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‘On Hanslick and the Musically Beautiful’

By

Maria Mjaaland Sele

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ABSTRACT

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

Philosophy

Doctor of Philosophy

‘ON HANSLICK AND THE MUSICALLY BEAUTIFUL’

By Maria Mjaaland Sele

The content of music is not the representation of specific feelings, rather the content of music is forms realised in tone.

Eduard Hanslick is known for his negative story and formalistic claims. After having discussed the claims of the negative story the main emphasis of this thesis is to enable a proper reading of Hanslick’s positive story. Hanslick’s main aim is to find what can stand as a foundation of a principle of the musically beautiful, and concludes that this foundation cannot be feeling. This negation of feeling as the content and purpose of music is founded on a belief of music as contentless. It is concluded that this idea of contentlessness is merely another way to claim that there is no form and content distinction in art, as there is no independent content. This distinction, as will be shown with the help of R.G. Collingwood, is what separates art from craft, as art has two kinds of ends, a technical end and an expressive end. Hanslick offers a similar distinction between *Inhalt* and *Gehalt*. This distinction is essential to understanding the picture Hanslick offers, as this distinction not only suggests the way in which we understand music by alluding to different aspects of understanding, but furthermore it offers a different way to read and interpret the main positive thesis of the content of music. Furthermore, this distinction stands as the foundation for how we should consider and value the process of the composer, the relation music has to nature, the musical system and the value of the listener. And last but by no means least, this distinction offers justification for an alternative reading of Hanslick where Hanslick is indeed a formalist but where he does not exclude everything that goes by the name of feeling.

To Julie, Filip,
Tiril, Oskar and Endre.

May this be proof of how what seems impossible, can be possible.

- Never give up on your dreams.

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Figure 1. 'Duck Rabbit' (Wittgenstein PI: 166)

Academic Thesis: Declaration of Authorship

I, Maria Mjaaland Sele, declare that this thesis and the work presented in it are my own and has been generated by me as the result of my own original research.

‘On Hanslick and the Musically Beautiful’

I confirm that:

1. This work was done wholly or mainly while in candidature for a research degree at this University;
2. Where any part of this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree or any other qualification at this University or any other institution, this has been clearly stated;
3. Where I have consulted the published work of others, this is always clearly attributed;
4. Where I have quoted from the work of others, the source is always given. With the exception of such quotations, this thesis is entirely my own work;
5. I have acknowledged all main sources of help;
6. Where the thesis is based on work done by myself jointly with others, I have made clear exactly what was done by others and what I have contributed myself;
7. None of this work has been published before submission

Acknowledgements

From the moment I started this journey, I had this whole great speech in mind for this section of my thesis. However, unknowing as I was of what I was about to embark on the speech I had in mind has changed, as have I. My thesis, as a work of art, has become what it is whilst it was being formed, it is not close to what I originally set out to do, but it is done. And as any artist, I can now only sit back and hope that what I have tried to express will be intelligible and understood by whomever reads it.

There are many I should thank, and to those who feel like they deserve it, thank you. To those who think they don't but who still deserve it; thanks to Benjamin, for support, discussion and editing. Any spelling mistakes are thusly his fault. Thanks to Jon Sverre and Marit, who have endured countless hours of rambling, for hospitality and for hugs. To Pål, for always lending an ear. To my mum and dad for always believing and supporting me and for always letting me come home. To Einar and Hanne, for cheering me on. To Georg, for carrying me home. To Anette, for always making me see the bright side. To Siri, for the talks, interest and comfort. To Sigrid, for being an inspiration. To Anne, for teaching me never to give up on my dreams. And, thanks to Trygve, this thesis would never have been started nor finished if it was not for you. You kept your promise.

And, last but not least, thank you, Aaron Ridley.

You did not teach me anything, but by doing so you taught me everything.

If there ever was...

Helpful overview of words and phrases used:

Anschauung – intuition.

Beautiful – that which is of value, aesthetic value.

Bewegte – moved, from the verb *Bewegung*.

Form – form, shape or construction but also end or something that is complete.

Feeling-theory – a theory which considers feeling is the source of value and appreciation in music.

Gehalt – meaning, substance or essence.

Geist – spirit, mind, that which animates in our mind.

Geistige Gehalt – meaning which originates and is understood by a mind, referring to the mental aspects of something.

Inhalt – content.

Material- material is something which is the material for something and it is a specific thing, for example a specific piece of wood.

Medium – is the medium which is worked within, such as the composer works with tones, not specific tones but all the tones he knows.

Seele – soul or mind.

Seelenbewegung – mental motion (something that moves the soul).

Tönend – resoundingly.

Toneform – a form which is completed and intelligible in the medium of tone.

The quintessential distinction – Collingwood's fifth distinction between form and matter.

The art distinction – Collingwood's distinction between what is expressed and that which expresses it.

Introduction

Eduard Hanslick claims that the content of music is form, and this thesis aims to offer justifications for suggesting that he is right in this claim. By showing that feeling cannot stand as a foundation of a principle of the musically beautiful, Hanslick aims to get alongside the thing itself, to find what is particular, intrinsic, and objective. In summary, Hanslick aims to say something valuable about the particularly musically beautiful.

The significance of Hanslick's work and his arguments is not this main formalistic claim; rather, the value lies in the way in which this formalistic claim is made, the assumptions it rests on and the successful rendering of arguing for what in the art of music is particular.

Hanslick's work is saturated with the arguments which constitutes his negative story. His positive story is equally, if not more important. There is little disagreement about Hanslick's main negative conviction,¹ but the positive story has received less understanding. The main issue with Hanslick's positive story is that it is read in light of Hanslick's main negative conviction, which has resulted in claims of Hanslick being a pure formalist and excluding expressive properties to the art of music.² This is a misunderstanding, and this thesis will be my justification of it.

Before venturing into an overview of the chapters and arguments of this thesis there are a few things I wish to get clear. The main aim of this thesis is to offer a reading of Hanslick, where the main emphasis will be on trying to suggest a proper reading of Hanslick's positive story. Although Hanslick's negative story is crucial to the field of aesthetics, as it has certainly accumulated discussion in several aspects of the field of philosophy of music, I suggest that the positive story can yield even more.

This project was inspired both by an interest in Hanslick's entire work and by the lack of discussion concerning Hanslick's positive story.³ The vast majority of secondary literature

¹ Davies 1994: 209

² See Budd 1980, Hoaglund 1980, and Kivy 1990, for such suggestions.

³ There are some papers and books that discuss areas of Hanslick's work, however, doing a general search on *The British Journal of Aesthetics* and *JSTOR* I found only one paper that mentions anything about the

on Hanslick is focused on discussing the negative story⁴ or discussing formalism.⁵ There are two good reasons for this, firstly the negative story is difficult to accept and secondly the general conception is that Hanslick's positive story is an account of pure formalism. That is not to say that he is not a formalist, however, the proof is in the pudding, as whether or not he was a formalist is almost beside the point. To my knowledge there are only a handful of authors who speak in favour of Hanslick, although their views and motivations for doing so are very diverse. Payzant, who offered a superior translation of Hanslick's main work⁶ suggests that Hanslick did not exclude everything that goes by the name of feeling, a suggestion which rings true, I suggest, with an author who has spent a good amount of time with the original work.⁷ Peter Kivy,⁸ who has written several papers on Hanslick and has been a major contributor to discussions of Hanslick in contemporary philosophy, suggest that Hanslick is right in his formalism, and makes his own suggestion of aesthetic formalism on similar grounds.⁹ More recently, Zangwill has made claims about Hanslick being right suggesting that music cannot express feelings.¹⁰ Although they speak in Hanslick's favour, none of them offer a proper defence of Hanslick's positive story.

issue of what music can contain, although only in passing as a comment on the aesthetic debate in the 1880, see Romand 2018. The other articles concern either Hanslick's negative argument, the discussion of absolute music, program music, and formalism. Hanslick is also very often used as a reference for aesthetic formalism, see for example Denham 2009 and Puolakka 2017. Hanslick's work has been discussed since it was published in 1854, however, the debate caught new wind with Payzant's translation published in 1986, and more recently with Bonds' publication of the book *Absolute Music: The History of an Idea* in 2014. Bonds' book is primarily concerned with debates about absolute music, but furthermore it brought to light a section of Hanslick's work that was deleted by the third edition. This 'deleted ending' has accumulating papers such as Sousa, T. (2017) 'Was Hanslick a Closet Schopenhauerian?' and Zangwill N. (2017) 'Hanslick's Deleted Ending'. A debate I am hoping to attend after this thesis. For other articles discussing various parts of Hanslick, see Anderson 2013, Hall 1995, Yanal 2006, Zangwill 2004, Payzant 1989, 1991. It is also worth checking out the major works of Kivy, Budd, Davies, and Levinson, for discussions on Hanslick and other topics of musical aesthetics.

⁴ For good overviews and introductions to Hanslick's negative story, see Budd 1985, Davies 1994, and Kivy 1980.

⁵ For discussions on formalism in art, see Bell 1914, Langer 1953. For discussions on Musical formalism see Davies 1994, for Hanslick and formalism, see Hall 1967.

⁶ *On the Musically Beautiful* 1986.

⁷ 1986, 1981, 1989.

⁸ For a very good overview of Kivy and his work on philosophy of music, see Levinson 2017.

⁹ 1980, 1988, 1990.

¹⁰ 2004.

Hanslick's positive story is his attempt to say something valuable about musical aesthetics, as such, I suggest that what he is trying to do is make a claim for a general account of musical aesthetics. This means that although I suggest that his arguments can be fruitful for other arts, his main claims are suggested for the art of music. My suggestions and interpretations should be read with the same intention in mind, making a case for general musical aesthetics.

This brings us to another issue that needs to be attended to, concerning what is meant by music in this context. When Hanslick is talking about music, he is talking about instrumental music. The main reason for this is that 'whatever can be asserted of instrumental music holds good for all music... Of what *instrumental music* cannot do, it ought never be said that *music* can do it'.¹¹ Thus, in the context of this thesis music should be read as instrumental music. Thus far this is a reasonable way to go about offering a general account of musical aesthetics. However, the latter part of this quote makes this choice a topic of discussion. Hanslick continues to write that we should focus on instrumental music 'because only instrumental music is music purely and absolutely'.¹² This suggestion, justifiably so, has led to heated discussions¹³ which is not helped by the way in which Hanslick portrays vocal music, theatre, or opera, as music that has had to compromise its beauty. I suggest that some of Hanslick's baggage can be blamed for some of the careless statements on this topic, however, I will not spend any more time on this query in this thesis, but it is surely a topic which needs further discussion at a later time.

And last but not least, Hanslick's book is *On the Musically Beautiful*, thus, it concerns itself with investigating the particularly musically beautiful. Beauty, in this context, as will be mentioned throughout this thesis, can be thought of as value. In other words, what Hanslick is investigating is essentially what in music that is aesthetically valuable. This leads his main investigation to be concerned with content, as the answer to the question of what music contains will enable an answer to what is particularly musically beautiful.

¹¹ Hanslick 1986: 14-15

¹² Hanslick 1986: 14-15

¹³ For further discussion, see Bonds 2014, Bonds 2017, Ginsborg 2017, Dammann 2017, Gregory & Robinson 2015, and Puolakka 2017.

It is important to understand what Hanslick means by beauty as he considers beauty in a specific way. Beauty is particular and unique for each individual art, in other words, the musically beautiful is particularly musical.

Beauty is particular to music, in such a way that what is particularly beautiful about music would not be the same that is particularly beautiful about paintings. When he is suggesting beauty, what he is considering is aesthetic value. What Hanslick considers beauty to be can be simplified as stating something along the lines of beauty being intelligible content, or content that makes sense. Thus, for an investigation of the aesthetics of music, the questions will be what is music's content, and how music is made intelligible. The answers to these questions will be the core of Hanslick's theory and this thesis.

Hanslick makes two main claims in his work. Firstly, he claims that the content of music is not the representation of specific feelings. This is the main idea which constitute his negative story. The second claim, that the content of music is form, is what constitutes his positive story. The majority of the book is spent on elaborating on this positive thesis, and this is also where the main claims of this thesis are centred. The main importance of Hanslick's story is not the idea of content as form, rather it is what is form, how it is formed, the specific idea of content, how we understand and then what we value, which makes Hanslick's account valuable.

I offer two main claims concerning the reading of Hanslick's story. The first one is concerning the idea of content, as content is intended in a specific way. The second claim is concerning music's meaning. The necessary distinction and unity between these two will be shown to be the core of Hanslick's theory of musical aesthetics.

This thesis will suggest that we can draw the following conclusion from Hanslick's positive story: the particularly musically beautiful, i.e., what music is expressing, is a definite mental motion in toneform. Music is able to express these definite mental motions by being formed in the artistic process of composition, and these definite mental motions are experienced when we listen to music with an aesthetic perspective, i.e. as an end in itself. This end is a conscious unity between the definite [musical] ideas and the [musical] form embodying it.

Three main questions have to be answered to enable the possibility of this conclusion. Firstly, what is it that music can express and what makes it definite? Secondly, what constitutes this forming process and how is this definite expression formed? And, last but not least, how are these definite expressions understood and experienced, and is this experience of any value? An additional interesting question is whether or not this definite mental motion can be connected with feeling, and if this connection would be of aesthetic value.

Chapter I of this thesis mirrors the first couple of chapters of Hanslick's book, where he offers a presentation of his intentions (I.I), as well as establishing the foundations of his theory of aesthetics (I.II).

Hanslick's main goal is to be able to suggest a principle of the particularly musically beautiful but before he can consider the positive side of this he needs to correct what he considers to be a methodological error in previous aesthetical investigations. Previous theories have focused on what we feel when we hear music rather than focusing on the music as a thing in itself. And it is on this foundation that Hanslick suggests the claims of his negative story which is the content of chapter II of this thesis.

Chapter II starts by first creating an understanding of Hanslick's aesthetical foundation before considering Hanslick's negative story. Hanslick's theory of aesthetics and conception of beauty resembles a Kantian conception, where the main idea is centred around judgments of aesthetics being disinterested and there is a free play of the faculties of imagination (II.I). Hanslick suggests that beauty is mere form and has no purpose outside of itself, and it is on this foundation that he claims that the feeling-theory is wrong in its convictions. Hanslick suggests a cognitive theory of feelings, where feelings are separated from sensations as feeling is an awareness of a mental state and not mere sensations. Thus, feelings are suggested to be specified through objects and concepts as a way to understand our specific feelings.

The argument which follows from this is that music cannot represent these specific feelings as music represents neither objects nor concepts, but rather tones. Therefore the content of music cannot be the representation of specific feeling. This is the main objection towards the feeling-theory and it is often referred to as Hanslick's negative

argument (II.II). The claim is not that there cannot be feelings aroused by music. Rather, the claim is that feeling cannot stand as a principle for the musically beautiful as the representation of specific feeling is not something we find in music. Feeling is not unique to music, which means that music would lose its autonomous significance if what we value and consider as the particularly musically beautiful was feeling. Hanslick suggests that feeling is more akin to a secondary effect of the musical experience rather than what is represented.

