he and Furtwängler seem to be moving apart. However, Furtwängler, whatever his posthumous reputation, was far more curious than Toscanini, who ignored Gustav Mahler, let alone his successors, and for whom "modern music" was represented by Ottorino Respighi and Samuel Barber. Furtwängler by contrast never lacked interest in atonal and dodecaphonic music. He even asked rhetorically, "Who would not have the highest respect . . . for Schoenberg's consistency, which borders on self-mortification and despair?" (A, 90). Moreover, Furtwängler conducted the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra in the first performance of the revised version of Schoenberg's *Five Orchestral Pieces*, op. 16 (1924) and the world premiere of the *Variations for Orchestra*, op. 31 (1928). Sections of the audience were so scandalized by the latter that it took a quarter of an hour before the concert could continue. Yet, as Wolfgang Stresemann, son of the foreign minister and chancellor and himself intendant of the Berlin Philharmonic, would observe: "People rattled their keys and hooted. . . . But the important issue here is that he was doing his duty as Berlin's first conductor, and his contribution to the expansion of the orchestral repertoire with important new works cannot be overestimated."<sup>13</sup> Claudio Arrau startlingly extolled in the same breath Furtwängler's "Schoenberg, and *Tristan* (shall we ever hear anything to match it in a hundred years?)."<sup>14</sup>

This should not be pushed too far; it would be absurd to claim twentieth-century music as Furtwängler's primary interest, let alone to claim him as a modernist. Willing in his notebook to give Schoenberg's music its historical due, Furtwängler nevertheless implies once again the distinction between intellectual and vitalist:

11. Theodor W. Adorno, "Wilhelm Furtwängler," in *Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann and Gretel Adorno, 20 vols. in 23 (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1971–86), 19:468.

12. Theodor W. Adorno, "The Mystery of the Maestro," in *Sound Figures*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999), 46.

13. Sam H. Shirakawa, *The Devil's Music Master: The Controversial Life and Career of Wilhelm Furtwängler* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 60.

14. Claudio Arrau, memorial tribute, in Gillis, *Furtwängler Recalled*, 115.

In terms of its fundamental attitude, this left wing [i.e., Schoenberg and his supporters]—certainly only a part within the whole of contemporary creation but, with respect to historical development, the most characteristic and most significant—has a large amount, the greatest amount of justification on its side, and one might be inclined to say that it relies too much on this attitude. For it is not their intention, but only the realization of what they intended, which renders Bach and Beethoven great. (A, 90)

It is not, then, enough for art merely to be as it should be for its historical period, and certainly not for its creator merely to have the correct intention as demanded by that period. Intention and timeliness are not relevant to greatness; they may act as an intellectualizing substitute for it. Adorno would not disagree, but there is an important distinction to be made, in that this is not his understanding of Furtwängler's allegedly intellectualizing "left wing." Instead, Adorno writes: "Among the reproaches intransigently repeated, the most widely disseminated is that of intellectualism: that new music originates in the brain, not in the heart or the ear; above all, that it is not at all imagined by the senses, but worked out on paper. The pitifulness of these phrases is obvious. . . . The second nature of the tonal system is [but] a semblance [*Schein*], originating historically."<sup>15</sup> Adorno clearly has Hindemith in his sights, in particular the latter's notorious, ahistorical claim that tonality was "a natural force, like gravity."<sup>16</sup> (Even if one accepted that new music were "unnatural," should one say the same about the music of the Renaissance and the Middle Ages?) By contrast, Adorno maintains that there is nothing "natural" about tonal music; it has simply appeared to be so for a certain period of time. This could, at least theoretically, become the case for new music, too. In truth, both are historically mediated.

Furtwängler, as I have shown, does not reject the appeals to history invoked by the Schoenbergian "left wing"—a somewhat ironic term, given Schoenberg's own right-wing politics, which had moved from youthful flirtation with social democracy toward authoritarian conservatism (and Zionism, most stridently voiced in his spoken drama, *Der biblische Weg* [*The Biblical Way*]). Yet Furtwängler questions whether this "left wing" is on comparably sure ground in terms of aesthetic quality. Elsewhere he goes further:

Bach, Beethoven, Schubert, Brahms, finally also Bruckner, Wagner, Hugo Wolf, Richard Strauss, Pfitzner, etc. all have the same laws—[they are part of] a [common] world. Not the nineteenth century, not the eighteenth, not a

15. Theodor W. Adorno, "Philosophie der neuen Musik," in *Gesammelte Schriften*, 12:20.

16. Paul Hindemith, *The Craft of Musical Composition*, trans. Arthur Mendel and Otto Ortmann, 2 vols. (London: Schott, 1945), 1:152.

"historical" world, but a common concept of music. Then, however, comes the break. Now they always conceal this by accounting for everything historically. But that is not the crucial thing. We must not delude ourselves on this: whoever today makes atonal or "tonally relaxed" music is doing something fundamentally different from his predecessors. (A, 153)

In this equivocal entry Furtwängler distinguishes between "history," which seems to be portrayed in a teleological, almost avant-gardist sense, and "tradition." He clearly rejects Schoenberg's claim that emancipating the dissonance was but one step, albeit a necessary step, in the history of music, neither more nor less important than any other. If "historical" music has "historical" justification, then we should be under no illusion that this is a great step indeed to have made.

Furtwängler, then, was not the reactionary of caricature. Nevertheless, his overriding concern remained the upholding of a humanistic tradition both universal and German, indeed German in its very conception of universality. Since the eighteenth century there had been a profound tension, both contradictory and mutually reinforcing, between the claims of German humanism toward a universal mission and the attention it must also pay toward national aspirations. Moses Hess, the founding father of Zionism yet also a proud German, had thus declared, "We Germans are the most universal, the most *European* people in Europe."<sup>17</sup> Mutual respect and many common origins notwithstanding, there remained a gulf, if not quite an unbridgeable gulf, between Furtwängler and Schoenberg:

Since the time of his death Schoenberg's cardinal importance as an innovator has been very widely recognized. As a result most of his works are now assured of at least an occasional hearing. Yet although his idiom is no longer unfamiliar in a general sense, his music remains less easily accessible than that of his eminent pupils and contemporaries. One difficulty has been that musicians who shared his background and artistic assumptions, and might in principle have built up a tradition of performance—men such as Furtwängler, Walter, Kleiber and Klemperer, all of whom worked in Berlin when Schoenberg was there—failed to keep abreast of his development, while the more objective, uncommitted approach cultivated in the postwar years overlooked too much.<sup>18</sup>

17. Moses Hess, "Die europäische Triarchie," in *Philosophische und sozialistische Schriften, 1837–1850*, ed. August Cornu and Wolfgang Mönke (Berlin: Akademie, 1961), 118.

18. Oliver W. Neighbour, "Arnold Schoenberg," *Grove Music Online*, ed. L. Macy, [www.grovemusic.com](http://www.grovemusic.com) (accessed February 14, 2006).

These words already point us, however, to a potential kinship of “background and artistic assumptions,” which might better be expressed elsewhere than in direct relationships.

A good example of this kinship relates to attitudes expressed toward Bach. The musicologist Richard Taruskin has devoted much attention to arguments about performance practice, not least that of Bach. In particular, he identifies the critique of “authentic” or “historically-informed” performances and, still more so, the desiccated and desiccating rhetoric in which performers’ and ideologues’ claims are couched. Taruskin sees a gulf between Furtwängler’s Bach and almost any conception coming thereafter. Such “modern” or “period” Bach—the two are equated in his argument—is “authentic” for Taruskin not in the sense that it trumpets, namely toward the composer and his time, but in the perhaps surprising sense that it is authentic to its own, (sadly) modernist time. Although Taruskin does not refer here to Adorno’s *Jargon of Authenticity*, he might readily have pointed to the Heideggerian self-absolution of using the term *authenticity* in an apparently purely “technical” fashion while actually betraying its ideological role all too clearly—at least for those who can distance themselves from its rhetoric. Although I agree with much of Taruskin’s critique of such performances and their rhetoric, the dichotomy he posits between Romanticism and modernism is false. They stand closer to each other than either does to the advocates of “authenticity” or “historically-informed performance.” (Any one description raises as many questions as it answers, but we must call it something.) This, I argue, has far more in common with postmodernism, which Taruskin acclaims as a potential agent of salvation from his demon modernism—and from Teutonism, which amounts to much the same thing for him. Notably, Schoenberg, Adorno, and Boulez figure prominently among Taruskin’s modernist villains elsewhere in his writings.<sup>19</sup> Elevating the allegedly greater communicative capacity of Dmitri Shostakovich over Schoenberg and even Igor Stravinsky, let alone Stockhausen, Taruskin has described the “avant-garde position” as being “in effect, the æsthetic of spoiled brats . . . a cultural leftover, emptied of appeal not just for audiences but for artists as well.”<sup>20</sup>

19. See, e.g., Richard Taruskin, “The Poietic Fallacy,” *Musical Times*, no. 145 (2004): 7–34; and Taruskin, *The Oxford History of Western Music*, vol. 5 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

20. Richard Taruskin, “When Serious Music Mattered: On Shostakovich and Three Recent Books,” in *A Shostakovich Casebook*, ed. Malcolm Hamrick Brown (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004), 364.