One of the worries with the feeling-theory is that it cannot answer for the 'heresy of separable experiences'. This fallacy, discussed by Malcolm Budd, highlights the issue of suggesting that what we value and what we experience are not the same thing. The worry with this is that the value would not be intrinsic; it would rather be an effect of the musical experience. In other words, what we experience and what we value would not be the same thing, as the feeling is not the content of music but rather a secondary effect of what we have experienced.

One connection between music and feeling which is endorsed by Hanslick is the connection between music and motion. This is a fruitful conception which will prove significant for the overall picture. Motion is what music shares with feeling. Although motion in and of itself is not any particular feeling, it is one aspect of feeling which cannot specify or represent any specific feeling.

The purpose of negating the connection between music and feeling is to make room for the positive story about what music does contain. However, there is an issue of content (II.III), as content for Hanslick has a special meaning where in one sense music does not have content but in another sense it does as music is not empty. This is the main topic of discussion at the end of Chapter II. The idea of contentlessness, which is suggested by Hanslick, is based on an underlying idea of there not being a separation between form and content in music. This assumption leads to the necessity of clarifying this which is the topic dealt with in Chapter III. This is examined by referring to the ideas offered by Collingwood (III.I) and the distinction between form and matter (III.II). This is the fifth distinction of six distinctions offered by Collingwood to separate art from craft. The quintessential distinction is argued to always occur in art yet not needing to occur in craft,

as art has two kinds of ends. These two kinds of ends, which are described as a technical kind of end and an expressive kind of end, represent different aspects of art.

The distinction between the two ends is equivalent to aspects which Hanslick suggest constitute music, namely *Inhalt* and *Gehalt*. It is suggested that the idea of contentlessness was suggested to underline the necessity of a distinction and unity between *Inhalt* and *Gehalt* (III.IV). A short introduction to these two aspects is discussed at the end of Chapter III and further in Chapter IV as these two aspects relates to a distinction which will be proven necessary in art.

Chapter IV elaborates on this distinction, this discussion leads to us to questions about how we understand music. Our understanding is constituted by different aspects. With reference to Wittgenstein, the topic of understanding in relation to language is discussed to highlight the different aspects: paraphrasable and non-paraphrasable.

The necessity of at least basic musical understanding for any musical experience is explored in the section about music's relation to nature (IV.II). This is based on the fact that music does not have a direct relation to nature, and much like language music must be taught and understood. It is artificial in the sense that it is not something that is already found in nature. When we understand music with basic musical understanding we listen to music in a certain kind of way, namely as having the basic building blocks of harmony, melody, and rhythm. These are intentional properties of the music. There is a difference between listening to music and hearing sounds, a difference which is best explained by considering aspects. With reference to Wittgenstein, *aspect hearing* is explained, as the difference between sounds and tones lies in our experience of them. In the same manner this will further relate to the different kind of perspectives one may listen to music with, as one could merely focus on the general aspects of music, or one could listen to the particular aspect of a piece. The piece of music does not change, but the experience and the value thereof is at least partly in the ears of the beholder.

Hanslick suggests two such perceptions of music, namely, a pathological and an aesthetic perception (IV.III). The main idea here concerns listening to music in different ways, one of which will only hear the generic paraphrasable parts of a piece of music, merely listening to it as a kind of thing, whereas the aesthetic listener will listen to the piece as

an end in itself, considering the particular aspects of the music. Only aesthetic perception of music will yield an experience of the particularly musically beautiful, as the pathological listener, although not listening to mere sounds, is not aware of the particularity, which is exactly that which is particularly musically beautiful in each piece.

Chapter V concerns itself with the positive story. This chapter aims to say something about what music contains, about the forming process and musical value. The positive story suggested by Hanslick is neatly summarised in his main positive thesis: 'Der Inhalt der Musik sind *tönend bewegte Formen*'.¹⁴ I suggest a new translation of this core statement based on the ideas suggested about the necessity of *Inhalt* and *Gehalt*, as well the idea of the previous translations missing an important factor. This results in the translation being 'the content of music is forms realised in tone'.¹⁵ The content of music is form, and these forms are realised in tone. The ability to realise these toneforms depends on the musical system, which is elaborated on in section V.II. The tonal system is not what is created but it is the medium which enables the process of the composer. This system is necessary for music to have *Gehalt*. This captures the idea of understanding, and the necessity of the paraphrasable and non paraphrasable aspects. The system is what the composer works within. The forming process (V.III) of the composer is the best source of musical beauty we have available, as what is particular to music is *geistige Gehalt*, which is what the composer creates. The composer does not create new tones, nor a new system: rather, he works within the musical system to 'work out' a new toneform. It is this toneform which is valued (V.IV); however, we need to listen to music with an aesthetic perception to be able to value music as an end in itself. A pathological listener will listen only to the generic aspects of music, whereas *Geistige Gehalt*, that which is particular, demands a different kind of awareness.

The conclusion drawn from the positive story is that the content of music is form, this form is specifically musical and this is a form which is made in tones, this toneform is what is realised by the composer in his forming process. This is a process of motion, which

¹⁴ Hanslick 1922: 59

¹⁵ Hanslick 1986: 29 (altered translation)

is reflected in the way in which music impresses us and is experienced. What this means is that the listener animates the tones when he listens to the music.

The content of music is form, and it is this content that is expressed and valued, however, what we value is not the mere structural shape of the piece of music, but we value the form as something which has been made intelligible, it is understandable, it is expressed.

As the main thesis in Hanslick's positive story is suggesting that the content of music is form it is clear that Hanslick was a formalist. This idea will be challenged in the last chapter of this thesis. Chapter VI will suggest that there are two ways to read Hanslick's positive story. Section VI deals with the traditional reading and section V.II deals with the alternative reading. What separates the two is not whether or not Hanslick was a formalist, as his arguments are clearly formalistic, rather, the difference is to what kind of formalist he was. The traditional reading will suggest a reading of Hanslick which excludes everything that goes by the name of feeling. This kind of conception is supported by Kant, amongst others. This reading suggests that Hanslick was a pure formalist, where everything that is of value and that can be considered as aesthetic is found within the musical structure, i.e., toneform. Although this is the traditional way to read Hanslick, I suggest that there is good textual evidence to support an alternative reading. The main issue with the traditional reading is the lack of significance put on *geistige Gehalt* and the idea of animation. Hanslick seems to suggest that motion is not merely motion in *Inhalt*, but more importantly mental motion in *Gehalt*, and this mental motion can be suggested to be definite. If this is the case, then this definite mental motion may have a connection to what Hanslick calls intellectual feelings, which is not the same as other kinds of feelings. These feelings do not need to be felt but are rather something akin to awareness of a definite mental state. There might not be sufficient evidence to claim that Hanslick was not a pure formalist, but there is at least good justification for suggesting that he was a formalist that did not exclude everything that goes by the name of feeling; rather he merely desired to redefine feeling in connection to musical expressiveness. The idea of motion and how music is able to make us think is suggested in the conclusion as an afterthought of what Hanslick was trying to do.

Translations and editions

Vom Musikalish-Schönen have been published in many editions since the first edition was published in 1854. There are two known English translations; *The beautiful in music* translated by Gustav Cohen published in 1891, and *On the Musically Beautiful* translated by Geoffrey Payzant published 1986. Cohen translated the 7th edition (1885), whereas Payzant translated the 8th edition (1891). The main edition that is currently available is the so-called 13-15th edition. There are only minor changes to the main body of text throughout the different editions, with most changes relating to formatting or cosmetic alterations. In the forewords to the 8th edition it reads 'The first edition of this work appeared in 1854; nothing is new in the present edition, the eighth, except the more convenient format and more attractive layout. In text it differs from the seventh edition (1885) in only a few minor corrections'.¹⁶ Thus, I suggest this entails that the basic structure and arguments are presented as Hanslick intended.

By looking at earlier editions which are still available, the key claims are the same in the 3rd edition (1965), 7th edition (1985) and the 13-15th edition (1922). For the purpose of this thesis I have been using the Payzant translation of the 8th edition and the 13th-15th German edition when I am referring to the German text. The 8th German edition which Payzant translated is harder to find, thus if this version is radically different and hence supports his translations where I have objected to them then I apologise. However, I suggest that the main original text still stands, and that my points are valid across the other editions.

¹⁶ Hanslick 1986: xxi

Editorial remarks

This thesis aims to offer a reading of Hanslick's main work *On the Musically Beautiful*, to this end there will be a great deal of time spent on interpreting and discussing key passages from the main text.

Whilst I intend to keep to the main text as much as possible, I will take the liberty to reinterpret and retranslate passages where I suggest that the main ideas have either been confused in the translation or where there is a need of further explanation to understand what Hanslick is intending. Any and all such clarifications will be indicated.

Any liberty taken in my interpretation or rereading of Hanslick is to aid understanding. Thus, my thesis should be seen as a helpful guide or an addition to the text itself and not a replacement. However, it should be noted that a new translation of Hanslick's work might be a viable and interesting project for the future.

Careful consideration has been executed to enable the best possible presentation of Hanslick's words to ensure that the intended meaning is captured. There are a few common issues with translating German to English¹⁷. Therefore, some words which are difficult or which do not translate well, such as certain compound words, are expressed in the original language. Any such words are taken from Hanslick's original work,¹⁸ and are indicated in italics. This is also present in the quotes used. Any altered translation have been checked in several sources including dictionaries and German native speakers.

The main focus will be on Hanslick and his philosophy, but other philosophers will be mentioned where support or objections are needed. I will especially venture into aspects of Collingwood's theory of art, aspects of Wittgenstein concerning understanding and language, and Kant's theory of beauty. However, all and any discussions, which are not Hanslick's own, have been explored with the intention of clarifying and aiding Hanslick's main arguments. Hanslick and his work is the primary focus of this thesis, with any other theories or philosophers discussed as means to achieve this end.

¹⁷ *German Dictionary of Philosophical Terms* 1997

¹⁸ 1922 13th-15th edition

As such, this is, and should be, read as an exploration and interpretation of Eduard Hanslick's main work.

Chapter I: Eduard Hanslick

'To produce one [a complete theory of musical aesthetics], is beyond my present intentions and capabilities. It will suffice if I succeed in bringing triumphant battering-rams against the decaying walls of the "feeling-theory" and in setting out a few cornerstones for future reconstructions'.¹⁹

20



Eduard Hanslick was a philosopher, academic and music critic in the 19th century. He lived the majority of his life in Vienna where he was surrounded by music and experienced some of the greatest composers first hand.²¹

He was brought up in a musical and academic family,²² which resulted in his main work being a cross between the two: *On the musically Beautiful – A Contribution towards the Revision of the Aesthetics of Music*, published in 1854.

Eduard Hanslick produced what I consider one of the most valuable works of philosophy of music. It is to each their own whether or not they wish to agree to Hanslick's convictions and assertions. However, his investigations and arguments are still vital and immensely important, either as an account to object to or defend. His theory stands as the basis of most good accounts of musical aesthetics, in one way or another. As a result of this, I suggest, that Hanslick did write one of the most fundamental works on philosophy of music.

¹⁹ Hanslick 1986: xii-xiii (from the forewords to the first edition).

²⁰ Author's own drawing, purely for decorative purposes.

²¹ Some of Hanslick's critical pieces are available in English in a book titled *Hanslick's Musical Critics* translated and edited by Henry Pleasant 1988.

²² Translators preface 1986: xiv-xv.

I.I 'On the Musically Beautiful'

Hanslick has two main aims with this book; namely to disprove or show the errors of what he calls 'the feeling-theory'²³ – a theory which reflects the main aesthetics of music in his time – and to offer arguments towards a new aesthetics of music. In other words, the main aim is to find a principle of what is particular with the art of music and why we value it, a principle of the particularly musically beautiful.

This aim was not without its difficulties, nor without objections and misunderstandings. Even so, Hanslick did not make any great changes to the main body of the text, nor did he address any of the objections raised against his work in the editions following the initial publication. He intended to keep the main argument as it was, as although it was argued to be flawed, he believed it still had merit.

'I include this essay in the present collection without defending it against the attacks it has received. And I have refrained from any but minor improvements. Perhaps nowadays I would have put some of it another way, would have taken more pains to explain, would have been more restrained. Who is ever entirely pleased with work when he reads it many years after he wrote it? Yet everyone knows that by meddling with it we are as likely to make it worse as better...I am very keenly aware of the shortcomings of this essay. Yet the favourable reception of previous editions, which far exceeded expectations, and the immensely gratifying sympathy with which eminent specialists in both philosophy and music responded to it, convinced me that my ideas, even in the somewhat caustic and rhapsodic manner of their original appearance, fell on good soil'.²⁴

A number of objections and negative response to his work continued not only throughout his life, but are still the subject of discussion in contemporary philosophy of aesthetics to this day.²⁵ Hanslick's work have inspired and provoked several areas of discussion,

²³ Hanslick 1986: 58

²⁴ Hanslick 1986: xxi

²⁵ See Ginsborg 2017, Yanal 2006, Karl & Robinson 2015, and Scruton 2012, to name a few.

Although the objections may have some merit, many of them are founded on confusions or misunderstanding of Hanslick's main argument, as Hanslick himself addresses in the introduction.

'Ardent opponents have accused me from time to time of mounting a full-scale polemic against everything that goes by the name of feeling, whereas every impartial and attentive reader can easily see that I protest only against the erroneous involvement of feeling in science and thus strive against these aesthetic visionaries who, while pretending to tell musicians what to do, merely expose their own tinkling opium dreams'.²⁶

It is clear that Hanslick did not intend to exclude everything that goes by the name of feeling,²⁷ When discussing music, and especially classical music²⁸ every suggestion seems to offend rather than enlighten. The ego gets in the way of truth in some cases, where what we want to believe is raised to the front of the mind because what is suggested seems to object to what we experience. However, I suggest that although the ideas which will be developed may seem to deny qualities to the art of music, it was Hanslick's intention, as is my own, to clarify what music can do rather than underline what it cannot do. Hence, the intention was to offer a foundation for the musically beautiful that was viable, objective and could stand as a principle.

'To the aforementioned thesis there is an antithesis: that the beauty of a piece of music is specifically musical, i.e., is inherent in the tonal relationships without reference to an extraneous, extramusical context. It was the sincere intention of the author to elucidate fully the "musically beautiful" as the vital issue of our art

²⁶ Hanslick 1986: xxiii

²⁷ See Payzant 1986, Kivy 1990.