Taruskin presents Furtwängler's celebrated 1950 performance with the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra of Bach's Fifth Brandenburg Concerto, directed from the piano, not the harpsichord, as a "vitalist interpretation of Bach."<sup>21</sup> Some sort of living force, it is implied in this phrase, is present, a force that traditionally might have been considered the soul. What such performance is not is mechanical; it is concerned with process rather than an inviolable "text" and recognizes, whether explicitly or implicitly, the problematic nature of the concepts of text and work, which are not coterminous. There is no textual warrant for Furtwängler's tempo variations, not least the enormous *rallentando* in the first movement's piano cadenza, though by the same token there is no textual prohibition, either. The work as it stands in 1950 is far more than the score. Work and performance are presented in full knowledge of works, performances, and writings on conducting of Wagner, writings of which Boulez, contrary to what one would expect from Taruskin, has professed his admiration.<sup>22</sup> Furtwängler lamented that Bach had become "today . . . indeed—as is also already the case with Beethoven—ininitely more of an authority than a vital force [*Lebensmacht*]" ("Über Bach," 49). This was his justification for concentrating on the core, German repertoire; it might be the most frequently performed music, but it was also the least well performed (A, 110). Elsewhere, he expressed reservations about the concept of vitality: "I have always devoted a great deal of thought to the word *vital*. It is a word of intellectuals for intellectuals. . . . Mozart and Beethoven are not vital, but simply beautiful, great, good, what they want to be. What highly praised modern art expresses: *Vitalität*" (A, 208–9). Furtwängler's usage and perhaps also his meaning are not quite consistent, but the general conception of vitalism I wish to present here accords with much of what he had to say and also with his performances. Even if he sometimes mystically recoiled from such "intellectualism," he is not a naive artist, nor, of course, are the great figures of musical modernism. Vitalist conceptions of Bach, as I show, are also characteristic of at least the modernist mainstream; Furtwängler's Bach is not the end of the road it has seemed to many, Taruskin included.

21. Richard Taruskin, "The Pastness of the Present and the Presence of the Past," in *Text and Act: Essays on Music and Performance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 107. Hereafter cited as "Pastness." Furtwängler's performance may be heard on an EMI CD, catalog no. 567422 2.

22. See Richard Wagner, "Über das Dirigieren," in *Sämtliche Schriften und Dichtungen*, ed. Richard Sternfeld and Hans von Wolzogen, 16 vols. in 10 (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Haertel, 1912–14), 8:261–337; and Jean Vermeil, *Conversations with Boulez: Thoughts on Conducting*, trans. Camille Naish (Portland, OR: Amadeus, 1996). Vermeil's work is hereafter cited as *CB*.

While Taruskin ably lays bare many of the delusions of "authenticity," he considers modernism the problem rather than the solution. Indeed, he explicitly connects the two demonized movements:

The split that is usually drawn between "modern performance" on the one hand and "historical performance" on the other is quite topsy-turvy. It is the latter that is truly modern performance—or rather, if you like, the avant-garde wing or cutting edge of modern performance—while the former represents the progressively weakening survival, of an earlier style, inherited from the nineteenth century, one that is fast becoming historical. . . . The same critics who can be counted upon predictably to tout the latterday [*sic*] representatives of High Modernism in music—Carter, Xenakis, Boulez—. . . are the very ones most intransigently committed . . . to the use of "original instruments" and all the rest of the "historical" paraphernalia. ("Pastness," 140)

This seems to me the weakest part of Taruskin's critique, amounting to an ideological denial of the strong connections between modernism and what might generally be considered the last gasps of musical Romanticism, namely, the Bach performances of musicians such as Furtwängler, Alfred Cortot, and Willem Mengelberg. Taruskin would certainly be hard put to find sympathy for "authenticism" in modernist composers themselves, as Boulez's repeated denunciations make quite clear. Indeed, Taruskin does allow on one occasion a degree of kinship between Furtwängler, Schoenberg, and even—with one brief reference—Adorno. This, however, is not the general tenor of his arguments; quite the contrary ("Pastness," 107). There is no rupture between Romanticism and modernism; there are differences, of course, yet the latter springs from the former.

No one who has heard the accusation "They say Bach [but] mean Telemann" is likely to forget it.<sup>23</sup> "Bach Defended against His Devotees," Adorno's blistering counterattack on what would soon proudly trumpet itself as the "authentic" movement in music, stands as perhaps the greatest of its kind. Adorno's 1951 reaction to the previous year's bicentenary commemorations of Bach's death—to which Furtwängler's performance had been a contribution, albeit markedly different from most others—was emphatically not of the official, approved variety. What does it mean to say that they say Bach but mean Georg Philipp

23. Theodor W. Adorno, "Bach gegen seine Liebhaber verteidigt," in *Gesammelte Schriften*, 10:150. Hereafter cited as "Bach verteidigt."

Telemann, and what is the context—often downplayed, disregarded, or simply unknown—to this claim? It is clearly a value judgment, both in terms of the relative merits of Bach and Telemann and in terms of “them,” as in “They say . . .” The first is easily explained: Bach is being reduced to the level of a generic baroque composer. This is restoration rather than renewal. Bach becomes simply a figure of his time, or rather a figure of what certain forces construe his time to have been, or of what they disingenuously represent it to have been. What this entails needs to be discussed further, but is a scandalized reaction to an affront to Bach’s music, understood in Romantic and Schoenbergian fashion as towering above that of his contemporaries. Historically mediated, in no sense historically restricted, Bach’s music emphatically resists identification with other music of the high baroque, even that of George Frideric Handel. Furtwängler says something similar: “Historians,” to whom we should presumably oppose true musicians, “sometimes wish to tell us that even a giant such as Bach, viewed in the context of his age . . . loses the superhuman quality we attach to him.” However, the truth appears to be quite the reverse, for never is the “astonishing superiority of Bach’s music clearer . . . than when one compares him with other composers of his time and environment,” such as Handel or Antonio Vivaldi. Handel’s brilliance “seems strangely arbitrary, strangely capricious next to the quiet, unerring organization consistent throughout Bach’s musical thought.”<sup>24</sup> Elsewhere, Furtwängler even insisted that, although Bach had lived and worked in the baroque age, his music had nothing to do with the baroque; it was, if anything, gothic.<sup>25</sup>

The defensiveness that Adorno and Furtwängler—and also Schoenberg—share toward associating Bach with his own time seems inconceivable today. This is not all loss: a greater appreciation of predecessors such as Heinrich Schütz and Dieterich Buxtehude is both a good in itself and helpful in understanding certain, previously neglected aspects of Bach. Yet many predecessors or contemporaries are rather less distinguished and—in a world in which Bach’s cantatas, let alone many contemporary compositions, remain at best neglected—might be better left to rest in peace. What ultimately interests us, or ought to interest us, in Bach is what elevates him above the commonplaces of his time—and let us not forget that he was a deeply unfashionable composer by the increasingly *galant* standards of the eighteenth century. This is not to deny those elements of the *style galant* that Bach’s work shares with that of his

24. Wilhelm Furtwängler, “Bach,” in *Ton und Wort*, 214–15.

25. Furtwängler, “Der Fall Wagner,” 137.

sons' generation, but it would be wrong to overemphasize them.<sup>26</sup> In Adorno's words, "What sets him apart from the practices of his time, instead of being understood as the contradiction between his substance [*Gehalt*] with them, is rendered fit only to elevate the nimbus of restricted craftsmanship to classical status" ("Bach verteidigt," 138). Contradiction here is the point; for in treating dialectic as logic, that which in empirical-positivistic terms appears logically unacceptable is seen to be not only logically acceptable but foundational to ever-changing reality. Dialectics, as Adorno wrote elsewhere, is to be understood not "as a particular philosophical standpoint, but as the sustained attempt to follow the movement of the object under discussion and to help it find expression."<sup>27</sup> Movement lies behind contradiction.

Moreover, contradiction, in senses philosophical and quotidian, is something the most zealous members of the "authentic" movement have never been willing to tolerate. It is important to consider the political and intellectual climate in which that movement was born and has developed. Indeed, two of the more uncompromising "authenticists," Gustav Leonhardt and Reinhard Goebel, condemned Furtwängler's Bach as "disgusting": not misguided, not uninteresting, not bad, but "disgusting." This is language to which I draw attention on account of its undeniable aggression, a quality on which Adorno holds no monopoly. Michael Tanner wryly notes that Goebel even referred to one "Mr Furtwängler," which is as insulting as a musicologist can get."<sup>28</sup> Goebel was, one assumes knowingly, addressing Dr. Wilhelm Furtwängler, son of the great classical archaeologist, Professor Adolf Furtwängler. More darkly, one is put in mind of the notorious 1933 "Protest by the Richard Wagner City Munich" against "Mr. Thomas Mann."<sup>29</sup>

That Bach's devotees had turned him, according to Adorno, into "a composer for organ festivals in well-preserved Baroque towns" no longer even

26. East German writers show a particular interest in positing a stronger relationship between Bach and the Enlightenment than had been allowed by traditional scholarship, with its overriding emphasis on his Lutheranism. See Meinrad Walter, "J. S. Bach und die Aufklärung? Kritische Bemerkungen zum Bachverständnis der DDR-Musikwissenschaft," *Archiv für Musikwissenschaft* 42 (1985): 229–40.

27. Theodor W. Adorno, "Criteria of New Music," in *Sound Figures*, 145.

28. Michael Tanner, introduction to Furtwängler, *Notebooks, 1924–1925*, ed. Michael Tanner, trans. Shaun Whiteside, rev. ed. (London: Quartet, 1995), iv.

29. This protest was published in the *Münchener Neueste Nachrichten*, April 16–17, 1933, subsequent to the "national restoration of Germany . . . [having] taken on definite form." It is reprinted and translated in Sven Friedrich, "Ambivalenz der Leidenschaft—Thomas Mann und Richard Wagner: Zum 125. Geburtstag Thomas Manns," in *Programmhefte der Bayreuther Festspiele*, 2000, 142, 150.

seemed a grave accusation to many ("Bach verteidigt," 139). This was the restorative impulse so characteristic of the Federal Republic of Germany—witnessed also, for example, by Adorno's passionate condemnation of "the abominable paragraph [against] homosexuals [being] kept alive" and carried forward in the legal code of "liberated" Germany. The Third Reich's Supreme Court, the Reichsgericht, and its West German successor, the Bundesgerichtshof, juridically defined sexual offense as concerning acts that "objectively, after healthy contemplation, offend against the sense of shame and morality."<sup>30</sup> The words "morality," "healthy," "objectively" (*Sittlichkeit, gesund, objektiv*) spoke for themselves: so much for "liberation." Such was the world from which the young avant-gardist Hans Werner Henze decided that he must escape, "the period of political *reconstruction* [my emphasis] around and after 1950," the very year of Furtwängler's Bach performance and the year before Adorno's essay. This period for Henze looked "like a gradual return to the recent past, under which its appalling conditions once again became conceivable." Communists, "old comrades, who had been imprisoned by the Nazis, were locked up again. I have never heard anyone mention this in musical circles. Music is, after all, unpolitical!"<sup>31</sup>

It is no surprise that, for the powers of this administered world, Bach had become, to quote Adorno, "ideology" ("Bach verteidigt," 139). Furtwängler had observed a similar situation in the previous regime—which is not surprising, given how much had been "restored": "The less Bach is known, the less naturally evolved our relationship toward Bach's music is, the more is written about him. Pieces of good advice to help with him and his works, their performance, etc., grow like mushrooms from the earth" (A, 48–49). Specialization, the curse of modernity's division of labor, therefore led not to greater understanding of the issues involved in Bach performance but to naive positivism—"specialists in nullity," as Boulez would subsequently deride its practitioners (CB, 39). Lamenting contemporary inability to consider the questions that truly mattered, Furtwängler continued:

The actual "problem" . . . [is] that today he [Bach] is indeed—as already Beethoven is, too—infinately more of an authority than a vital force. . . . a natural, uninterrupted and real [*wirklich*] relationship with him is not the general possession of a time, which writes and thinks so much nonsense about

30. Theodor W. Adorno, "Sexualtabus und Recht heute," in *Gesammelte Schriften*, 10:542–43.

31. Hans Werner Henze, "German Music in the 1940s and 1950s," in *Music and Politics: Collected Writings, 1953–1981*, trans. Peter Labanyi (London: Faber and Faber, 1982), 50.

him, which performs his music so inadequately so often, etc. Regarding the question of performance, the naïveté, indeed primitiveness, of what our contemporaries have to say . . . is particularly eye-catching. ("Über Bach," 49)

Such "primitiveness" would be perfectly comprehensible to anyone who subsequently read Horkheimer and Adorno's *Dialectic of Enlightenment* on the "barbarism" that not only had led to the Third Reich but continued to underpin the administered world. Unmediated immediacy, as Adorno would have called it, was nothing of the sort, just an ideological strategy—and a highly successful one at that. "To speak immediately of the immediate," Adorno wrote, "is to behave much as those novelists who drape their marionettes in imitated bygone passions like cheap jewellery, and make people who are no more than component parts of machinery act as if they still had the capacity to act as subjects, and as if something depended on their actions."<sup>32</sup> The indoctrination of such ideological subjectivism was the greatest enemy of what was actually possible for a modern subject.

For there is nothing more ideological than the constantly repeated claim that music is not political, which meant in practice that the restored treasures of the past should be shielded from modernist subversion. Furtwängler, it is true, had resisted connections between the political and artistic spheres, but in quite a different way: ideological perhaps, but Romantically aestheticizing rather than neutralizing. We should beware glib comparisons between the restoration in 1955 of the Bundeswehr, which so horrified Henze and many others, and the unmediated terraced dynamics and sewing-machine geometries of Bach performances by minor German chamber orchestras, performances that would soon metamorphose into claims to "restore" baroque practice. Nevertheless, the well-ordered police state, be it understood in an eighteenth- or twentieth-century sense, was an increasingly mechanized, bureaucratized, devitalized institution. This was why Adorno could write that, according to Bach's "devotees," Bach's music was dissociated from "the subject and its contingency." It was being enlisted to express "not so much man and his inner being as the order of being as such" ("Bach verteidigt," 138). To speak of such an order of being, apparently elevated over ideological concerns, was a thoroughly ideological act.

Modernism too was to be neutralized and co-opted where possible, hence the paradoxical support from Western states, even the Central Intelligence

32. Theodor W. Adorno, *Minima Moralia: Reflections from Damaged Life*, trans. E. F. N. Jephcott (London: Verso, 1978), 15.

Agency, for the “formalism” so overtly feared and denounced in the Eastern bloc. To channel baroque interpretation or modernist art into quasi-scientific “research” was to preserve them as an emblem of bourgeois freedom while preventing them from continuing to challenge the status quo, indeed threatening to divest them of their meaning. As Martin Scherzinger has written: “What functioned in the 1920s and 1930s as a politically progressive abstraction—a radical questioning of the ability of art to describe the world in naively positive terms—threatened to be co-opted in a kind of ‘swindle’ (which even Brecht could not have foreseen) in the Cold War period. It is against this background that the purely formal approach to the study of literature, art and music at this time should be analyzed.”<sup>33</sup>

Antibourgeois conceptions of freedom, whether Romantic-aristocratic in Furtwängler’s case or modernist-Marxist in Henze’s and Adorno’s, had to be driven from the agenda. They might apparently be encouraged, so long as they would “unpolitically” conform, but should there be any serious threat to the social order, ruthlessness would be the order of the day. Dissenting musical voices would be treated as harshly as social and political sedition; Henze ran afoul of the authorities on both counts.