²⁸ Classical music is regarded in a different way than popular music. And, from personal experience people get very offended if one voices any opinions about classical music especially criticism, as if one has unintentionally judged the person and not the piece although, the person who gets offended by a judgement of this kind may not be a worry as such, let the thesis stand as a clarification of this conundrum.

and the supreme principle of its aesthetics. If, however, the polemical and negative element took on an overemphasis in the realisation of this intention, I hope the reader will pardon this, considering the special circumstances of the time. As I was writing this essay, the spokesmen for the “music of the future” were at their most vocal, inevitably provoking a reaction from people with convictions such as mine. And while I was working on the second edition, along came Liszt’s so called “program symphonies” which succeeded more completely than anything heretofore in getting rid of the autonomous significance of music and in suggesting to the listener that it is nothing but a means for the generation of music configurations’.²⁹

This slight overstatement of certain fears and the emphasis of the negative argument should be considered as reflecting some of Hanslick’s baggage. The musical scene in Hanslick’s time was rapidly developing and futurists such as Wagner were testing the boundaries of traditional music. This is not to say that these new more daring ways of composing were bad; rather, because of Hanslick’s turbulent history with Wagner and his background in classical music, Hanslick desired to maintain the autonomous significance of music and feared any change as diluting this musical conception.³⁰

However, Hanslick is not making any strong final claims about musical aesthetics. Indeed, as he states on several occasions, he is not offering a complete theory, merely a suggestion towards a revision of musical aesthetics. If we can look at Hanslick’s work with a slightly different perspective I suggest that his ideas may become more clear. This is not to suggest that there are no errors with his work, but rather that some of the overstatements are such because of the events of his time. Hanslick wrote an autobiography: *Aus Meinem Leben*, which has not been translated,³¹ except for a few

²⁹ Hanslick 1986: xxiii

³⁰ There are some mentions about Wagner and these musicians of the future in *On the Musically Beautiful*, 1986: 16n, 25, 26, 43, 44, 86, 91. But a deeper story is told in Hanslick’s autobiography, which is a good read for people who are especially interested. Although his autobiography is to my knowledge not available in English, the German version *Aus Meinem Leben* is available.

³¹ It has been tempting to translate aspects of this autobiography both because of the ideas about musical aesthetics which may be hidden in there, but also because of the historical aspects of Hanslick and his experiences with what is still considered to be some of our greatest composers. A highly desired project for the future, and a fruitful one for the field.

passages by Payzant, which he used in his translators introduction. It is here that the following quotation is found.

‘Of course it was my intention, when I had time, to expand on my essay *On the Musically Beautiful* into a proper aesthetics of music. It was obvious to me that the essay was only a kind of preliminary sketch or ground plan as it was that its negative, polemical part was too long and too harsh compared to the positive, systematic part’.³²

The main challenge with any reading and interpreting of Hanslick is this negative baggage that seems to colour our perception and understanding of the less prominent positive story. Thus, the reader should try and keep the aims and intention of Hanslick in mind; trying to find what in music could stand as a principle of aesthetics.

I.II A principle of aesthetics

Hanslick’s aim is to find what in music can stand as a principle of musical aesthetics. Aesthetics is mainly defined in the following way or variations thereof: ‘the study of what is immediately pleasing to our visual or auditory perception or to our imagination: the study of the nature of beauty; also, the theory of taste and criticism in the creative and performing arts’.³³ In other words, aesthetics is to do with art, value, enjoyment and understanding. An aesthetic principle is something that can serve as a foundation for a truth or system of belief. Thus, a principle of musical aesthetics would be a principle that could stand as the foundation of musical value, in other words, the musically beautiful.

For Hanslick, musical aesthetics is an investigation of beauty.

‘The striving for as objective as possible a scientific knowledge of things, of which the effects are being felt in all areas of knowledge in our time, must necessarily also have an impact upon the investigation of beauty. This investigation can proceed satisfactory only by breaking away from a method which takes subjective feeling as its starting point and then returns to it after going on a poetical excursion around the outskirts of the topic. If it is not to be wholly illusory, this

³² Hanslick 1986: xiii (translators preface, his own translation of Hanslick’s autobiography).

³³ *The Penguin Dictionary of Philosophy* 2005: 8

investigation will have to approach the method of the natural sciences, at least to the point of attempting to get alongside the thing itself and seeking whatever among our flickering impressions and feelings may be enduring and objective. The aesthetics of poetry and of the visual arts are far in advance of that of music and have for the most part abandoned the delusion that the aesthetics of any particular art may be derived through mere conformity to the general, metaphysical concept of beauty (of which, however, each of the arts has its own set of variants). The servile dependence of the various special aesthetics upon a supreme metaphysical principle of a general aesthetics is steadily yielding ground to the conviction that each particular art demands to be understood only of itself, through a knowledge of its unique technical characteristics. System building is giving way to research firmly based on the axiom that the laws of beauty proper to each particular art are inseparable from the distinctive characteristics of its material and its technique...the primary object of aesthetical investigation is the beautiful object, not the feeling subject'.³⁴

We can combine Hanslick's thoughts into a few determining aspects. A principle of musical aesthetics is particularly musical. The basis of such a principle needs to be found in the thing itself. To be able to find such a basis we need to look at that particular art's unique technique and characteristics. A principle of musical aesthetics needs to be able to account for the 'unique and imperishable in music, i.e., musically beautiful, and to how our great masters embodied it'.³⁵

What Hanslick suggests is that there is no overall theory which covers the beauty of all arts. Rather, each art's beauty is connected to each individual art's technique and characteristics as well as the relations between them. It follows that the way in which we find a piece of music beautiful may differ from the way in which we judge a painting to be beautiful, although both would be judged to be beautiful. Hanslick suggest that it is an error to think that all arts are the same, but merely the material differs. Hanslick addresses and dismisses this worry briefly in a footnote, by referring to the theory of

³⁴ Hanslick 1986: 1-2

³⁵ Hanslick 1986: xxiii-xxiv

Robert Schumann.³⁶ However, this kind of thinking would have to suggest that there is a distinction between form and matter/material in art, and that one could define beauty independently of the material or medium, both of which would be a an error.³⁷ One philosopher who supports this is R.G. Collingwood, who suggests that such a distinction between form and matter need not exist in art, which at least raises the notion that such a distinction is not necessary and thus cannot be the defining feature of art.

Thus, any suggestion of a theory of musical aesthetics needs to be able to make a case for what is particular in music, what the defining features are, which in turn needs to be necessary for that art, consistent and intrinsic. In other words, what is particularly musically beautiful has to be something which all music must contain, which is at, least in part, what makes it art, what makes it valuable and what makes it beautiful.

To understand what Hanslick is claiming in his negative argument we first need to understand what his theory of beauty is, as this stands as the basis for an aesthetics principle. We need to understand Hanslick's theory of feeling, as he separates between feeling and sensation, in order to suggest a cognitive theory of feelings, which is significant considering the role of feeling as content. Furthermore, the idea of imagination as the real organ of the beautiful will give insight into the way in which Hanslick is thinking, all of which gives a foundation for objecting to the feeling-theory, as the claim is that feeling cannot stand as a basis for a principle of musical aesthetics.

³⁶ Hanslick 1986: 2n

³⁷ For the full argument, see 'The quintessential distinction' section of Chapter III.

Chapter II: The Negative Story

‘Thus we say nothing at all concerning the crucial aesthetic principle of music if we merely characterize music in general, just as little, perhaps, as we would get to know the real nature of wine by getting drunk’.³⁸



To fully understand Hanslick’s main negative convictions it is important to understand on what grounds he makes his claims. Thus the first part of this chapter is dedicated to elaborate on Hanslick’s theory of beauty, of feeling and imagination, in order to help comprehend the broader topic of his negative story. His idea of beauty provides a foundation for objecting towards the first claim of the feeling-theory, namely that arousal of feeling is the purpose of music. Hanslick’s suggestion of a cognitive theory of emotion offers support for his second main conviction that the representation of specific feeling is not the content of music.

Hanslick’s main conviction is a negative one, yet its main purpose is not to negate but to accentuate the need for a different approach. This is due to his positive story and its arguments are based on the need for and negation of the current theories of musical aesthetics and especially the feeling-theory.

³⁸ Hanslick 1986: 6

Thorough investigation and experimentation have been done during the research and writing of this thesis, to whether or not Hanslick’s claim here can be disproven. Although there have been several attempts and trials, the conclusion is still the same, indeed, one cannot find the nature of wine by getting drunk.

II.I Aesthetics of Imagination and Beauty.

The first chapter of Hanslick's work introduces the foundation of his claims and beliefs about music, thus the main ideas here are crucial for the understanding of the following arguments. Hanslick has two main goals with his work, as was mentioned earlier, one of which is to object to the feeling-theory. Thus, the introductory chapter starts by considering where current aesthetical theories have gone wrong in their investigations and how such theories fail to stand as a foundation for an aesthetic principle.

'Musical Aesthetics up to now has for the most part laboured under a serious methodological error, in that it occupies itself, not so much with careful investigation of that which is beautiful in music, but rather with giving an account of the feelings which take possession of us when we hear it... Previous musical aesthetics has not been able to make the effort to confront squarely its subject matter, the musically beautiful, as an autonomous beauty. Instead, "feelings" keep coming back like an old spectre to haunt us in broad daylight'.³⁹

Hanslick claims that the previous theories have looked at the feeling effect of music rather than considered the object itself. As a consequence, any such account will merely be a judgment about subjective experience and not something that could stand as a principle, i.e., a universal rule, for the beautiful in music. Rather than starting from within and working outwards we should try to work from the object itself. In this way, not only do we need to find objectivity in the art, but we need to find what in music, in relation to its specific technique and characteristics, can be considered objective.

The issue with previous theories is the inability to confront what Hanslick calls the subject matter, i.e. what music means or is about. The objectivity which stands as a foundation for judgment in other arts seems to be lacking in music. This is because the objectivity is related to concepts and objects, but music does not share the same conceptual relation.⁴⁰ This led theorists to the conclusion that because of the lack of conceptual definiteness, feeling, as thought to be opposite to conceptual definiteness, must be the foundation of

³⁹ Hanslick 1986: 1-2

⁴⁰ For discussions on art and its object, see Wollheim 1980.

judgments about musical beauty. This doctrine is what Hanslick calls the ‘feeling theory’⁴¹. I suggest that for Hanslick any theory which places aesthetic significance on feeling would be a feeling theorist, and any such theory would be what Hanslick is objecting to. Peter Kivy, makes a similar suggestion in his article ‘What was Hanslick denying’,⁴² where he claims that:

‘Hanslick denies that it is the defining function of music to “express” the emotions in any of the following three senses of “express.” He denies that it is the defining function of music to (1) arouse emotions in the listeners; (2) to represent emotions in music; or (3) to express the emotions of composer. He argues for this denial by claiming that since music *cannot* express the emotions in any of these senses of “express,” it cannot, plainly, be the defining function of music to express the emotions in any of these three senses of “express”’.⁴³

Thus, what Hanslick is denying is any significance placed on what we will come to know as specific feelings being aroused, expressed or represented by music. Any mentions of the feeling theory form heron will be referring to any one of these connections between music and feeling. Hanslick’s objection is not to one particular account or suggestion, rather it is an attempt to rectify the way in which we think the aesthetics of music, where the first step is to get rid of the erroneous views of the feeling theorists.

‘According to this doctrine... Music has to do with the feelings... in the prevailing view of music the feelings play a double role. Of music in the first of these two roles, it is claimed that to arouse the delicate feelings is the defining purpose of music. In the second, the feelings are designates as the content of music, that which musical art presents in its works. The two are similar in that both are false’.⁴⁴

⁴¹ Hanslick 1986: 58

⁴² Kivy 1990

⁴³ Kivy 1990: 17

⁴⁴ Hanslick 1986: 3

Hanslick swiftly denies the first claim of the arousal of feelings being the purpose of beauty. As:

‘Beauty has no purpose. For it is mere form,⁴⁵ which, of course, according to its content can be applied to the most diverse purposes without having any purpose of its own beyond itself. From the contemplation of beauty there may arise pleasant feelings in the contemplator, but these have nothing to do with beauty as such. I might very well show something beautiful to an observer for the specific purpose of giving him pleasure. But this purpose in itself would not be what made the thing beautiful. Beauty is and remains beauty even if no feelings are aroused and even if it be neither perceived nor thought. So of a purpose in this sense, concerning music as well, nothing can be said’.⁴⁶

What Hanslick is suggesting is very similar to a Kantian understanding of the beautiful. It is more than likely that Hanslick was inspired by Kant’s philosophy, considering that Hanslick was a classically trained scholar in 19th century Europe. The lack of referencing to the ideas he is portraying here may be caused by several things, such as the lack of referencing at the time, the ignorance of thinking that someone would not be familiar or a believer of Kantian philosophy, or merely that Hanslick found the ideas so self-evident that he did not consider any further explanation necessary. Notwithstanding the uncertainty of the Hanslick-Kant connection, Hanslick’s main ideas and the similarities to Kant’s merits an elaboration of Kantian philosophy.

This should not be read as nor is it intending to be an understanding or investigation of Kantian philosophy; any misunderstandings of Kant’s theory is my own and not a reflection of what Hanslick is writing. The following section should merely be seen as a way to put Hanslick’s view into some context.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Can also be translated as beauty being a form, which may clarify that beauty is a kind of thing. In other words that beauty is something that has a form which is complete in its own right; intelligible.

⁴⁶ Hanslick 1986: 3

⁴⁷ I apologize to any Kantian scholar who might take offence of my simplistic and glossy view of Kant here. But for the purpose of this thesis, a glossy simplified picture was what was needed.

The judgment of taste is aesthetic.

Kant's theory of beauty is mainly found in *The Critique of Judgment*.⁴⁸ Kant suggests that there are three kinds of pleasure: pleasure in the agreeable, pleasure in the good and pleasure in the disinterested, i.e., the beautiful. Pleasure in the good is finding pleasure in doing something morally good. Pleasure in the agreeable would be things that appeal to you, things you desire. These things are dependent on real existence, and we could also call this interested pleasure.

The disinterested pleasure is taking pleasure in the pure presentation of the object, i.e., the impression of the mind. We are taking pleasure purely in the way in which this object impresses us. Disinterested pleasure is had without the necessity of an end or a purpose of an object. In other words, disinterested pleasure is had independently of what the object is supposed to be. For example, when I judge whether or not the object in front of me is a table, I compare the object to my conception of a table. I then use my conception of a table as a frame of reference and judge whether the object is or is not of this kind. However, when we judge something to be beautiful there is no such preconceived end of what the thing ought to be; a judgment of the beautiful is not based on such an end. This does not mean that there is no intention or direction at all. Rather, it signifies a different way of understanding and imagining an object which is referred to as 'free play of the imagination'.⁴⁹ Free play of the imagination can be understood as using our faculties of which we are able to comprehend the world but in a 'free' way, i.e., without concepts. In other words, when we are considering disinterested pleasure, i.e., judgment of the beautiful the faculties are not constrained by what a thing is supposed to be or how it is supposed to function, rather it just is. We can understand this as being able to appreciate and take pleasure in something that is beautiful.

'The beautiful is that which, apart from concepts, is represented as the object of universal delight'.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ I will be using two versions of this text in this thesis: the 1978 J.C. Meredith translation and the 2016 eBook translated by J.H Bernard.