Vitalist art in general was not to be tolerated. Bach was to be something predictable, performance practice a matter of following all-too-readily summarized rules and regulations. “Heritage” was compartmentalized, a jealously guarded museum, replete with visitor center, rather than a lumber room from which one might take and adapt what one needed, when one needed. And enforcement would be necessary. In terms recognizable to one of the most miraculously restored German cities—albeit medieval rather than baroque—it is as if the mastersingers of Nuremberg had dispatched the subversive Walther von Stolzing back to Franconia forthwith. To extend the Wagner metaphor, a *Schatzkammer* required the unproductive protection of a *rentier* Fafner—“What I lie on, I own!”—not the liberation of a revolutionary young Siegfried.

Returning to Adorno’s devotees, we read: “They enjoy the order of his [Bach’s] music because they are enabled to subordinate themselves” (“Bach verteidigt,” 138). Here the strong Freudian influence on Frankfurt School Marxism is readily apparent. *Werktreue*, self-proclaimed fidelity to a naive idea of that most problematic concept, “the work,” involves fidelity and obedience

33. Martin Scherzinger, “In Memory of a Receding Dialectic: The Political Relevance of Autonomy and Formalism in Modernist Musical Aesthetics,” in *The Pleasure of Modernist Music: Listening, Meaning, Intention, Ideology*, ed. Arved Ashby (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2004), 89.

to rather more than just that. It involves, at least in this case, fidelity and obedience to "authenticity," for, in Lawrence Dreyfus's words, "if there is an idea which cements together this diverse collection of people and things [Early Music practitioners and instruments], it is authenticity. Whether or not it is so named, it underlines every conscious act of Early Music."<sup>34</sup> This movement also involves fidelity and obedience to an apparently "scientific" and therefore "objective" method and above all—at least in practice—to the direction of a small group of more or less absolute musical leaders: informers, police, prosecutors, and judges in the world of Early Music *Werktreue*. Most "period" orchestras have been founded only to serve the program of a particular conductor. They are not self-governing institutions drawing on a range, in diachronic and synchronic terms, of directors.<sup>35</sup> The Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra under Furtwängler or Herbert von Karajan—often considered the musical autocrat supreme—always invited a large number of guest conductors. Indeed, it is misleading to consider the orchestra as having toiled "under" a leader at all; the players appointed the music director, and they were notably rebellious in Karajan's final years.<sup>36</sup> It would be meaningless, by contrast, to speak otherwise than of *Goebel's* Musica Antiqua Köln, nor could one subtract *Leonhardt* from the Leonhardt-Ensemble. The irony, moreover, that a modern "conductor" is, in "authentic" terms, an anachronism for most baroque works would appear to have been lost—or buried. Subordination is psychological and socio-political; the two realms are inextricably interlinked. Furtwängler appreciated this, too, noting in 1935: "The prattle about 'servants of the work' (Toscanini). A self-evident truth is prized as a great achievement. . . . [This] is the myth of the ruler, i.e., the animal-tamer . . . based upon the slave-instinct of the so-called public. . . . So it is not experience of art, but experience of the ruler" (A, 109). Nietzsche could hardly have put it better. In Freudian terms, one might refer to infantilism—just as Adorno did with regard to the neutralizing neoclassicism of Stravinsky: "The archaic only comes to light uncensored

34. Lawrence Dreyfus, "Early Music Defended against Its Devotees: A Theory of Historical Performance in the Twentieth Century," *Musical Quarterly* 69 (1983): 299. The echo of Adorno's essay in Dreyfus's title could hardly be stronger, although he considers Adorno's conclusions "quite wrongheaded" (300).

35. There are rare exceptions, notably the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, but it remains the case that venerable institutions such as the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra and the London Symphony Orchestra are far more "democratic" in constitution and in practice than most period orchestras, whatever their "countercultural" rhetoric.

36. See, e.g., Richard Osborne, *Herbert von Karajan: A Life in Music* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1998), 670–74.



through the explosion to which the ego has succumbed: in the disintegration of the individual. Stravinsky's infantilism knows its cost."<sup>37</sup>

An interesting aspect of this is that the more Stravinsky thumbed his nose at German tradition, the more he insisted on an authority that resembled a tradition, or "history" in Furtwängler's terms, albeit a tradition divested of much of its content. Likewise, the "baroque" of Adorno's antimodernist devotees, from which both Adorno and Furtwängler wished to rescue Bach, was a restorative neoclassicism that, if it was modernist at all, was so in its postures rather than its essence. Boulez remarked dismissively of this: "People gather up all manner of bits and pieces and say, 'O.K., I'll put a Corinthian column on a metal base and it will look post-modern.' Obviously, this is all quite superficial" (CB, 78). Moreover, there was a time, he claimed, when neoclassicism "actively prevented people from developing," which explains why he "reacted most violently against [it] when I was young" (CB, 39–40). This was precisely the same time as Adorno wrote his Bach essay, and the objections are remarkably similar. In general terms and allowing for exceptions, neoclassicism rather than high modernism was allied to neutralizing Bach.

It is not difficult to see why one might draw an opposing conclusion. Furtwängler's language—for instance, "Here [are] a few remarks on the perceptible fundamental artistic types: . . . the transcendental (Bach)"—can make him sound like one of Adorno's obscurantists (A, 27). But such language is more akin to a late stage of Wagnerism than to Adorno's real target; Furtwängler's more substantial remarks and his performances show this beyond any doubt. For instance, when he writes that every piece by Bach proceeds to fulfillment according to the law under which it commenced its path, it is difficult to imagine Schoenberg or Adorno failing to assent. He also avers that Bach's choruses and fugues appear to be the work "not of a human being, but of the prevailing world-spirit, the very world-architect."<sup>38</sup> The mode of expression now veers close to the "devotees," to the belief in what Adorno, at the opening of his Bach essay, called revelation of "the theologically vaulted cosmos," but Furtwängler's words must be understood in the context of what has gone before ("Bach verteidigt," 138). We remain in essence closer to Schoenbergian developing variation, with its sources in Bach, Brahms, and others, than to medievallizing ontology, for which one might read Heideggerian "historicity," an Adornian target from the 1930s onward as a false reconciliation of nature

37. Adorno, "Philosophie der neuen Musik," 155.

38. Furtwängler, "Bach," 216–17.

and history.<sup>39</sup> Medievalization is mechanical, neutralizing, but never vital, as Adorno recognized when writing of "the phantasma of Bachian ontology," which arose "through the Philistines' mechanical deed of force" ("Bach verteidigt," 141). Whatever anyone might claim of Furtwängler's Bach, in words or in performance, it is neither mechanical nor neutralized; it is as far removed from neoclassicism as one might conceive. There are differences of style and idea between Adorno and Furtwängler, but those of style are more marked.

Neither wishes to consider the music of the past in terms of the Rankean *wie es eigentlich gewesen* (how it really was). For both of them, this stands utterly opposed to art. Art in general and music specifically represent for Adorno the sedimented history of human misery, whereas for Furtwängler art participates, when considered as history, in a tale of spiritual triumph. Yet these are to an extent different judgments taken from similar conceptions of development. Both concern themselves with human experience and its development, for better or for worse. In Adorno's conception, the concerns of the avant-garde are paramount in understanding music of the past and musical history; for Furtwängler, tradition is paramount, although, as Ernest Ansermet remarked, Furtwängler himself was often reproached by the unimaginative for "giving interpretations which did not conform to tradition."<sup>40</sup> Tradition as *Schlamperei* (sloppiness), in the celebrated denunciation from Mahler—who could hardly be considered antitraditional in a general sense—was as far removed from Furtwängler's intention as from Adorno's.