⁴⁹ Kant 2016 CJ: §9

⁵⁰ Kant 1978 CJ: §6

Universal delight here refers to something which is subjective yet still universal. This kind of universal subjectivity is formal when it comes to art and beauty, i.e., judgments of taste. What this means is that what makes it a judgment is not whether or not the object fits a concept, it means it is based on a universal agreeability of which if I judge something to be beautiful everyone else should judge it to be beautiful too. Thus, my judgment is not a subjective judgment of a personal nature, in the sense that I am not saying whether or not I like something or prefer something, rather I am claiming something which I think is true. Truth here would refer to understanding or commensurability. For example, I could easily state that something, like a painting for example, is beautiful, but still not want it displayed on my wall, as it doesn't fit my personal taste or interiors. In this way, an aesthetic judgment is one which is not based on concepts and objects as such, but one which is based on what Kant calls feelings.⁵¹ Feeling in this context would not be akin to specific feelings, rather it would be something resembling the ability to feel and understand what one is feeling but where the feeling is completely disinterested and universally communicable. In other words, they would not be judgments that would be influenced by charm or emotions, i.e., personal or other interests.⁵²

‘A judgment of taste which is uninfluenced by charm or emotion and whose determining grounds, therefore, is simply finality of form,⁵³ is a *pure judgment of taste*’.⁵⁴

A judgment is thus pure when the determining grounds, i.e. the foundation of the judgment are on ‘finality of form’. Finality of form can be understood as the aesthetic version of an end, where the end is not presupposed as it is in other judgments, but where there is still an end in the sense of something final, that we can understand as being presented to us. In other words, there is purposiveness but not definite independent purpose.

⁵¹ Kant 1978 CJ: §1-2, §9

⁵² Kant 1978 CJ: §13

⁵³ A different translation is offered in another edition: ‘has its determining ground merely the purposiveness of the form’. Kant 2016 CJ: §13.

⁵⁴ Kant 1978 CJ: §13

‘Beauty is the form of the purposiveness of an object, so far as this is perceived in it without any representation of a purpose’.⁵⁵

In short, a judgment of taste is a judgment which is disinterested, where there is no presupposed end or purpose, where there is finality of form, which can be reflected upon by the imagination, and is universal in the sense that it can be understood by everyone. What is given to us in free play of the imagination is mere form. It is this form which we are able to find pleasure in, ‘art... is a mode of representation, which is a purposive for itself, and which, although devoid of [definite] purpose, yet furthers the culture of mental powers in reference to social communication’.⁵⁶

With the above understanding in mind, we can reconsider Hanslick’s main claim about beauty and form. ‘Beauty has no purpose. For it is mere form,⁵⁷ which, of course, according to its content can be applied to the most diverse purposes without having any purpose of its own beyond itself’.⁵⁸

Beauty is mere form, and can be understood as a way in which we are able to understand, or as Kant says ‘a mode of representation’⁵⁹ of a certain content. The key claim which we can gather from Kant is that there is no independent purpose in the sense of an object or concept as such. This is reflected in Hanslick, where he explicitly states that beauty is a form that does not have any purpose, i.e., end beyond itself. It is on this foundation that Hanslick dismisses the first claim of the arousal of feeling being the purpose of music. As Hanslick conception of beauty entails that what determines something to be beautiful cannot be a purpose or end beyond itself, the arousal of feeling cannot be the purpose of something beautiful as the purpose of something beautiful is the form of beauty itself. Thus, the determining factors, i.e., what makes it beautiful will be gathered by what is formed, i.e., the content. The defining purpose of music as the musically beautiful is thus

⁵⁵ Kant 2016 CJ: §17

⁵⁶ Kant 2016 CJ: § 44

⁵⁷ Can also be translated as beauty being a form. I interpret this as saying that beauty is not merely a mould which we fit all things that are beautiful in, rather, there are many different shapes, which all have beautiful form, but these forms are unique.

⁵⁸ Hanslick 1986: 3

⁵⁹ Kant 2016 CJ: §44

not the arousal of feeling but rather a form of a musical content. This is not to say that the arousal of feeling could not still be *a* purpose of music,⁶⁰ rather the claim is merely that it is not the determining purpose of music.

‘From the contemplation of beauty there may arise pleasant feelings in the contemplator, but these have nothing to do with beauty as such. I might very well show something beautiful to an observer for the specific purpose of giving him pleasure. But this purpose in itself would not be what made the thing beautiful. Beauty is and remains beauty even if no feelings are aroused and even if it be neither perceived nor thought. So of a purpose in this sense, concerning music as well, nothing can be said’.⁶¹

In other words, something is only beautiful for the intuiting subject, but, it is not caused by that subject, nor is it beautiful through that subject.

We have established that beauty is mere form which does not have a purpose as such, hence the purpose of something beautiful, like music, cannot be to arouse feelings, seeing as that would make any such arousal of feeling something besides what makes it beautiful and not what defined its beauty. Feeling then does not have the aesthetic authority over judgments of the beautiful, rather imagination does.

‘The tendency to allow feelings to become aroused is an interest. Thus, if we are to treat music as an art, we must recognize that imagination and not feeling is always the aesthetical authority’.⁶²

When Hanslick talks about imagination he uses the German word *Phantasie*, and although one would think that because of his agreement with Kantian philosophy of both the mind and beauty that he would have used the word *einbildungskraft*. However, one possible reason for using *Phantasie* could be that Hanslick is suggesting something a bit different from Kant and possibly more in line with an Aristotelian conception of mind. Although

⁶⁰ There are many accounts suggesting some form of arousalism, see for example Matravers 1998. For a good overview, see Davies 1994.

⁶¹ Hanslick 1986: 3

⁶² Hanslick 1986: 5

such a connection cannot be proven, the connection whether it is true or not can still be fruitful.⁶³ The word '*Phantasie*', which is translated as 'imagination', is in need of some explanation. The word *Phantasie* was used to refer to the creative ability of man, as the ability to create images in our mind. In one sense activities of imagination are the aftereffect of perceptions, but the imagination could also be active without perception.⁶⁴ In the context of Hanslick's work, imagination can be understood as the faculty which is able to intuit or understand things. Simply put, imagination is the faculty of which we understand and perceive the world.

Imagination is thus for Hanslick something that not merely 'sees' (or indeed hears) but something that 'sees' with understanding. This kind of reading of Hanslick is supported by the further idea that Hanslick is considering something akin to Kant's pure intuition, as when Hanslick talks about 'seeing with understanding' he evolves from mere seeing to the German word *Anschauung*, which is what Kant used to refer to intuition.

'It is remarkable how musicians and the older aestheticians concern themselves only with the contrast between feeling and understanding, as if the main thing did not lie directly between the two. Out of the imagination of the composer, the piece of music arises for the imagination of the listener. Certainly with regards to beauty, imagining is not mere seeing, but contemplating with active understanding, i.e., conceiving and judging. Of course these processes occur so swiftly that we are unaware of them and are deceived into thinking that what, in truth, depends on several intermediate processes occurs immediately. The word [*Anschauung*]⁶⁵ *intuition*⁶⁶ has long since been extended to include all sense appearances and not merely the visual. And it serves very well for what we do when we listen attentively to the sequence of tonal forms that is music.

⁶³ Hanslick does mention Aristotle when he is considering music and the relation to nature (see Hanslick 1986: 73) Whether or not he has interpreted Aristotle correctly is irrelevant here, seeing as at least this means that Hanslick did study Aristotle, which will be relevant in the discussions in the final chapter of this thesis.

⁶⁴ *The Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy 1994: 187*

⁶⁵ Hanslick 1922: 8

⁶⁶ Altered translation from contemplation to intuition. The word contemplation misses the development from mere Seeing to Seeing with a certain kind of perception, i.e. pure intuition.

Imagination, moreover, is by no means an isolated domain; it draws its vital impulse from our sensations and rapidly transmits our sensations to intellect and feeling'.⁶⁷

The German word *Anschauung* is a compound word of seeing: *schauen*, and *ana*: at or on.⁶⁸ *Anschauung*: Intuition is thus to be understood as something more than seeing, namely seeing as or looking at, which underlines that this is more than mere seeing, i.e., we are seeing not just with our eyes but with our minds, as we are 'conceiving and judging'.⁶⁹ Kant defines an intuition as a representation of the imagination,⁷⁰ and intuition can be understood as that which structures sense impressions into something comprehensible. So from the discussion so far, we can assert that imagination is the faculty that organises sense impressions into something that we can understand.

'Beauty encounters first of all our sensations. But this is not the private preserve of beauty: beauty shares it with all appearances.⁷¹ Sensation is the beginning and prerequisite of aesthetical pleasure, and it constitutes initially the basis of feeling; feeling always presuppose a relation (often a complex one) between itself and sensation. It takes no skill to stimulate sensation; a single tone, a single colour can do it... Art first of all puts something beautiful before us. It is not by the means of feeling that we become aware of beauty, but by the means of the imagination as the activity of pure seeing'.⁷²

Sensations are merely sense impressions: 'the perception of a specific sense quality'⁷³ whereas feeling is 'becoming aware of our own mental state with regards to its

⁶⁷ Hanslick 1986: 4

⁶⁸ *Collins German Dictionary* 2017

⁶⁹ Hanslick 1986: 4

⁷⁰ Kant 1978 CJ: §49

⁷¹ I have translated the word here as 'appearance' whereas the previous translation was using the word 'phenomenon'. However, considering the heavy Kantian link, it seemed logical to merely stick to a more Kantian terminology all the way through.

⁷² Hanslick 1986: 4

⁷³ Hanslick 1986: 4

furtherance and inhibition'.⁷⁴ Hence, in line with the picture established above, when a beautiful object is 'put before us' it meets our senses first, and impresses us, but we see it not merely by seeing but seeing with active understanding. In other words, the activity of the imagination is not passive but active. We are aware of it, but it is completely disinterested, so what we 'see' is an immediate impression of the perceived object.

'The universal communicability of a pleasure involves in its very concept that the pleasure is not one of enjoyment arising out of mere sensation, but must be one of reflection. Hence aesthetic art, as art which is beautiful, is one having for its standard the reflective judgment and not organic sensation'.⁷⁵

Thus, if we follow this Kantian way of thinking, the pleasure will be found in the pure intuition or reflection of our own organised sense impressions, which have been organised by the imagination as the organ of the beautiful.

⁷⁴ Hanslick 1986: 3

⁷⁵ Kant 1978 CJ: §44

II.II Feeling cannot be content

After establishing Hanslick's claim that the defining purpose of music was not to arouse feelings, we can now move on to the second claim. The second negative claim is that the content of music is not the representation of specific feeling. Which follows from the previous discussion as feeling is not something which is in music's power to represent. This second claim is the one which is generally referred to as Hanslick's negative story. This argument, which takes up little more than a page, has been the basis for discussion amongst philosophers and academics for many years. This negative story is indeed an important factor of Hanslick's argument; however, it is not and should not be seen as the most important argument in his work, rather it should be read as the foundation which enables the furtherance of an investigation of music's actual content, i.e., the positive story.

'The representation of feeling is not the content of music...The philosophical investigation of art raises the question of arts content... There has been considerable agreement that the whole gamut of human feelings is the content of music...The representation of a specific feeling or emotional state is not at all among the characteristic powers of music. That is to say, the feelings are not so isolated in the mind that they have made themselves the salient feature of an art to which the representation of the other mental activities is closed. They are, on the contrary, dependent upon physiological and pathological conditions. They depend upon ideas, judgments, and (in brief) the whole range of intelligible and rational thought, to which some people so readily oppose feeling. What, then, makes a feeling specific, e.g., longing, hope, love? Is it perhaps the mere strength or weakness, the fluctuations of our inner activity? Certainly not. These can be similar with different feelings, and with the same feeling they can differ from person to person and from time to time. Only on the basis of a number of ideas and judgments (perhaps unconsciously at moments of strong feeling) can our state of mind congeal into this or that specific feeling. The feeling of hope cannot be separated from the representation of a future happy state which we compare with the present; melancholy compares past happiness with the present. These are entirely specific representations or concepts. Without them, without this cognitive apparatus, we cannot call the actual feeling "hope" or "melancholy"; it

produces them for this purpose. If we take this away, all that remains is an unspecific stirring, perhaps the awareness of a general state of well-being or distress. Love cannot be thought without the representation of a beloved person, without desire and striving after felicity, glorification and possession of a particular object. Not some kind of mere mental agitation, but its conceptual core, its real, historical content, specifies this feeling of love. Accordingly, its dynamic can appear as readily gentle as stormy, as readily joyful as sorrowful, and yet still be love. This consideration by itself suffices to show that music can only express the various accompanying adjectives and never the substantive, e.g., love itself. A specific feeling (a passion, say, or an affect) never exists as such without an actual historical content, which can only be precisely set forth in concepts. Music cannot (as if by way of compromise) render concepts as "indefinite speech." Is the result of all this not psychologically irrefutable? It is that music is incapable of expressing definite feelings; indeed, the definiteness of feelings lies precisely in their conceptual essence'.⁷⁶

For Hanslick this argument concludes and proves that the content of music is not the representation of feeling. However, the general consensus is not as necessarily in agreement, something which baffled Hanslick.

‘Granted that music’s inability to represent specific feelings follows readily from the nature of tones, it seems almost inconceivable that this has not in the course of events more rapidly achieved general acceptance. Let anyone whose heartstrings are made to resonate by a piece of instrumental music try to demonstrate with plain argument what affect constitutes its content’.⁷⁷

For Hanslick the idea that the content of music is the representation of specific feeling is unthinkable. I suggest that when deconstructed and understood, the idea that music is not and indeed should not be a representation of specific feeling is evident, something which will be elaborated on in the following discussion.

⁷⁶ Hanslick 1986: 9

⁷⁷ Hanslick 1986: 12

Hanslick's negative argument, which is outlined in the quotation above, makes a few essential claims. Firstly, the representation of specific feeling is not in the power of music, seeing as feelings are defined via concepts and objects. In other words, Hanslick is suggesting a cognitive theory of feeling, which at the time was opposite and disruptive to the current way of thinking, which tended to be more romantically inclined.⁷⁸ Hanslick is suggesting that feelings are indeed not the opposite, but rather, are defined and understood by being specified through objects and concepts. Furthermore, he suggests that without these concepts and objects, i.e., with the lack of this cognitive apparatus, the feelings cannot be understood as anything besides emotional stirring. What this mean, is that the way in which we are able to become aware of our own mental state as feeling is precisely by feeling about things, such that what defines a specific feeling is not merely the fact that we are feeling, it is the feeling about a certain thing that separates one feeling from another. This is what Hanslick is suggesting when he says that 'love cannot be thought of without the beloved person',⁷⁹ because what defines the feeling of love is the beloved person. The beloved person would be the content of my feeling and I would not be able to understand that feeling without this specific representation. As such, a specific feeling is made for the purpose of understanding how one feels about a certain thing.

Thus, if we take this specificity away, all that would be left would be some sort of awareness of feeling without knowing what you were feeling, i.e., what Hanslick calls emotional stirring. Therefore, considering the fact that feelings are defined and specified by concepts and objects and the further claim that music cannot and should not represent these concepts and objects the negative conclusions seems to follow. But before agreeing to this conviction, we need to understand why Hanslick would claim that music cannot represent objects and concepts.

⁷⁸ Hanslick mentions quite a few feeling theorists at the end of the first chapter in the original text, this information has been strategically put at the end in the translation. For the entire list, see Hanslick 1986: 86-91, amongst the mentioned feeling theorists he names Johann Mattheson who states that the main purpose of a melody is to produce a feeling in us. C. F. Michaelis, who claims that 'Music is the art of expressing feelings by means of modulation of sounds'. J. G. Sulzer claims that 'Music is the art of expressing our passions by the means of tones'. And the list goes on.

⁷⁹ Hanslick 1986: 9

Let us consider what it would mean to represent something. 'To represent...is to produce a clear and distinct content, to put before our very eyes'.⁸⁰ When Hanslick uses the word 'represent' he uses it with this meaning, i.e., whatever is represented is the thing itself, thus something cannot represent something else so to speak. 'Every art has as its own a range of ideas which it represents in its own medium of expression'⁸¹, in the musical case this would be things that can be expressed in the medium of tones and tonality. What we claim that something is representing must be the thing itself. Hence, the next step for Hanslick will be to prove that these feelings are not something which is part of the music itself. This refers back to the idea of beauty as mere form, which was discussed in the previous section, which does not have a purpose or end beyond itself.

This kind of representation discussed above is not to be confused with something being a representation of something else, seeing as this would necessitate two different things, one which were represented by another. Thus, in the current context if music was a representation of specific feelings then the music would be a mere means and not the thing valued, nor the thing represented, which excludes the music as essential at all. This latter kind of thinking seems especially unhelpful in the study of finding what is particularly musically beautiful.

Going back to the more reasonable consideration of music as representing, what music is representing is something which can be clear, distinct and which is its content. When we consider feeling, feelings are defined by concepts and objects which is not in the power of music to represent. Furthermore, general feeling or moods would be general and too vague to be considered as a clear content, and by being general it would not be distinct.

Whether or not music could possibly be representing this emotional stirring or any other kind of suggestions relating to getting around this objection, have been tried and failed by many a contemporary theorist.⁸² Although the following arguments have not been specifically examined in this thesis, a considerable amount of research has been done

⁸⁰ Hanslick 1986: 14

⁸¹ Hanslick 1986: 8

⁸² See amongst others: Davies 1994, Kivy 1980, Budd 1985, and Levinson 1990. For a good overview of the different discussions, see Davies 1994.

covering the relevant theories offering a way out of what I have called Hanslick's negative story. There have especially been three main contemporary theorists that have offered different ways around Hanslick's objection: Jerrold Levinson, Stephen Davies, and Peter Kivy. Another important contemporary theorist is Malcolm Budd,⁸³ he offers, in my opinion, the best overview of the issues and relevant objections of Hanslick's negative story, outlining the areas which would have to be filled for a possible objection to his account. Budd offers little in the way of possible conclusions to these issues, which is where the three other philosophers come in. They are all mainly considering a resemblance based theory with certain characteristic differences and personal flares, however the main idea runs through them all, namely, that music sounds as, resembling emotional characteristics in appearance, as emotional gestures, or essentially as moods. I am by no means intending to object to nor undervalue the efforts these philosophers have made or their contribution to the field of aesthetics. However, I do indeed want to claim that the theories they suggest are good as far as they go, but lack an answer to what is the particularly musically beautiful or why we value music on this basis. I suggest that the main issue with these theories is that they have misunderstood parts of Hanslick's main aim, which I have argued in several places was not to take away from music but rather to give music the place amongst the high arts as deserved. However, if music is merely the representation of specific feeling, music is a mere means to a different end, the value is outside the work itself, and it has no autonomous significance. This assertion is problematic, as it would be working against Hanslick's principle of the musically beautiful. Any such theory would mainly consider tones being some kind of symbolic representation of certain feelings; 'We call it "symbolic" because it does not directly represent the content, but it is symbolization of an entirely different order'.⁸⁴ Music does indeed have its own content of which it expresses directly, thus if we merely consider this expression as assimilating another expression of a specific emotion say, then we would merely say that the music was a representation of that feeling as a way of being a symbol of that feeling. What has happened here is that we have interpreted the one being a symbol for the other, however the two are connected via our interpretation.

⁸³ Budd 1985

⁸⁴ Hanslick 1986: 12

This kind of suggestion which makes music a mere means to an end, separates the music from what is valued. This makes any such theory liable to the heresy of separable experiences. If the feeling-theory can only claim that the connection between music and feelings is of this kind then the feeling-theory has to at least answer the worries raised in the following objection.

Heresy of the separable experience

Malcolm Budd highlights this error when he considers 'expression theory'⁸⁵ of music in his book *Music and the Emotions*.⁸⁶ The expression theorist suggests that what the composer does in his music is to express his own subjective artistic experience, and then transmits this experience through the music such that the listener can experience the same experience as the composer.⁸⁷ In other words, the composer uses the music to express his own feelings which then can be experienced by the listener. This theory has faced several fatal objections.⁸⁸ However, for the discussion at hand the main error is that the experience of the music is separated from the experience of that which is considered valuable, i.e. the expression.

To clarify: this type of theory suggests that the composer is having an emotional experience and then translates or transmits this experience through the music, (this experience may be had before the creation of the music takes place) such that the listener may receive the composer's emotional experience and experience it for themselves.⁸⁹ However, the idea of emotions and moods being transmitted from the composer *through* the music to then be received by the listener when he is experiencing the music is to perceive music as a means to some further end. As the purpose of music seems to be to produce a certain type of emotion in the listener, or make the listener experience a certain transmission intended from the composer, the value is not situated

⁸⁵ For a classical suggestion of this theory, see Leo Tolstoy 1898. For a more contemporary suggestion, see Robinson 2005, 2011.

⁸⁶ Budd 1985: 125

⁸⁷ Budd 1985: 121

⁸⁸ See Davies 1994

⁸⁹ Budd 1985: 123

in the musical experience itself, rather it is found in an experience which may be achievable by different means.

For example, if we suggest that the experience of expression in music is associative, i.e. where we associate the musical experience with certain feelings or situations, the relation is of a secondary nature and no musical value can be founded on these grounds. If this were the case the two very different experiences can be associated with and arouse the same feeling. Such as a specific song and the smell of certain flowers can both be associated with and arouse the same feeling. If we suggest that there is value in the emotional experience had, this would be an experience which would be separable from the musical experience as the music would merely be a tool for arousing a state of mind in the listener; hence, being guilty of heresy of the separable experience.

If we are to suggest that what is particularly musically beautiful; i.e. what is of value, is the experience of musical expression, then that experience cannot be a combination of different experiences or an experience that can be had outside of the musical experience. Rather, we need to consider it as intrinsic; i.e., the experience of what is of value is nothing more than the musical experience⁹⁰ 'It should be remembered that the experience a work of art offers is an experience *of the work itself*, and the valuable qualities of a work are qualities *of the work*, not of the experience of it'.⁹¹ In other words, if we value something intrinsically to the musical work it will be a value of the work and not a further experience of that value: a single complex experience.⁹² Hence, for a foundation of value to be found in the relation between music and musical expression we need a theory which can avoid heresy of the separable experience, as the issue is not necessarily the connection to feeling, but rather the idea that music is a mere means or vehicle for some composer's feelings.

⁹⁰ Budd 1985: 124

⁹¹ Budd 1995: 4-5

⁹² Ridley 1995: 63

Thusly, 'I protest only against the erroneous involvement of feeling in science and thus strive against these aesthetic visionaries who, while pretending to tell musicians what to do, merely expose their own tinkling opium dreams'.⁹³

Thus, we can conclude, that the feeling-theory, which suggests that feeling is the content music represents, is guilty of committing the heresy of separable experiences if we endorse the cognitive theory of feeling. As whatever feeling is valued and experienced is not something which is the content of music, rather it is an effect of the musical experience. Thus, the feeling experience and the musical experience are two experiences which do not have a necessary connection.

The conclusion of the aforementioned argument is that music's content cannot be the representation for specific feeling as what specifies said feeling, i.e., concepts and objects, is exactly what music is lacking. Hence, any connection between feeling and music will be a connection which considers music a mere means to a feeling and the question of beauty would rest on the feeling and music would lose any autonomous significance.⁹⁴

In other words, the feeling-theory fails in being able to provide a foundation for a principle of musical aesthetics. However, this should not automatically be understood as dismissing everything that goes by the name of feeling.⁹⁵

Motion

Although Hanslick does indeed exclude specific feeling from being the content that music represents, he does not exclude feeling altogether. The idea that there is some link between feeling and emotion is evident, however, what is also evident is that this connection is not a defining one, i.e., music does not represent the content of feeling.

⁹³ Hanslick 1986: xxii

⁹⁴ This seems to be what Yanal 2006 is suggesting as 'Hanslick's third thesis', namely the fact that even if music and feeling can be connected the 'beauty of a piece of music and its expression properties are disconnected'. Yanal 2006: 259.

⁹⁵ Zangwill suggest that 'Music, in itself, has nothing to do with emotions' 2004: 29. I suggest that this is a misrepresentation of Hanslick's views.

‘What then, from the feeling, can music present if not their content? Only the same dynamic...It can reproduce the motion of a physical process according to the prevailing momentum: fast, slow, strong, weak, rising, falling. Motion is just one attribute, however, one moment of feeling, not feeling itself. It is generally accepted that music’s representational capacity is satisfactorily defined when we assert that it can signify not the particular object of feeling, but rather the feeling itself, e.g., not the person loved, but rather Love. But in fact music can do the one as little as the other. It can depict not love but only such motion as can occur in connection with love or any other idea, like Virtue and Immorality. The assurance of theoreticians that music cannot represent abstract ideas is superfluous: No art can do this. It goes without saying that only ideas, i.e., activated concepts, are the content of artistic embodiment, but also that instrumental music cannot represent the ideas of love, anger, fear, because between those ideas and the beautiful combinations of musical tones there exist no necessary connection. Then which moment of these ideas is it that music knows how to seize so effectively? The answer: motion. (This is, of course, “motion” in the wider sense, which also includes increasing or decreasing of single notes or chords.) Motion is the ingredient which music has in common with emotional states and which it is able to shape creatively in a thousand shades and contrasts. The concept of motion has up to now been conspicuously neglected in investigations of the nature and effects of music. It seems to us the most important and fruitful concept’.⁹⁶

The idea of motion is what music is able to represent that is shared with feeling. There are a few key claims made in this passage which will be important for further discussion. The main idea here, that music is able to express motion is not another way to say that music can thus express emotions, as what defines an emotion, i.e., makes it specific is objects and concepts and not the motion in and of itself.

‘Speaking more rationally, one can only mean by this that music should embody the motion of feeling, abstracted from the content itself, i.e., from what is felt. This we have called the dynamics of feeling and have entirely conceded it to

⁹⁶ Hanslick 1986: 11

music. This ingredient of music, however, is not a representation of unspecific feeling. The term unspecific and representation are contradictory. Mental motion [*Seelenbewegungen*] as motion pure and simple, with no content, cannot be the subject for artistic embodiment, because there is no way of taking hold of them without answering questions about what moves or what is moved'.⁹⁷

This is further connected to the fact that form is not what defines, rather, one could understand it as something which encloses, whereas, the content is what is enclosed, and the defining aspects of the form will be in connection to its content, i.e. what has been formed. We are not able to comprehend the one without the other, or at least not with the same comprehension as we desire when we say that we comprehend a piece of art. In other words, motion or the dynamics of feeling is a link found between music and emotions, however, as this is not the actual feeling so to speak, but rather something that can accompany a feeling, the definiteness lies not in the motion, thus we cannot understand the motions as anything before we know what moves or is moved.

Motion is a concept used by Hanslick throughout the book and is to be considered as a concept that captures not merely spatial movement but movement of the mind, i.e., mental motion [*Seelenbewegungen*].

However, I suggest that it would be helpful to clarify what Hanslick means when he says 'motion', as I suggest this too has its origin in Kantian philosophy. Kant's idea of motion is that motion is not something that is a property of the object, rather it is a way in which the product is structured to be understood by the mind.

'Motion presuppose the perception of something movable; consequently the movable must be something that is found *in space only through experience*, and must therefore be an empirical datum'.⁹⁸

As such, motion is an experience of something moving where the motion is part of our experience, or in other words, motion is a mode of experience and not a property of the object.

⁹⁷ Hanslick 1986: 20

⁹⁸ Kant 1929 CP: §82

Hanslick generally uses the word 'motion' when he is considering processes that happens both inside the mind and outside the mind. It may be helpful for the reader to consider this kind of motion as a process, something which moves but not in a very literal sense. Rather, it would be things such as moving from not understanding to understanding something, becoming aware of things, or indeed such as other activities which are not static. With regard to the current discussion then, the idea of motion and its connection to feeling is telling us something about what kind of impression music makes.

The idea of motion, and mental motion, making something 'inner' move, is something which will be further discussed throughout this thesis. However, the importance here is that this quality of motion is something that music can represent. I suggest that for Hanslick, motion is a fruitful concept because it lets us in on how music becomes alive. Music is not static, it is, when experienced, experienced as moving. One tone follows another, and then another, in succession of toneforms.⁹⁹ But this connection, although vital, is not a connection that can stand as a foundation for the principle of the musically beautiful.

'Every genuine artwork stands in some kind of relation to our feeling, but none in an exclusive relation. Thus we say nothing at all concerning the crucial aesthetical principle of music if we merely characterize music in general, according to its effects upon feeling, just as little, perhaps, as we would get to know the real nature of wine by getting drunk. It depends solely upon the particular manner in which such feelings have been aroused by music. Thus, instead of clinging to the secondary and vague feeling-effects of musical phenomena¹⁰⁰, we would do better to penetrate to the inner nature of the works and try, from the principles of their

⁹⁹ This sort of idea runs through all of Hanslick's writings. The idea of motion being an essential feature of what we consider music to be and our musical experience. It is even featured in the main positive thesis, as will be discussed in due course.

¹⁰⁰ See footnote on p. 18.

own structure, to account for the unique efficacy of the impressions we receive from them'.¹⁰¹

This quote summarises Hanslick's intentions nicely. The idea is not to exclude feeling as having any sort of relation to music, nor is it to exclude music as being expressive. Rather it is an appeal to try and find what music is actually capable of expressing, as the expression is an immediate representation of the content, and, it is this expression that we value. Furthermore, this would be what could stand as a principle of musical aesthetics, i.e., the musically beautiful. What we have gathered thus far is that this content cannot be the representation of specific feeling, that music is able to represent motion and that this has a connection to feeling but not a definitive nor a necessary one.

¹⁰¹ Hanslick 1986: 6

II.III The content of music is...

After having concluded that the content of music cannot be the representation of specific feeling, we have an empty outline of music, which can now be filled with the positive side of the story. In other words, what is it that music does contain if it is not feeling? Hanslick offers an answer to this at the start of his third chapter.

‘Der Inhalt der Musik sind *tönend bewegte Formen*’.¹⁰²

This is the core of what is known as Hanslick’s positive thesis, and the remainder of this thesis will be dedicated to try and give a proper reading of this main statement. This statement, I suggest, has been the source of many misunderstandings that have excluded Hanslick from being considered as saying anything beyond a mere formalistic suggestion of musical aesthetics. These misunderstandings mainly spring from reading this statement in light of the negative story and without a proper understanding of Hanslick’s positive story. Hanslick’s positive story is built on a few very key assumptions, some of which are not fully fleshed out; however, I suggest that to fully understand what Hanslick means these assumptions need to be dealt with.