We see this in Boulez, whom at least in this respect we might count as a successor to Adorno—and, of course, in the role of composer, as a successor to both Adorno and Furtwängler, albeit a successor of incomparably greater stature. Taruskin rightly points out that "Generalissimo Boulez" voices "the authentic," or at least *an* authentic, "rhetoric of modernism," when proclaiming that "there is of course no such thing as tradition." Rhetoric, however, ought to be italicized. Moreover, this Boulez salvo, translated in the "authenticist" sanctum of *Early Music*, is distorted by selective quotation, for in the very next sentence Boulez writes: "A strong personality will inevitably transform it [tradition]."<sup>41</sup> However fluid and uncertain the tradition, it could not

39. See, e.g., Theodor W. Adorno, "Die Idee der Naturgeschichte," in *Gesammelte Schriften*, 1:344–65.

40. Ernest Ansermet, memorial broadcast, Geneva, December 1, 1954, in Gillis, *Furtwängler Recalled*, 27.

41. Richard Taruskin, "Tradition and Authority," in *Text and Act*, 192; Pierre Boulez, "The Vestal Virgin and the Fire-Stealer: Memory, Creation, and Authenticity," trans. Susan Bradshaw, *Early Music* 18 (1990): 356.

be transformed if it did not exist in the first place. A further misrepresentation occurs when Taruskin quotes Boulez, "who 'sing[s] the praises of amnesia.'" Boulez actually initiates his musings by asking *rhetorically*, "Must I once again sing the praises of amnesia?" There seems to be a presumption in favor of a positive response, but his answer eventually comes in presenting and exploring something that "is neither memory nor amnesia, merely memory of an ungraspable, distorting, unfaithful kind, which retains of an original source only that which is directly useful and ultimately perishable."<sup>42</sup> Boulez's words from an interview elsewhere take us to the nub of the matter:

A civilization that cannot do without or even demolish certain things in its own past is itself in the process of expiring. . . . It's always been like that—people take some monument, disfigure it, and then transform it according to the tastes of the time. . . . Mozart made no bones about modifying Handel, nor Wagner about Gluck. In that respect, I think it's far healthier to live in the present. The quarrel between ancient and modern has always existed, but not this fetishistic attitude towards the past. History is there, of course; it made us what we are. It's senseless to ignore it—like breaking down wide-open doors—but that's not to say one has to be imprisoned by it. (CB, 45–46)

It would take some degree of casuistry to square any of these words with "authenticism."

Music of the past is here treated as Schoenberg's composition treated it: radical negation in one sense and yet, through rather than despite this negation, preservation of what is useful from the past, what has made us what we are. Yet this is preservation at a subsequent dialectical stage of mediated unity, which will then once again be negated. In short, this is the Hegelian dialectic at work. It is the selfsame spirit in which Schoenberg made his defiant, triumphant statement of the BACH motif in the finale to the *Variations for Orchestra*—which, it will be remembered, Furtwängler premiered. As Arnold Whittall has remarked, "It certainly did not escape Schoenberg's notice that Bach's name was embedded in his own (if his initial 'A' is included), and so in a sense Op. 31 culminates with a double signature, and a very direct homage to a great tradition."<sup>43</sup> Furtwängler made a similar homage whenever he conducted Bach.

For tradition is not static. In his essay "Tradition" Adorno writes: "The difference between what is past and what is present . . . is not absolute. One

42. Taruskin, "Tradition and Authority," 192; Boulez, "Vestal Virgin," 355, 358.

43. Arnold Whittall, "Schoenberg: 'Erwartung,' etc.," booklet, EMI CDC 55212 2, 7.

can only understand Schoenberg if one understands Bach; one can only understand Bach if one understands Schoenberg.”<sup>44</sup> This might lead one to retort that no one could therefore have understood Bach before Schoenberg, but such a retort holds only if there is something unchanging to be understood. Tradition develops; even if Furtwängler would more likely have spoken of Wagner or Brahms than Schoenberg, his beliefs are much the same. And the avant-garde, even that of Darmstadt, did not appear, Parsifal-like, from nowhere. Whatever one might think of the characterizations of the Second Viennese School from which the historical position of the avant-garde springs, they are definitively predicated on a developmental understanding of history. Moreover, one reason Adorno valued Mahler’s music so highly was that it looked back to the nineteenth century and used “old” music to emphasize its dialectical contradiction with modernity. Mahler, who was in 1930 far removed from the later twentieth-century’s ultrapopular composer, was either ignored or opposed as “the despoiler of venerably traditional musical goods.”<sup>45</sup> Yet it was only through working with such goods that they might actually become productive, indeed, that tradition might be upheld through development rather than stultified. As Adorno wrote with particular reference to Bach and Beethoven, “It is only from the vantage point of the most advanced production that light is shed on the entire species.” Compositions such as theirs were “revealed much more readily when one starts from what confronts us today . . . than if one were to confine oneself to the historical preconditions and immediate intentions from which this work once originated.”<sup>46</sup> Note the “once”: origins might be differently construed today. Schoenberg, Webern, and Furtwängler were doing something rather similar with Bach. Boulez certainly thinks so, lamenting the extremity of the pendulum’s swing:

It was much more interesting when the period piece being performed was actually distorted by the period performing it. At least that implied some creativity, even if it caused a few distortions, whereas specialized reconstruction leads to a total and remote historicism. The more one reconstructs, the further one drives things back into history, resulting in a totally dead contact—the myth of the Golden Age. It’s like people who think dinner without candlelight is not a proper dinner. It’s as vulgar as that really—rather *nouveau riche*. (CB, 38)

44. Theodor W. Adorno, “Tradition,” in *Gesammelte Schriften*, 14:140.

45. Theodor W. Adorno, “Mahler Today,” trans. S. H. Gillespie, in *Essays on Music*, ed. Richard Leppert (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 603.

46. Theodor W. Adorno, “On the Contemporary Relationship of Philosophy and Music,” trans. S. H. Gillespie, in *Essays on Music*, 147–48.

Note especially the claim about "dead contact," precisely the vitalist accusation leveled by Taruskin at the "authentic" movement and its presumed associates: Boulez and his modernist confreres. Taruskin would claim that the desiccation of modern ("authentic") performances is the product of the (modernist) period in which they are performed, but the modernists' own witness must count for something.

Modernism has never, whether by intention or by result, sat comfortably with the "modern" world or modernity; it has necessarily been a product thereof but has nevertheless remained in a relationship of dialectical antagonism. Inasmuch as a fundamental modernist imperative has been that artistic production must be appropriate to its time, and its time demands confrontation, this could hardly be otherwise. It also involves a relationship with history in which the latter must serve the ends of the present; what was once required may no longer be relevant or desirable. Much the same could be said of Romanticism and its world—but *not* of positivism, with its antihistorical, nondevelopmental attitude toward "truth." Furtwängler's recording of the Fifth Brandenburg Concerto might very well be, in Taruskin's words, "Bach interpreted by a musician who still regarded Bach as . . . the fountainhead of contemporary music," although it is not quite clear here what "contemporary music" is intended to mean with respect to Furtwängler ("Pastness," 106). But Taruskin's claim is true of most modernists, too; if history may in some sense be construed and interpreted in reverse, then it certainly applies to Adorno. It also does to Boulez, when he declares, "A musician approaching an eighteenth-century work after playing something from the twentieth would have a much broader view than these eighteenth-century specialists who end up locking themselves in an antique armoire" (CB, 39). Modernism tends to be explicit about the past serving the present, about the past to all intents and purposes becoming part of the present and that which does not being discarded. It is the antihistorical outlook of postmodernism that tends toward disconnection and thereby the "choice" of a reconstruction that dissociates us from current production.<sup>47</sup> Such choice, by loosening any anchor between the present and the past, soon hardens into necessity.