To be able to understand Hanslick’s main positive story we need to be able to understand what Hanslick means by *Inhalt* and *Gehalt*. This understanding springs from the idea of music as contentless, which is mentioned by Hanslick. However, the main assumption rests on the fact that the idea of contentlessness justifies a special understanding of the idea of content in music. Thus, to be able to fully understand Hanslick’s picture we need to resolve, understand and justify the issue of content.

When the foundation for the positive story is set in place, this positive main thesis will be read in a different way which at least allows for an alternative way of understanding Hanslick which would make him a formalist but not a purist.

The issue of content

The main positive thesis about music’s *Inhalt*, can only properly be understood if it is read as part of what constitutes music. Music does not merely have *Inhalt* it also has *Gehalt*.

¹⁰² Hanslick 1922: 59

Gehalt, as we will come to see, is an essential part of music, and it is necessary for Hanslick's theory of the particularly musically beautiful.

Hanslick suggests in the original German text that music has both *Inhalt* and *Gehalt*, however, the justification or need for such a distinction in art is not specified or even dealt with before the last chapter where the idea of music as *Inhaltless*¹⁰³[contentless] is discussed. The discussion opens as follows:

'Has music a content? Since people first gave thought to music, this has been the question most passionately debated. It has been answered categorically in both the affirmative and the negative. Eminent people, mostly philosophers, have affirmed the contentlessness [*Inhaltslosigkeit*]¹⁰⁴ of music: Rousseau, Kant, Hegel, Herbart, Kahlert'.¹⁰⁵

Considering music as *Inhaltless* [contentless] comes from, amongst others, a Kantian tradition of trying to get to grips with something akin to the aesthetic ideas. Kant explains the aesthetic ideas in his *Critique of Judgment*:

'by an aesthetical idea I mean that representation of the imagination which induces much thought, yet without the possibility of any definite thought, whatever, i.e. in concepts, being adequate to it, and which language, consequently, can never get quite on level terms with or render completely intelligible'.¹⁰⁶¹⁰⁷

These aesthetic ideas come very close to what can be interpreted as the goal of Hanslick's aesthetics investigation, trying to find what these sort of ideas would be in music.

¹⁰³ I have chosen to use this word which is a mixture of the original German word and English because it creates less confusion than using the word content, seeing as both *Inhalt* and *Gehalt* can be thought of as content. When this word is used it should be read as lacking *Inhalt*, i.e., the German word *Inhaltslosigkeit*, but not necessarily as lacking content as in being empty.

¹⁰⁴ Hanslick 1922: 160

¹⁰⁵ Hanslick 1986: 77

¹⁰⁶ Kant 1978 CJ: §49

¹⁰⁷ A real comparison between the original German Kantian text and Hanslick would have been both interesting and fruitful, however, there is indeed not space for it in this thesis yet the connections I have found would merit such a project being pursued in the future.

Furthermore, it follows from this sort of reasoning that the definiteness we find in specific feelings would not be identical to these aesthetics ideas, specific feelings are defined by their conceptual essence whereas aesthetic ideas are not. This leads to the opening of the positive story where Hanslick is trying to discuss what these sort of aesthetic ideas would be in music, i.e. try to find the particularly musically beautiful. And it is on this basis that Hanslick finds issues with the concept of content.

The idea of *Inhaltlessness* [contentlessness], with regards to Hanslick, is based on the idea of the lack of conceptual content. The main intention here is to qualify the kind of 'content' music has. Thus, the idea of contentlessness does not mean that music is empty rather it is merely an overstatement to provoke the idea of a different kind of content. In other words, Hanslick is trying to figure out what music can contain by denying different kinds of contents to music so to speak. He has negated the idea of feeling, and other such 'contents' which cannot stand as a foundation for a principle of the musically beautiful, thusly.

The main reason for suggesting that music is *Inhaltless* is based on the idea of music not having an independent content, in other words, in music there is no separation between form and content. This idea is crucial as it suggests a specific understanding of music's *Inhalt* and maybe more importantly of music's *Gehalt*. I suggest that the positive story and the positive main thesis cannot be properly understood if we do not understand that the idea of *Inhalt* is different in art, as in art there is no separation between form and content. Although the idea of contentlessness is addressed by Hanslick, the connection between what this idea of contentlessness means and the connection to *Gehalt* and *Inhalt* is not argued for. Although, the idea of *Inhalt* and *Gehalt* seems to be a reason for why music cannot have a distinction between form and matter.

If we consider the fact that Hanslick's positive thesis rest on many of these assumptions, the objections and misreadings, seem understandable. However, I suggest that the aim of Hanslick is still clear, but the arguments and explanations of why he is suggesting what he does is lacking. Hanslick offers no clear argument of how the idea of contentlessness is supposed to underline the way in which we understand the ideas of *Inhalt* and *Gehalt*, i.e. why there is no distinction between form and content in music.

A philosopher who's grappling with the same ideas and does suggest a clear distinction of this kind, is R.G. Collingwood in his work *The Principles of Art*.¹⁰⁸ The resemblance between the two accounts is significant, and although the accounts are not identical they are discussing the same kind of ideas and issues. Thus, the main element of Hanslick's argument which is missing, namely an explanation of the lack of a distinction between form and content which the further understanding of *Inhalt* and *Gehalt* rest on, is found in Collingwood. The main idea with the *Inhalt* and *Gehalt* distinction is that it says something that is particular about music (art), and considering Collingwood will enable an understanding how this distinction is a necessary result of the arguments offered that separate art from craft.

The main positive story relies on an understanding of *Inhalt* and *Gehalt*, as Hanslick will suggest that *Gehalt* is necessary for beauty, but this idea relies on the idea of *Inhaltlessness*, which is explained by the quintessential distinction. Thus, to be able to create an entire picture of the story I interpret Hanslick as wanting to tell, the arguments from Collingwood will enable a deeper understanding and fill in some of the gaps left from Hanslick's assumptions.

The following chapter will therefore discuss the ideas suggested by Collingwood, and further offer a strong reading of his fifth distinction. Which in turn offers double service as a distinction which actually separates art from craft, and also offers justification for Hanslick's claim. This understanding enables the further investigation of *Inhalt* and *Gehalt*, which is essential for Hanslick's positive story. The denial of the quintessential distinction forces the idea of another kind of distinction which is necessary in art, which will be the topic discussed in the fourth chapter. The conclusion of this chapter will finally enable us to see a full picture of the foundation which Hanslick is basing his positive thesis on. In other words, we will then be at a place to properly understand Hanslick's positive story without reading it in light of the negative story.

¹⁰⁸ 1958.

Chapter III: 'Form' and 'Content'

'We who write and read this book are persons interested in art. We live in a world where most of what goes by that name is amusement. Here is our garden. It seems to need cultivating'.¹⁰⁹



The first part of this chapter is dedicated to giving a brief introduction to Collingwood's theory of art,¹¹⁰ the six distinctions he offers to highlight what separates art from craft, and the issues and definition of 'art proper'.

The second part, 'The Quintessential distinction', offers a discussion of Collingwood's fifth distinction between form and matter, which need not occur in art yet always occur in craft. However, the particularity which we demand of a piece of art excludes this distinction from occurring in art, therefore, this discussion will suggest a strong reading of the form-matter distinction, where the distinction is necessary for craft yet never exists in art.

The third part of this chapter suggests how the ideas from Collingwood are able to explain Hanslick's claim of *Inhaltlessness* [contentlessness]. The quintessential distinction shows, with a strong reading, how there is no separation between form and matter in art. This is very similar to the idea Hanslick suggests when he states that there is no content as opposed to the form, and no form independent of the content.¹¹¹ Thus, the quintessential distinction shows how the idea of contentlessness should be understood, as only if we understand the idea of *Inhaltlessness* [contentlessness] does the idea of the "real" content, i.e., *Gehalt* of music become apparent.

¹⁰⁹ Collingwood 1958: 104

¹¹⁰ For a good introduction to Collingwood read: Aaron Ridley's book *R.G. Collingwood* (1999).

¹¹¹ Hanslick 1986: 78

III.I The Principles of Art

In *Principles of Art* Collingwood's project is to answer the question of what art is, to find that which is specific to art. This starts by reacting to what he calls the 'technical theory of art'.¹¹² The technical theory of art has earned its name due to the perspective of art as some kind of craft, something which can have a technique. However, Collingwood suggests that art is an activity that cannot have a technique. Thus, the main goal is to try and be able to offer an argument for what separates art from craft, which is suggested by highlighting six distinctions.

Distinctions

What is art and what is craft is easily confused, as more often than not there are elements of craft in the process or creation of an artwork and there are instances of craft which are considered to be art. Therefore, the misunderstanding is not one of calling crafts 'art' or arts 'craft', as the two are not mutually exclusive, rather it is one where we fail to distinguish the aspects of a piece of art which are 'borrowed' from craft and the aspects which are specific to art.

Collingwood separates art proper from other 'arts', falsely so called, such as craft by offering six characteristic distinctions that always occur in craft, yet need not occur in art.¹¹³

1. The means/end distinction: 'Craft always involves a distinction between means and end, each clearly conceived of as something distinct from the other but related to it'.¹¹⁴ The means is what is used to arrive at the end such as materials and tools, and the end is the product, i.e., what is crafted.
2. The planning execution/distinction: in craft, 'The result to be obtained is preconceived or thought out before being arrived at. The craftsman knows what

¹¹² Collingwood 1958: 19

¹¹³ This would entail that the distinctions could exist in art yet they need not, i.e. this would be a weak reading.

¹¹⁴ Collingwood 1958: 17

he wants to make before he makes it'.¹¹⁵ There is a distinction between the plan of making something and the activity of doing so, this is possible as the plan is identical to the product thus the time or process of execution does not affect the finished result. The craftsman needs to plan first before executing, as he uses the plan to find the right tools, material, and technique.

3. The reversibility of means and end: in craft, 'Means and end are related in one way in the process of planning; in the opposite way in the process of execution'.¹¹⁶ In other words, in the planning process the end is before the means, but in the execution process the means is before the end.
4. The raw material/finished product distinction: 'A craft is always exercised upon something, and aims at the transformation of this into something different'.¹¹⁷ There is a distinction between already existing raw material, and the finished product of craft, seeing as the finished product has been transformed into something else.
5. The form/matter distinction: in craft, 'The matter is what is identical in the raw material and the finished product; the form is what is different, what the exercise of the craft changes'.¹¹⁸ In other words, the raw material is transformed in the activity of craft by being crafted into the desired form.
6. The hierarchical relation: 'There is a hierarchical relation between various crafts, one supplying what another needs, one using what another provides'.¹¹⁹ For example, transforming iron into nails, which then are used by the carpenter to make a table.

Looking at them separately can be helpful, however, they are all distinctions which considers the same activity, namely that of craft. Thus, they are all intertwined and

¹¹⁵ Collingwood 1958: 17-18

¹¹⁶ Collingwood 1958: 18

¹¹⁷ Collingwood 1958: 18

¹¹⁸ Collingwood 1958: 18

¹¹⁹ Collingwood 1958: 15-16

together they create an organic structure which considers different aspects of the same activity, and it creates the following complete picture of the activity of craft:

First, there is a craftsman who wants to make something. The craftsman then has a *plan* of what he wants to make. This *plan* is a description of an object, this description is the *end*. The craftsman then finds the *means* which he needs to fulfil his *end*, i.e., he finds the *raw material* which he can transform into the desired *end* by the activity of craft. The craftsman can then *execute* his *plan* and use the *means*; i.e. impose the *form* on the *raw material* transforming it into the *matter* of the desired *end*. The *form* and *matter* then coexist in the now *finished product* which, if the activity has been successful, fits the described specifications of the *end* as *planned* in the craftsman's head.

In practice: if I want to make a table, I have a plan and an idea of what this table should look like. I then use this design to find the appropriate means to achieve this end, I find the raw material of wood which I can transform to fit a table-shape by the activity of carpentry. The form of table is thus imposed on the raw material of wood, and the wood becomes table-shape and thus becomes the matter of that table. This would be an activity of craft.

Craft is thus an activity of creating a thing of a certain kind; a thing of a certain kind is a thing that fits a set of descriptions. As the activity of craft starts with the idea or desire to create a thing of a certain kind, as we saw in the description of the activity above, foreknowledge of what kind of thing we desire to make is necessary for craft. In other words, before we can go ahead and make a table we need to know that what we want to make is a table, as, this desire of a preconceived end is what enables the different steps of the activity of craft. Thus, it is this foreknowledge which makes it an activity of craft rather than an accident.

‘The craftsman’s skill is his knowledge of the means necessary to realize a given end, and his mastery of these means. A joiner making a table shows his skills by knowing what materials and what tools are needed to make it, and being able to use these in such a way as to produce the table exactly as specified’.¹²⁰

¹²⁰ Collingwood 1958: 28

A craftsman who is not able to produce the thing he set out to do is merely a bad craftsman. What makes a good craftsman is the ability to create a thing of a certain kind in the best or most efficient way.

Surely, some degree of these distinctions do indeed occur in most art, yet as Collingwood claims: 'To prove it false we need only show that there are admitted examples of art of which it does not apply',¹²¹ in other words all we need is one example of what we call art that does not adhere to any of the distinctions. This would be a case of what Collingwood calls 'art proper'.

What is art (proper) then?

The short answer to what art is, is that art is expression.¹²² However, Collingwood has a very specific definition of what he takes expression to be, i.e., what is expressed and how it occurs. What is being expressed in art has something to do with emotions, yet what Collingwood means by expression of emotion is distinguished from arousal, description, or betrayal of emotion.

Arousal of emotion is defined by Collingwood as 'bringing into existence, by determinate means, something whose existence is conceived in advance as possible and desirable',¹²³ these characteristics are those we have come to know as craft which entails that they cannot be what is distinctive about art. Again, the feeling-theory, as discussed by Hanslick, comes out as a theory more akin to craft, and not art. However, although arousal of emotion in this way is something borrowed from craft this does not entail that art does not deal with emotions themselves.¹²⁴

Expressing an emotion is also very different from betraying an emotion, yet often the two are confused. Betraying an emotion is 'exhibiting symptoms of it'.¹²⁵ The common thought that things such as redness, paleness, tears and such are expressions of emotions

¹²¹ Collingwood 1958: 29

¹²² Collingwood 1958: 105-124

¹²³ Collingwood 1958: 108

¹²⁴ Collingwood 1958: 108

¹²⁵ Collingwood 1958: 121

is certainly true, yet the distinction lies in improper and proper use of expression in the context provided here. 'Turning pale and stammering is a natural accompaniment of fear, but a person who in addition to being afraid also turns pale and stammers does not thereby become conscious of the precise quality of his emotion'.¹²⁶ Proper expression has to do with becoming aware or conscious of what one is feeling, it is an activity of consciousness not of the senses,¹²⁷ the betrayal of emotion, or rather the exhibition of emotion symptoms are generally a side effect, a bodily happening which is usually not something we have any control over.