This seems a strange outcome, given the strong postmodernist tendency to elevate extramusical matters when seeking to understand musical

47. John Butt also makes the point, for somewhat different but far from contradictory reasons, that "historically-informed performance" has more to do with postmodernism than with modernism (*Playing with History: The Historical Approach to Musical Performance* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002], 20–24, 126–30).

works, but is perhaps less strange when one stops to consider what this might entail. Reconstruction seems to reject, and in large part does reject, modernist teleology in favor of an understanding that might be characterized as "historical." Yet this tends to be a historical outlook—I am not convinced that *historical* is quite the right word here—close to positivism, and a rather selective positivism at that. Let us take a Bachian and Furtwänglerian example: the *Saint Matthew Passion*. Furtwängler had from 1922 to 1928 been director of the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, which plays for the Bach performances in Saint Thomas's Church in Leipzig. The *Saint Matthew Passion* was explicitly written for performance in that church—although two years after its composition (1727) Bach began to award a noticeably lower priority to church composition for the Lutheran Church, partly on account of an understandable desire to turn to other forms but also, it would seem, on account of the inadequacy of the musical forces at his disposal. His celebrated memorandum of August 23, 1730, to the Leipzig town council makes his frustration abundantly clear, even more so for holy days such as Good Friday than for Sundays. Bach claimed to need at least twenty instrumentalists, whereas only eight were employed, of whom some were "not at all in such practice [*exercitio*] as they should be."<sup>48</sup> Yet the fact undeniably remains—and the word *fact* is important in stressing the positivistic bent of such a line of argument—that Bach's passion was written for the Thomaskirche.

In 1929, the year after leaving Leipzig, Furtwängler wrote in his notebook, concerning performance practice (as he would never have called it):

It appears not yet to be clear that the question of whether one should employ sixteen or four first violins, a choir of thirty or three hundred people, is a question of the space in which the performance takes place (the question of whether this be chamber music or no). That the acoustic of the Thomaskirche—as in any church—is different from that of the [Berlin] Philharmonie, and that therefore not only the forces must be different, but also that the dynamics must be handled differently, seems to be unknown. That the church, with its particular acoustic designed much more for linear effects, copes much less well with dynamic variation, and thus with variation within the individual performance, than the concert hall, which exposes the sound with ruthless clarity, seems to be unknown, although it must be known that Bach wrote his Passions, etc., for immediate, practical performance in the Thomaskirche. ("Über Bach," 49–50)

48. Hans T. David and Arthur Mendel, eds., *The New Bach Reader: A Life of Johann Sebastian Bach in Letters and Documents*, rev. and enl. Christoph Wolff (New York: Norton, 1998), 145–51.

Furtwängler was in an excellent professional position to comment on both the Thomaskirche and the Philharmonie. This is not an absolute idealism; he is actually more conciliatory to the practice of performing with smaller forces, albeit in particular, spatially defined circumstances, than Adorno, who contemptuously refers to reaction's seizure of Bach under "the ignominious name of the 'Thomas Cantor.'" Reaction, "robbed of its political heroes," in the awkward period surrounding 1950, furthers its present-day interests by cutting Bach down to historical and geographic size ("Bach verteidigt," 139). Modernism, by contrast, attends to *its* historical mission by rescuing Bach from his domestication, from the fate of losing that into which he has posthumously grown. "It is immaterial," Adorno writes, how the *Saint Matthew Passion* was performed in the Thomaskirche. Should it be done so now, "with meager forces," it will sound to a modern ear "pale and non-committal, like a rehearsal upon which a few participants have happened by chance." Such a performance will assume a didactic character and, most important, contradict "the essence of Bach's music" ("Bach verteidigt," 149). Nevertheless, the crucial point marking off both Furtwängler and Adorno from "authenticism" is the realization that modern performances will necessarily take place in very different circumstances from those with which Bach had to be satisfied or which he could ever have imagined. Were Adorno's "they" to be serious about reconstruction, modern concert halls—whether the Philharmonie, the Gewandhaus, or smaller venues—would have to be shunned, let alone the recording studio. Boys' voices would have to be used and so forth, and then there is the matter of somehow reproducing the conditions for a parallel reception in a modern-day *audience* to that of Bach's *congregation*.

Selective "authenticist" positivism therefore concentrates on a few "facts," "facts in themselves" I am tempted to call them, to emphasize their one-sided objectivism. The selectivity is crucial here. Many facts are excluded, especially those that might lead one beyond "in itselfness," for instance, the relationship to which Furtwängler pointed between size of orchestra and venue of performance. This "authenticism" excludes those crucial questions about how, if at all, one might meaningfully—in a strong sense—perform Bach's music in the twentieth century. For many Germans, the historicist approach was seen, fairly or no, to have led straight to the horrors of the Third Reich. Among historians, this led to an interest in Jacob Burckhardt and cultural history; musical debates suggest a similar—or at least analogous—search for alternative paths. Adorno referred to the "sectarian" nature of *Historismus*. One could hardly avoid the suspicion that the sole concern of Bach's "devotees" was to ensure that "no inauthentic dynamics, no modifications of tempo, no excessively

large choirs and orchestra" should be employed. Palpable was the potential fury, "lest any more humane impulse" should become audible ("Bach verteidigt," 147). The (presumed) "absolute" sound of the eighteenth century—not at all, I might add, an eighteenth-century concept but a distorted product of nineteenth-century conceptions of "absolute music"—had been falsely elevated to an exclusivist end in itself.<sup>49</sup>

This does not simply equate with the use of period instruments, the most obvious sign of rebellion both against the "Romantic" or "modern" symphony orchestra and against claims of technological progress or development. There have been many performers on modern instruments who would readily fall into Adorno's sectarian camp. Likewise, there have been a few period performers, such as Nikolaus Harnoncourt, who have always taken seriously the question of what it means to perform for a modern audience and have disavowed, long before it became rhetorically fashionable to do so, the notion of reconstruction.<sup>50</sup> Harnoncourt rightly points out that the "key question is actually: why do we play old music at all, since we now have new music?"<sup>51</sup> This is not a question that would have seemed at all odd to the eighteenth century. Moreover, he raises the specter of vitalism, only from the other side, believing that what might be termed a "secondary vitalism" might be possible in terms of "historical performance," this claim being based on the questionable premise that the life has been sapped from contemporary music. Harnoncourt claims that "whenever it is actually possible to achieve a high degree of true fidelity to the original, undreamed-of riches are the reward," and that "works" will therefore "sound not only historically more correct, but also more vital." Adorno and Furtwängler would have applauded the latter goal, while vigorously disputing the means, but Harnoncourt cannot justly be accused of elevating the means over the end, of watching furiously and resisting any more humane impulse. Instead, he pragmatically declares: "Original sound interests me only to the extent that it is the best-suited of all available means for rendering a given piece of music *today*." This is a secondary-vitalist claim, not

49. Adorno, "Tradition," 142.

50. However, Paul Henry Lang argues that there is a "historicist" rigidity to Harnoncourt's actual (first) recording of the *Saint Matthew Passion* (editorial, *Musical Quarterly* 58 [1972]: 117–27). Holloway, referring to Harnoncourt's Bach cantata recordings, laments that the conductor has done something "monstrous" to Bach, having "drained this music of its meaning" ("Bach Betrayed," in *On Music*, 4).

51. Nikolaus Harnoncourt, "The Reconstruction of Original Sound Conditions in the Studio," in *Baroque Music Today: Music as Speech; Ways to a New Understanding of Music*, ed. Reinhard G. Pauly, trans. Mary O'Neill (London: Lang, 1988), 86.



a positivistic one. Adorno and Furtwängler—and Boulez, as I have already shown—would also have had little difficulty in agreeing with Harnoncourt's observation that the "kind of historical perspective" he is at least partly endorsing "is totally alien to a culturally vital period." Such an era would readily have discarded "magnificent Gothic altars" to make way for baroque versions and would have looked askance at the preservationist, restorative impulses of the present day.<sup>52</sup> This "Harnoncourt qualification," however, in no way invalidates the distinction between vitalism and positivism. Accuracy merely insists that we posit it more subtly.

There is clearly a great difference between the positivist, reconstructionist view of a musical work—and, whatever the difficulties of using the term and more important the idea of a musical "work," both or all sides continue to do so—and the modernist conception of appropriateness not to the work's own time but to ours. This, in Adorno's words, is "a position of consciousness toward Bach that corresponds to the present state of his truth" ("Bach verteidigt," 153). Such a historical mediation of truth stands worlds away from its postmodernist rejection. Taruskin claims that the authenticist vision, whatever its stated nature, is in practice that of modernism, but the evidence belies his claim. Boulez commented with exasperation: "There are six performable [orchestral] works by Bach: the *Brandenburg Concertos*! And I've done them, the *Brandenburgs*, in my career as a conductor. But even as I was making my way forward, until about 1978, the specialists were simultaneously taking over. They were starting to say, 'If they're not played in the true baroque manner, with baroque instruments, it's useless to play them any other way.' Then one isn't going to play them at all" (CB, 49). The situation described by Boulez had become very much a reality, such intransigent attitudes as he outlines being more typical than Harnoncourt's musings.

Yet what appears to be historicist is, if at all, only so after a very peculiar fashion. This is Taruskin's argument, which he backs up by referring to the following ex cathedra pronouncement from Stravinsky:

The *Saint Matthew's Passion* by Johann Sebastian Bach is written for a chamber-music ensemble. Its first performance in Bach's lifetime was perfectly realized by a total force of thirty-four musicians, including soloists and

52. Nikolaus Harnoncourt, "The Interpretation of Historical Music," in Pauly, *Baroque Music Today*, 18; Harnoncourt, "Old Instruments: Yes or No?" in Pauly, *Baroque Music Today*, 77; Harnoncourt, "Interpretation of Historical Music," 14–15.

chorus. That is known. And nevertheless in our day one does not hesitate to present the work, in complete disregard of the composer's wishes, with hundreds of performers, sometimes almost a thousand. This lack of understanding of the interpreter's obligations, this arrogant pride in numbers, this concupiscence of the many, betray a complete lack of musical education.<sup>53</sup>

It is tempting and would be worthwhile to spend the rest of this essay on such a remarkable passage. I shall withstand the temptation, merely remarking on the irony of juxtaposing a claim of perfect realization, whatever that might be, by thirty-four musicians with an accusation of "arrogant pride in numbers." Adorno put it thus, in the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*: "To the Enlightenment, that which does not reduce to numbers, and ultimately to the one, becomes illusion; modern positivism writes it off as literature. . . . The destruction of gods and qualities alike is insisted upon."<sup>54</sup> Stravinsky's witness should not blind us to the counterstream or rather the prevailing stream in modernism, which owes at least as much to Romanticism as it does to the Enlightenment, insofar as these can be separated. The extent to which Stravinsky's neoclassicism, unlike much of the rest of his music, is modernist as opposed to exhibiting certain modernist *elements* is a moot point. Boulez would certainly reject the claim, and he would not be alone in doing so. He and Adorno are not to be dismissed out of hand as witnesses, especially on aesthetics, in which sphere Stravinsky was liable to parrot or to adapt the phrases of others. The extent to which the *Poetics* are actually his work is another moot point. Stravinsky's importance, let alone his genius, cannot be gainsaid, but utterances ascribed to him are often not a reliable aesthetic guide to his music, let alone to broader cultural currents. He is less typically modernist than Schoenberg, Boulez, or Adorno, and it is precisely where he departs from the modernist mainstream, if indeed he was ever really there in the first place, that he is closest to proponents of "historically-informed performance."

Taruskin is quite right to dispute that modern, "geometric" Bach performances—not restricted to those on period instruments—have their "origins in historical research or aspirations toward historical verisimilitude, let alone respect for the composer's intentions" ("Pastness," 112–13; see also 115). As Adorno writes, the effect (*Wirkung*) of Bach's music no longer for

53. Igor Stravinsky, *Poetics of Music—in the Form of Six Lessons*, trans. Arthur Knodel and Ingolf Dahl (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1970), 129. Taruskin refers to another edition of Stravinsky's *Poetics* ("Pastness," 130).

54. Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, trans. J. Cumming (London: Verso, 1997), 7–8.

his devotees results from "what takes place musically in his music [*was musikalisch in seiner Musik sich zuträgt*], but from style and play, formula and symmetry, from the mere gesture of recognition" ("Bach verteidigt," 139). It is not surprising that Adorno, the key figure, along with Jürgen Habermas, of the "positivist dispute" in German sociology with Karl Popper, questioned positivistic musicology, too.<sup>55</sup> The thrust of Adorno's criticism of Popper and Heidegger was that they posited an object independent of the subject, when the object may only be subjectively defined: to award metaphysical or epistemological primacy must lead to totalitarianism. To avoid the fallacy of the ultimate "identity," Adorno presented his principle of "negative dialectics," in which all theories are systematically negated and concepts are constantly reformed to fit the object. To separate style from idea, formula from form is to render the music lifeless. Positivism does not equate to verisimilitude; it falsely separates subject and object and awards a false primacy to a chimerical "original" work. Moreover, in its selectivity, in its inability or refusal to deal with what cannot be "known" in its (Stravinsky's) terms, and indeed in its evasion of "evidence" that contradicts what it has willfully decided must be the case, it actually opposes verisimilitude far more emphatically than vitalism does.

This judgment might seem odd, given that Adorno writes in his *Aesthetic Theory*: "The subcutaneous structure of Bach's most important instrumental works can only be brought out in performance by means of an orchestral palate that he did not have at his disposal."<sup>56</sup> It is as extreme a claim about orchestration as one can imagine: not can best be brought out, but can *only* be brought out. However, it is no more extreme than claims that Bach's works can be adequately performed only on period instruments or, more likely in practice, on copies of surviving instruments. Yet Adorno's claim is more sophisticated, attempting to problematize rather than to settle an insoluble problem, in that it is made with specific reference to "subcutaneous structure." The problem that the origins of Bach's works lie nearly three centuries distant forms part of our understanding and experience, but this must not degenerate into a "spiritualizing" sense of "early music" atmosphere, replete with Boulez's candlelight, which attempts false reconciliation rather than problematization. Adorno's case is that the "subcutaneous structure," lying beneath the skin or surface that appears to be all-important to the "authenticists," has become

55. See Theodor W. Adorno et al., *The Positivist Dispute in German Sociology*, trans. Glyn Adey and David Frisby (London: Heinemann, 1976).

56. Theodor W. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, ed. Gretel Adorno and Rolf Tiedemann, trans. Robert Hullot-Kentor, new ed. (London: Athlone, 1999), 211. Hereafter cited as *AT*.

more apparent through musicohistorical developments since Bach or we cannot but place more emphasis on it than we should once have done, on account of these subsequent developments. Thus origins and essence might not be metaphysically what they are in positivistic terms; indeed, their historical qualification means that they cannot have remained so. Furtwängler would not have claimed, as Adorno does, that adequate performance of a work of art worthy of the name "requires the formulation of a work as a problem, the recognition of the irreconcilable demands, arising from the relation of the content of the work to its appearance, that confront the performer" (AT, 106). Indeed, Furtwängler might not have disagreed in practice; in the singular case of Beethoven's *Missa solennis*, he actually nodded assent, declining after a certain stage ever again to perform Beethoven's greatest yet most unrealizable work, as he saw it. However, the important difference between Furtwängler and Adorno is that Furtwängler would always have seen the "problem" as something to be solved, however unsuccessful the attempt might be, whereas the work's problematization is in itself the point for Adorno. Such is the only way to proceed in a fragmented modern world lacking any normative aesthetics, a grave difficulty but also an opportunity, for it leads would-be aestheticians to concentrate on the particularity of individual works and their changing meanings. This is what Georg Picht meant when he wrote of Adorno's "atonal philosophy."<sup>57</sup> Furtwängler viewed this situation with greater skepticism, or perhaps greater pessimism, but his dissent would only have been partial and would have involved a degree of refuge in the past rather than wholesale rejection of the diagnosis of the present.