Describing an emotion is also different from expressing an emotion. When we describe an emotion using words for example, there need not be any reference to the actual felt feeling at all. 'Indeed, so far as they simply and solely express it, they cannot contain any such reference'¹²⁸, seeing as what is described is a generalisation whereas the feeling of anger would be a particular instance of anger. 'To describe a thing is to call it a thing of such and such a kind: to bring it under a conception, to classify it. Expression, on the contrary, individualises'.¹²⁹ In other words, the expression is not something which can be substituted or generalised, it has no replacement as what is desired is a particular: 'He does not want a thing of a certain kind, he wants a certain thing'.¹³⁰

Hanslick makes the same kind of argument when he suggests that we often use emotional words to describe our musical experience, but this is merely to be able to describe it, and it does not follow from this that what we describe and what we experience is identical.¹³¹

Expression could be considered more like a process than a mere definition, a process of trying to get something clear. What happens is that a man may have impressions from the world, but these impressions are not yet understood. The man may now become aware

¹²⁶ Collingwood 1958: 122

¹²⁷ This is very similar to the idea of senses versus feeling discussed in the previous chapter. Hanslick states 'feeling is becoming aware of our mental state' (1986: 3), this rings true with what Collingwood is suggesting here.

¹²⁸ Collingwood 1958: 112

¹²⁹ Collingwood 1958: 112

¹³⁰ Collingwood 1958: 114

¹³¹ Hanslick 1986: 32

that he is feeling something, an awareness of impressions having entered his mind or consciousness, nevertheless he is unaware or ignorant to its nature. He can only say 'I feel... I don't know what I feel'.¹³² 'From this helpless and oppressed condition he extricates himself by doing something which we call expressing himself'.¹³³ The act of expressing oneself is then becoming aware or conscious of what it is that I am feeling. In other words, expression is an activity of consciousness, of becoming conscious of something. When a feeling becomes known, i.e., expressed, it becomes more than a mere 'I feel' or a feeling, it becomes an emotion. An emotion¹³⁴ for Collingwood, is something which has been imbued with meaning, i.e., it is something which we now know and understand. The act of expression is trying to clarify and coming to understand one's own emotions, the act in and of itself occurs in the desire to make something clear which is not clear.

Prior to the act of expression there is no emotion known, as 'until a man has expressed his emotion, he does not yet know what emotion it is'.¹³⁵ The specific expression does not exist or is knowable until the clarification process is done, it becomes clear and known through the act of expression. In other words, 'the end is not something foreseen and preconceived, to which appropriate means can be thought out in the light of our knowledge of its special character'.¹³⁶ Therefore, the act of expression cannot be seen as a craft, as craft presupposes a pre-conceivable end before the craft takes place. Without such a specific end in mind there can be no means to such end, there can be no planning prior to the execution, there can be no preconceived knowledge of the raw material of which the end will be carved out as none of this is accessible prior to the activity of expression. It is not the case that we know what we want to say and then say it through expressing ourselves, rather the act and process of expression is to figure out what it was that you wanted to say in the first place;

¹³² Collingwood 1958: 109

¹³³ Collingwood 1958: 109

¹³⁴ Collingwood seems to suggest that emotions are not limited to what we generally would refer to as emotions, but is to be understood as including other mind related stuff such as thoughts and ideas 1958: 267-268.

¹³⁵ Collingwood 1958: 111

¹³⁶ Collingwood 1958: 111

‘What he wants to say is not present to him as an end towards which means have to be devised; it becomes clear to him only as the poem takes shape in his mind’.¹³⁷ Hence, ‘Expression is an activity of which there can be no technique’.¹³⁸

The problem of representation

The same confusion between art proper and craft arises in the idea and application of what we call representation. Art is often thought of as something which is representative or which represents. Collingwood on the other hand considers representation as ‘a matter of skill, a craft of a special kind’,¹³⁹ which suggests that any art which is considered to be representative or a representation is a work of craft not art. This relates to the previous conviction of Hanslick with regards to the feeling-theory, as an artist trying to arouse a specific feeling in the audience is doing something more akin to craft than what will be shown to be art. Thus, Hanslick was right to object to the feeling-theory as the theory fails to say something about music as an art. If music represents specific feeling it would not be what is particular to music.

What Collingwood wants to suggest is not a separation between things that are a representation and things which are art, as, ‘[a] representation may be a work of art; but what makes it a representation is one thing, what makes it a work of art is another’.¹⁴⁰ In the same manner as there may be craft like elements in art, there may also be representation in art, but neither of those are necessary for art to be art. The same is argued by Hanslick with regards to the feeling-theory, the idea is not that feelings cannot be aroused from music, the claim is merely that these feelings are not the particularly musically beautiful, i.e., what makes it art.

The point is not that art is not representation, as a lot of art is, such as portraits. However, the point is that what makes it a good representation of a face, i.e. the likeness or resemblance to the face in question, (or what makes a piece of music a good representation of a specific feeling), and what makes it good art are two different things.

¹³⁷ Collingwood 1958: 29

¹³⁸ Collingwood 1958: 111

¹³⁹ Collingwood 1958: 42

¹⁴⁰ Collingwood 1958: 43

If it is merely likeness we are after, a photo of a face would always be better at representing the bodily features.¹⁴¹ Being a painter who is good at painting likenesses is a matter of technique, being able to paint what one sees is a matter of skill, and it is measured in how accurate the resemblance is.

‘Thus a commercial portrait, such as most of those one sees on the walls of exhibitions, is in one sense a work of art and in one sense not a work of art: it is a work in which artistic motives are genuinely present, but denatured by subordination to a non-artistic end, the end of representation’.¹⁴²

Hence, art could be both a representation and art proper, yet the aspects that make it art proper and those that makes it representational would be two different things. In other words, the value of such a representation would not be placed on the aspects which would determine it as art, hence, such aspects could not stand as a foundation for an aesthetic principle.

Expression in art: the artistic process and the listening experience.

Art is expression and what is expressed is some form of emotion; this would be the core of the artistic process. In the same manner as one would have impressions which then would be clarified, one has impressions which lead to or need¹⁴³ clarification in art. The artistic process then could be simplified in the following manner: we get impressions, and the artist’s job is to become aware of these impressions by clarifying them.^{144, 145} The artist is trying to see, and painting (or any other art form) enables him to work through

¹⁴¹ Although there is something to be said for how things may be captured in different ways in art, such that a painting may capture the essence or the spirit of a person, a photo would still be a better likeness to what a person physically looks like.

¹⁴² Collingwood 1958: 45

¹⁴³ One could suggest that what needs to be clarified is already a confusion of a certain type, such as a musical confusion which would need clarifying in music, rather than in words say. Yet there is still a question of whether an impression or, i.e., a confusion which is in need of clarification can be clarified by using different means and whether or not this would make it a different impression.

¹⁴⁴ Collingwood 1958: 309

¹⁴⁵ I suggest that what Collingwood calls emotions here is a concept that captures ideas and thoughts too, and it is not exclusive to what we normally consider to be emotions. Rather I suggest that it is more in line with things happening in the mind, an idea which I suggest can be attributed to Hanslick too.

the process to the result of seeing. 'One paints a thing in order to see it'¹⁴⁶, thus clarifying that which was not clear and expressing a certain specific thing.

'Expression of emotion, simply as expression, is not addressed to any particular audience. It is addressed primarily to the speaker himself, and secondarily to anyone who can understand'.¹⁴⁷

This may sound as if the listener is not important or necessary for expression, yet this is a misunderstanding. What Collingwood is suggesting here, is not that the audience or public is not necessary, rather, he is trying to specify a relation which is not one of the artist as a saviour or missionary, nor as a person who wants to affect or arouse the audience, which would be a work of skill.¹⁴⁸ The relationship Collingwood is suggesting, between the artist and the audience is one which is based on a collaboration, where the audience is not only engaged but furthermore essential for the artist.¹⁴⁹

The act of expression is presented to the onlooker in the piece of art such as a painting or a performance of a piece of music. However, if the audience is merely looking at the painting passively they will not experience the art in full,¹⁵⁰ in the same sense that if we do not understand something we will not have the same experience as if we do. When the listener of music, for example, is hearing music as music, what he is doing in his own mind is to move from the mere impression of manifested sounds to the idea of music. It requires the listener to not merely perceive or passively hear but actively engage his musical understanding, as if not he would only hear noise or sound and not tones and

¹⁴⁶ Collingwood 1958: 303

¹⁴⁷ Collingwood 1958: 111

¹⁴⁸ Collingwood 1958: 301

¹⁴⁹ This kind of dependence is mirrored in Hanslick too, where the idea of the listener is as important as the artist for the art, see Hanslick 1986: 64.

¹⁵⁰ An even stronger claim could be made here, where it could be argued that the passive onlooker will not experience the art at all, or at least not what Collingwood calls 'art proper'.

chords.¹⁵¹ The audience is required to understand a piece of art in a specific way to be able to 'see', i.e. experience, what the painter 'saw'.

What the listener may achieve in the same manner as the artist is the clarification process, yet not by clarifying the composer's emotions but rather understanding the piece of art in a similar state of mind as the artist was when he created it.¹⁵² However, the audience can never achieve the same experience as the artist who created the piece can,¹⁵³ as the audience is not in effect creating the piece of work as such; it is not the case that the audience brings his paints and canvas to have a trip to the art museum to enable the full artistic experience for himself. Rather, what Collingwood is getting at is that after the clarification is done, i.e. the piece of art is manifested, that piece of work can be experienced by the audience as well as the artist in a specific way. This specific way is to understand the piece of art not only as a static work, that we see it in front of us, but rather, with the additional knowledge and attempt to grasp how this artistic process of clarification occurred. Thus, to experience 'the richer and more highly organized experience of a person who has not only looked at it but has painted it as well'.¹⁵⁴ The level of engagement and awareness will reflect the experience one may have of a piece of art, in other words, 'If you want to get more out of an experience, you must put more into it'.¹⁵⁵

Thus, this presupposes not only an active engagement from the audience, but furthermore, it presupposes that what is being expressed is something that can be understood, seeing as '[t]he hearer can understand only if he can add two and two together in his own mind'.¹⁵⁶ One can only understand what is being expressed if one has

¹⁵¹ This sort of idea is exactly what Hanslick is suggesting when he considers the idea of musical understanding, which is discussed in the next chapter. This way of thinking is based on the idea that to experience art requires more than mere senses, it requires something relating to intellect or awareness.

¹⁵² Collingwood 1958: 118-119

¹⁵³ This is considered by Hanslick too when he suggests that the composition is formed but the performance is experienced. A notion we will discuss further in chapter V.

¹⁵⁴ Collingwood 1958: 308

¹⁵⁵ Collingwood 1958: 308

¹⁵⁶ Collingwood 1958: 118

the ability to come to such an understanding.¹⁵⁷ In other words, what the artist is clarifying, what one may achieve for oneself is not the emotions of the artists as his subjective emotions, rather it is a clarification of man.

The idea is not that the composer expresses his emotions through the art. Self-expression does not entail expression of one's personal self, but rather of 'the self' as something which is shared, which can be understood and communicated.

The artist is working for his community 'he undertakes his artistic labour not as a personal effort on his own private behalf, but as a public labour on behalf of the community to which he belongs... not "I feel" but "we feel" ... It is a labour in which he invites the community to participate; for their function as audience is not passively to accept his work, but to do it over again for themselves'.¹⁵⁸

In other words, with the right understanding and grasping of the artistic process the audience can experience the complex work of art.

The idea of this collaboration goes both ways, as the artist is also in need of the audience. The audience is in no way insignificant, rather, they are an invaluable part of the process, as, they are the only way in which to test that one has indeed clarified oneself. The artist wonders 'whether he was speaking the truth or not',¹⁵⁹ and the audience is the measure of truth here. There is no other way of knowing that what has been clarified is an actual clarification and not a corruption of consciousness.¹⁶⁰ Just entertain the thought of something that sounds perfectly sensible in your head, but that makes no sense when it is said out loud. 'Every artist knows that publication of some kind is necessary to him',¹⁶¹ thus, the collaboration between the artist and his audience is essential. 'The aesthetic activity is the activity of speaking. Speech is speech only so far as it is both spoken and heard. A man may, no doubt, speak to himself and be his own hearer; but what he says to

¹⁵⁷ Collingwood 1958: 118

¹⁵⁸ Collingwood 1958: 315

¹⁵⁹ Collingwood 1958: 314

¹⁶⁰ Collingwood 1958: 317

¹⁶¹ Collingwood 1958: 313

himself is in principle capable of being said to anyone sharing his language'.¹⁶² 'The characteristic mark of expression proper is lucidity or intelligibility'.¹⁶³

The previous discussion has created a brief overview of some of the key claims of Collingwood's theory of art. Collingwood is trying to say something about art proper, and to do so he sees it necessary to firstly try to separate art from craft and further clear up any other misunderstandings about the activity of art. This is very similar to Hanslick's own ideas and methodology, where he tries to clear up certain misconceptions and errors to be able to suggest an actual theory of musical aesthetics. The two philosophers are aiming for the same conclusion, namely being able to say something valuable about the particular parts of art which makes it aesthetically valuable. For Collingwood art is expression, which is a process of clarification of some sorts. Art is not the activity of representation, of describing or betraying emotions, nor is it an activity which can have a technique.

As was mentioned previously Hanslick's main positive thesis relies on there not being a distinction between form and content, as only if there is no such distinction can his ideas of *Inhalt* and *Gehalt* be read in the intended way. Content in this context is similar enough to what Collingwood calls matter to suggest that they are talking about the same kind of distinction. Furthermore, both accounts depend on or at least gain from proving that the form and matter distinction does not exist in art or at least any aspect of art that does adhere to this distinction is not what determines its specificity. In the context of this thesis, the quintessential distinction is used to suggest and provide valuable justification for the points Hanslick is trying to make, however, Collingwood is making his claim about art, Hanslick is making his claim about music. Thus, the discussion concerning Collingwood is a discussion about art, but the defence and application to Hanslick is based on the art of music. The following discussion will suggest that the fifth distinction never exist in art, and in this context the art of music, a conclusion which follows from Collingwood's theory of art proper, making the fifth distinction quintessential as it successfully separates art from craft and justifies Hanslick's idea of contentlessness.

¹⁶² Collingwood 1958: 317

¹⁶³ Collingwood 1958: 122

III.II The quintessential distinction

Collingwood suggests that there is a distinction in craft -between form and matter-, this distinction is found in artefacts.¹⁶⁴ The form is what pre-exists as the plan in the craftsman head. The end result is foreseen in this plan, which means that if we execute this plan to make something that fits this description we will end up with an object which fits this description. In short, if you plan to make a table you will only be successful if you have made a table that can fit this description.

When we have the plan we need to find the means to realise that plan, and those means would be some sort of material which becomes the matter. The matter, Collingwood writes, pre-exists as raw material¹⁶⁵, in other words, the matter of a table, i.e. wood, pre-exists the carpenters activity of planning and making a table, either as a tree or as a log that has already found its way into the carpenters workshop. Both the form, as the preconceived plan, (i.e. I want to make this kind of thing), and the matter, as the raw-material, pre-exist the creation of the artefact and thus co-exist in the finished product. In other words, both the form of table and the raw material of wood co-exist in the artefact, the wooden table created by the craftsman. The form and matter then exist separately and can be defined independently of one another. It does not matter what raw material becomes the matter, or what form a raw material is shaped as, as long as it fits a certain kind of description. In other words, we can easily see how the form of a chair could have been imposed on a different matter such as wood, plastic and iron, and how the matter of wood could have accepted a different form say by becoming a chair. If there was no such distinction we could not see how the material could have taken on a different form or vice versa.