Adorno points to "the gaps between the structure of . . . [Bach's] music and the technical means that were available for its completely adequate performance." This is relevant, he continues, "for the critique of æsthetic historicism" (AT, 60). His critique here is more structural than that of Furtwängler, whose concern lies with performance. This distinction leads us to another, since Adorno claims that Bach's experience in this respect played some role in determining his production. Furtwängler does not necessarily deny this, yet the possibility is of little interest to him. In this respect, one might paradoxically consider him more "modernist" than Adorno, but it is really a matter of him being more "Romantic." In works that one might consider archaic, Adorno claims that "expression is amalgamated with technique as well as with its absence or with what technique could not yet accomplish" (AT, 60). What

57. Georg Picht, "Atonale Philosophie: Theodor W. Adorno zum Gedächtnis," *Merkur* 23 (1969): 889-92.

might be considered "archaic"? Certainly not those works in which Furtwängler was most interested, but perhaps late works such as the *Art of Fugue* and the *Musical Offering*, which, ignored or unfashionable for so long, came to exert an extraordinary fascination over modernist composers and performers, such as Webern, Boulez, and Hermann Scherchen. Webern's *Ricercata* from the *Musical Offering* combines a modernistic rigor in exploring "twentieth-century" intervallic relationships through ever-changing, transformative orchestration, with an avowedly espressivo, Romantic conception of Bach. What technique might not in Bach's time have been able to accomplish might yet have an opportunity two centuries later. Adorno commended the Webern piece and Fritz Stiedry's realization of the *Art of Fugue*, along with Schoenberg's orchestrations, as paragons of fidelity through infidelity to Bach's music. The music is rethought rather than consigned to the researches of "philologists with no compositional ability," who would merely apportion the parts between individual instruments or groups of instruments. Modernist Bach takes its cue from Bach's music, in that the "contradiction between music and sound-material," especially that between the baroque organ and the "infinitely articulated structure," is acted on, developed, brought into the open rather than falsely reconciled ("Bach verteidigt," 251). No more than the subject-object dialectic are these problems there to be solved.

Adorno also sounded a warning. Archaic works, "generally limited in their range of possibilities, always seem to have just enough available technique and no more than is required for the realization of the project. This imbues them with that deceptive authority that is misleading with regard to the technical aspect that is a condition of such authority." The dilemma then presented is that it becomes impossible to distinguish between "what was wanted and what was still out of reach," yet abandoning this question tends toward obscurantism (AT, 60). Negative dialectics indeed. A wonderful example Adorno gives in his Bach essay is the E-flat major fugue from the second book of the *Well-Tempered Clavier*. This, he rightly points out, has something of the archaic about it. Indeed, I might add, it initially resembles on the page a four-part a cappella work or a transcription thereof, inevitably putting one in mind of earlier music. The fugue looks readily comprehensible: it is monothematic (which should already sound alarm bells for supposed "archaism"); the labyrinthine chromaticism of, say, the B minor fugue from the first book could hardly be more distant. Yet this is no more neo-Palestrina (or neo-whomever else one might choose) than *Die Meistersinger's* chorales are neo-Bachian; if anything, it is still less so. Returning to Adorno's analysis, the affirmative character of

Bach's fugue "is not the unmediated certainty . . . of a sacral community, secure in its revealed truth," but is "in its substance, though certainly not in its subjective consciousness, reflection on the happiness of the acknowledgment of musical security, such as is possessed only by the emancipated subject: it is capable of conceiving music only as the emphatic promise of objective salvation" ("Bach verteidigt," 142). In other words, this fugue is historically mediated through and through, employing the dualism of subject and object as an earlier composer could never have done. The diatonicism is already better characterized by the word Dahlhaus would employ with reference to *Die Meistersinger*: "secondary," that is, predicated on the negation of its immediacy.<sup>58</sup> It is canceled, evoked, elevated, preserved: in a word, *aufgehoben*.

Therein lies much of the work's beauty—but, as we saw Adorno warn, part of its danger, too. The work's authority is deceptive yet unavoidable, rather like a simplistic view of a mathematical "proof." Moreover, it tends to lead backward, to parallels one can draw with past music, to the detriment of what is to come. For Adorno, it is only rising barbarism (*heraufziehende Barberei*), which limits works of art to what is immediately apparent ("Bach verteidigt," 142). Though employing less polemical language, Furtwängler made a similar point about objectivity and subjectivity in Bach: "First and foremost, his music is just as much an expressive music as any other music of the first rank. I.e., the expressive and the musical correspond with one another, presuppose one another, fulfill one another. This is why some call it the most objective [music], others the most subjective (which, in a work such as the [*Saint Matthew*] *Passion*, is completely true)" ("Über Bach," 51).

Moreover, Adorno was moved to defend Furtwängler's own much-derided "subjectivity" in a way that would make no sense if we adopted Taruskin's distinction between modernism and vitalism: "It is lightly said that Furtwängler's conducting was subjectivist, and this is intended—measured against 'new objectivist' [*neusachlichen*] performances—to criticize and to belittle. Now he was certainly . . . subjective in his musical performance, in which every beat . . . was mediated though his exceptional, highly-intensified sensibility. But subjectivity never manifested itself in him for its own sake; it was disciplined by the representation of the object [*Darstellung der Sache*]."<sup>59</sup> To insist exclusively on the objectivity of Bach's music, both Furtwängler and Adorno agree, is every bit as one-sided as the "subjectivist" caricature presented by self-proclaimed "objectivists." Neither Adorno nor Furtwängler is a

58. Carl Dahlhaus, *Richard Wagner's Music Dramas*, trans. Mary Whittall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 72–75.

59. Adorno, "Wilhelm Furtwängler," 468.

structuralist. Indeed, both resist leveling, rationalizing assaults on the subject, whether from phenomenology, "historical" research, or the culture industry. All of these offer a false objectivity. "Objectivity does not remain," Adorno warns, "after subtraction of the subject" ("Bach verteidigt," 149). Healthy objectivity feeds subjectivity, and vice versa.

While the term seems "Romantic," it should come as little surprise that Adorno is just as prepared as Furtwängler to speak of Bach's genius. Adorno grants that the idea of originality bore no authority prior to the "age of genius." Yet, he continues, earlier practice demonstrates only "that originality had yet to become the object of critical reflection, by no means that there was no originality in artworks; one glance at the difference between Bach and his contemporaries suffices to make the points" (AT, 172). There is nothing wrong, then, with using a nineteenth-century category to speak of Bach. Indeed, it is necessary—so long as one does not become stuck in the nineteenth century and is mindful to consider its successors. Bach is not for us, whatever that might mean, merely a craftsman, a humble servant of the church. He is, has become, and in some sense always was a composer in an emphatic, modern sense. "The concept of originality," Adorno writes, referring to Walter Benjamin's concept of the "originary," does not "so much summon up the primordial as the *yet to be* in works, their utopic trace" (AT, 172). Furtwängler would be more likely to stress the *what has become*, yet he and Adorno crucially agree that this true authenticity is not primarily a matter of origins.

It would be absurd to claim that there are no differences between Adorno and Furtwängler, even in terms of their conceptions of Bach, but the connections are strong and are far from coincidental. Music permits the subject to express itself, perhaps not quite free from the "objective" constraints of society, but with considerable relative autonomy. Ernst Bloch voiced strikingly similar objections to those of Adorno, attacking Bach's devotees—or "vicars"—for wishing "to transform these incomparably lofty works into proper sexton's music." He also averred that the "harpsichord's sharp, short sound fulfills not a single one of Bach's requirements. . . . there can be no doubt that only our own pianos, the incomparable Steinways that were born for the modern Bach, clear, booming, edged with silver, have revealed how the master should now be played." Bloch's philosophy witnesses different conceptions of the ideal subject instantiated through musical history, starting with the "spiritual self" in Bach.<sup>60</sup> Adorno and Furtwängler allow Bach's music to

60. Ernst Bloch, *The Spirit of Utopia*, trans. Anthony A. Nasser (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000), 53, 55.

change over time, to present opportunities and challenges afresh, and thus to participate in the historical transformation of the subject. They not only allow this—for how could anyone really prevent it?—but encourage it to do so, and are explicit as to their intent.

For all its permissiveness, indeed perhaps on account of it, postmodernism seems far less willing or able to further this developmental goal. The contrast is striking between the ready commoditization of Bach by his “devotees,” who, with the interesting exception of the keyboard works, have obtained something approaching a monopoly on performing and still more on recording his music, and modernism’s ongoing resistance to “solution” of the problems Bach’s music continues to present. Art history seems pointless without aesthetics, for however skeptical one’s conception of the artwork may be, the work can never be a document in performance. At the point of such reduction, the re-creative element of performance is eliminated. By contrast, modernism remains insistent on re-creation rather than reconstruction. Boulez claims not to draw any great interpretive distinction between composer and conductor (*CB*, 79); Adorno concludes his Bach essay: “[Modernist] composition . . . calls his music by name in producing it anew” (“Bach verteidigt,” 151). It is here, and not in an illusory excavation for origins, that we might strain toward true authenticity.