The desired end, the end of the plan which is the design which determines the means necessary to achieve such an end and finally the end of the finished product is the same end. In other words, the craft process starts and finishes with the same end, where the end is achieved by following a certain kind or technique making it a technical kind of end. This end necessarily is the same from the start of the process until the end of the process

¹⁶⁴ Collingwood 1958: 24

¹⁶⁵ Collingwood 1958: 24

seeing as this is what enables not only the process of crafting the desired end, but furthermore the knowledge of whether or not we have achieved the desired end. Thus, there has to be a distinction between the form as the end and the matter as the form as the end is what enables the raw material to become the matter of an end.

The activity of craft can be summarised as an activity which creates a thing of a certain kind. A thing of a certain kind is something that fits a certain kind of description; this description is exhaustive, i.e. all you need to make an object of this kind is to make something that fits that description. Craft is therefore an activity of realising a technical end, in other words an end that can have a technique. Thus, there is always in craft a separation between form and matter.

Does this distinction exist in art?

The previous section discussed how the distinction between form and matter functions in craft and how it is necessary in craft as craft is the activity of making a thing of a certain kind. However, the question that will occupy the following paragraphs is whether such distinction also exists in the activity of art.

First let us consider what would be akin to *matter* in art. Matter as we saw is what pre-exists as raw material such as wood or marble. The idea of raw material is unproblematic for some arts such as sculpture and painting, yet it is more problematic to see what such raw material would be for other arts. We can easily see how paints, brushes, and canvases, are the raw material of paintings, but what would it be for music or poetry?

When a craftsman creates a table he chooses a material; his material for the table in question is a particular piece of wood which he has foreseen as something which can be transformed into the desired shape. In arts, such as music and poetry, no such raw material is available. It is not the case that the composer picks out a predetermined selection of tones, rather he starts with all the tones that he knows. In the same manner the poet doesn't start with a chunk of language, rather he starts with all the words he knows. Hanslick puts it rather nicely when he says: 'The measurable tone and the tonal system are, first of all, *that by means of which* the composer creates, not *what* he

creates'.¹⁶⁶ This captures an important aspect of the difference between material and what we will come to know as a medium. A medium is to be understood as that which is worked with or within, such as the medium that a carpenter works with is all of wood, or the medium of a poet is language. The raw material or matter¹⁶⁷ on the other hand is the specific piece of a medium such as a particular piece of wood or a slab of iron.

This highlights another important difference, namely that the aim or the desired end in the two activities is not the same. In craft, the desired end is the form or in other words the preconceived plan; however, as was mentioned in the previous discussion, the artist does not have a plan in this way. Art has to do with what Collingwood calls expression and the main idea relies on the expression not being clear prior to the activity. In other words, the artist is trying to get something clear, and he gets it clear by creating art. Surely the artist needs some sort of medium or something akin to a material, but the artist also seems to want something else, namely to clarify himself. Thus, in art there seems to be two kinds of ends, a technical end, which is shared with craft, but also an expressive end.

To make a thing of a certain kind is to make a thing which fits a certain description and '...description generalizes. To describe a thing is to call it a thing of such and such a kind: to bring it under a conception, to classify it. Expression on the contrary, individualizes'.¹⁶⁸ Collingwood suggests that art is the activity of expression; the artist desires not merely a thing of a certain kind but a certain thing. Hence, the activity of art has two kinds of ends.

The technical end found in art is shared with craft, however, the expressive end is not. Thus, it would be reasonable to assume that anything that has to do with what is specific or proper in art is found in what can be called the expressive end. The expressive end separates itself from the technical end by not being known or predetermined, prior to the activity of art taking place.

¹⁶⁶ Hanslick 1986: 72

¹⁶⁷ I suggest that raw material and matter can be talked about interchangeably for my purposes.

¹⁶⁸ Collingwood 1958: 112

‘Until a man has expressed his emotion, he does not yet know what emotion it is....He is trying to find out what these emotions are. There is certainly here a direct process: an effort, that is, directed upon a certain end; but the end is not something foreseen and preconceived, to which appropriate means can be thought out in the light of our knowledge of its special character’.¹⁶⁹

The point is not that the poet does not use words, or that the composer is not using tones, rather, the point is that the poet in his artistic activity ‘does not “use” a “ready-made” language, it “creates” language as it goes along’.¹⁷⁰ What this means is not that a poet is creating some sort of new words, rather the poet by engaging in the artistic activity is realising new meanings, or rather expressions, he is realising a certain thing, and this thing is a clarification of a specific emotion which prior to this activity was not clear. Hence, whatever made this thought clear is not something we knew before. ‘The words which occur in the poem were never before his mind as a whole in an order different from that of the poem’,¹⁷¹ rather, the words the poet knows enables him to clarify his emotions serving as the medium of his poetical excursion.

Art has a technical end, but the technical end can only give us a thing of a certain kind, which means that the technical end is not exhaustive of what will be the finished product of an artistic activity, as, the activity of art is not merely the desire for a thing of a certain kind but also of a certain thing, i.e., the expressive end. Therefore, ‘It is no use to him [the artist] to get something else clear, however like this other thing may be. Nothing will serve as a substitute’.¹⁷²

In craft, the form and matter distinction is necessary. In art, the form cannot be separated from the matter as there is no predetermined form which can be understood and described in full prior to the activity taking place. Thus, what can be described prior to the activity is not what constitutes the entirety of the end of the finished artwork. Hence, there is no end of which there can be means, no raw material that can be formed into and

¹⁶⁹ Collingwood 1958: 111

¹⁷⁰ Collingwood 1958: 275

¹⁷¹ Collingwood 1958: 23

¹⁷² Collingwood 1958: 23

become matter. Thus, when we consider art, talking about form independently of matter makes little sense, because art has two kinds of ends, an expressive end and a technical end.

Strong reading:

The weaker reading of this distinction is that the distinction always occurs in craft yet need not occur in art. However, I will suggest a strong reading of Collingwood's quintessential distinction, and I will use none other than Hanslick himself as evidence.

Hanslick suggests that 'When we talk about the content of a work of art, we can really only make sense of it if we attach form to it. The concepts of content and form mutually determine and complement each other. Where in thought a form does not seem separable from a content, there exists in fact no independent content... This [is a] peculiarity of music, that it possesses form and content inseparably...In music there is no content as opposed to form, because music has no form other than the content'.¹⁷³

Thus, in art, and indeed in music, not only need there not be such a distinction, there exist no such distinction.

If we suggest that there is no separation between form and matter in art, as a result the medium becomes intimately connected with the mediated, as this cannot possibly be seen to have either another form nor another matter. In other words, because art is the activity of creating not merely a thing of a certain kind, e.g. a poem (technical end), but also a certain thing, e.g. a specific poem (the expressive end), art is an activity that has two kinds of ends. Furthermore, because the certain thing is not predetermined but necessarily unknown, the end which is available prior to the activity will never be exhaustive of the end which is the artwork.

Thus, it follows from Collingwood's own theory that if art is expression, and the artist is not merely creating a thing of a kind but a certain thing, which means that art has two kinds of ends, there cannot be a separation between form and matter in art. Because what makes it art proper, i.e. expression, is not captured by the technical end alone, thus

¹⁷³ Hanslick 1986: 80

necessitating the expressive end, which leaves art with two kinds of ends which excludes art from having a distinction between form and matter.

Therefore, I suggest that the fifth distinction is the quintessential distinction as it successfully separates the activity of craft from that of art as the distinction between form and matter is necessary in craft yet it never exist in the activity of art.

The issue of Ideal theory and other objections.

I have thus far presented Collingwood's views in an uncritical manner. This is not so say that there are not serious issues and worries about his account. This thesis is not the time nor the place to address these worries, nevertheless, having a brief introduction to some of the main worries will be beneficial, as well as considering how such objections may affect the current discussion. There are several objections to Collingwood's theory of art, however, the main objections is variations of suggesting that art is private, being something in people's heads, and the idea of it disregarding the medium, in other words, claiming that Collingwood's theory is an ideal theory.¹⁷⁴

In short, an ideal theory of art is a theory which suggest that the artwork or what we value is what is in our heads and not the manifested artwork. In other words, 'The art in his head is the plan that he follows; the painting itself is just a piece of craft'.¹⁷⁵ The medium then merely becomes a means to an end.

The objection does carry some merit, however, I suggest that it is more an issue of misunderstanding than it is a direct objection to what Collinwood is claiming. Aaron Ridley¹⁷⁶ have made significant contributions in way of properly understanding Collinwood. Although several passages in *Principles of Art* can be read as suggesting an ideal theory of art, there are many if not more that suggest that Collinwood is not committed to any such claim.¹⁷⁷ I agree with Aaron Ridley's conviction that this might be more a reflection of some of Collinwood's baggage rather than an objection to his theory

¹⁷⁴ See Wollheim 1980.

¹⁷⁵ Ridley 1999: 18

¹⁷⁶ See Ridley 1997, 1999.

¹⁷⁷ At least not in the case of artworks, as here discussed. For further discussion, see Ridley 1999.

about art. Furthermore, if we consider the previous discussion, I suggest that neither Collinwood nor Hanslick is committed to the idea of 'art proper' existing only in people's heads.

A strong reading of the quintessential distinction suggest that art has two kinds of ends, the technical end and the expressive end. These two ends in art are intimately connected, one does not exist without the other, such that one would not have merely the expressive end without the technical end. One cannot separate between these two ends as one can in craft, they are not a distinction of form and matter, or means and end, they are two kinds of ends, both which constitute and are necessary for what Collinwood calls 'art proper'. The same applies to Hanslick, seeing as the two kinds of end in art, will be suggested to be similar to what Hanslick calls *Inhalt* and *Gehalt*.

In the previous discussion, I concluded that with a strong reading the quintessential distinction never exist in art, on the grounds that the two ends in art are necessary for art and thus excludes art from having such a distinction. A possible objection to this would be that I cannot or have not proven that this would work for everything that we call art. Although, I suggest that a strong reading would count for all arts, I make in this thesis, no claims about other art, however, I am committed to the claim when it comes to the art of music.

Finally, even if one were to suggest that the replies to the objections were not sufficient, it would not be a fatal objection towards the main claims made in this thesis. Hanslick, as will be discussed, claims that music has *Inhalt* and *Gehalt*, both of which are necessary, the two come into being together and cannot be separate. In other words, Hanslick is not an idealist. Thus, his claims do not stand and fall with Collinwood, although, Collinwood offers some helpful clarification.

III.III Music is contentless.

There is no separation between form and matter in art because art has two kinds of ends, as suggested in the strong reading of Collingwood's quintessential distinction. This does not stray far away from what I suggest Hanslick is claiming: there is no separation between form and content in music, and therefore music is contentless.

What the strong reading of the quintessential distinction shows, is that there cannot in art be a distinction between form and matter. This is because art has two kinds of end and not merely the one technical kind of end that craft necessarily has. Thus, the defining end in craft, the technical end, is what enables the form matter distinction in craft, and it is this defining technical end that is lacking in art. This does not entail that art does not have the same end as craft, as indeed it does, however, in art the technical end is not the defining end, it is not what is foreseen and thus planned, executed and achieved, rather art is defined by two ends.

Hanslick refers to the distinction as what Collingwood named the strange 'hybrid distinction, form and content'.^{178, 179} Thus, when Hanslick states that music has no content he is stating the same as Collingwood, namely that there is no matter as separated from the form in art.

Let us consider this in a bit more depth.

'Content in its original and proper sense means what a thing holds, what it includes within itself. In this sense, the tones out of which a piece of music is made, which as its parts constitute it as a whole, are the content itself ...music in fact has no material'.¹⁸⁰

What Hanslick suggests is that there is no material in the sense of how the craftsman has a material, there is no raw material which can be transformed into the matter of a predetermined form. What Hanslick is suggesting is the same as Collingwood, that the artist works within a medium and that 'The measurable tones and the tonal system are, first of all, *that by means of which* the composer creates, not *what* he creates'.¹⁸¹ Thus, in the sense of material, where raw material is transformed into the matter of a thing, music does not have material. In other words, it has no independent content.

¹⁷⁸ Collingwood 1958: 24

¹⁷⁹ The hybrid reference might be referring to many things, although an educated guess would be that Collingwood is referring to the idea of content being a combination of matter and subject, i.e. subject matter.

¹⁸⁰ Hanslick 1986: 78

¹⁸¹ Hanslick 1986: 72

‘An art which lacks prototypal natural beauty has, strictly speaking, no external shape. The original of its form of manifestation is nowhere to be found, hence we can have no concept of it. This art (i.e. music) reiterates no subject matter already known and given a name; therefore it has no nameable content for our thinking in definite concepts... there exists in fact no independent content...there is no content as opposed to form, because music has no form other than content’.¹⁸²

The end of art is not something which is already known and which can be planned and fit a certain description, because arguably the expressive end in art is not something which has been understood before, rather it becomes known by being expressed and is thus also defined by this activity. Whatever would be akin to content in the sense of subject matter is not what we can subsume under a concept, in other words, when we are talking about music’s content we are merely talking about the technical end, and the technical end although necessary is not sufficient for art.

‘It is the mixing up of the concepts of content [*inhalt*], object [*Gegenstand*], and material [*stoff*] which has in this connection caused and still causes so much unclarity, since each uses for its own concept different term or attaches different ideas to the same word. *Content* [*inhalt*] in its original proper sense means what a thing holds, what it includes within itself...We usually confuse *content* with *object*. When we raise the question of content of music, we have in mind the idea of object (material, subject), which, as the ideal conception of the work, stands directly opposed to the tones as “material components”. A content in this sense, a material in the sense of the treated object, is not found in the tone art’.¹⁸³

What Hanslick is suggesting is that the idea of content is not synonymous with music’s meaning or substance. This would be the same claim as Collingwood suggests when he claims that the idea of a technical end is not the only end in art. In other words, the idea of content, *Inhalt* or the technical kinds of end does indeed exist in art, however, it is one of two kinds of ends that constitutes the activity of art, or indeed one could say one of two kinds of ‘contents’.

¹⁸² Hanslick 1986: 80

¹⁸³ Hanslick 1986: 78

It is on this basis that Hanslick suggests that music is contentless. The main motivation for suggesting that music is contentless is to be able to suggest what music actually does contain. This might sound obscure, but what Hanslick is getting at by suggesting that there is no form and content distinction in art is that there is indeed another kind of content which is necessary in art, and this is neither form nor content. We will come to know this as *Gehalt*. The only way to show that *Gehalt* is necessary is to claim that music lacks conventional content.

‘Only by firmly denying any other kind of “content” [*Inhalt*]¹⁸⁴ to music can we preserve music’s “meaning” [*Gehalt*]. This is because from indefinite feelings, to which at best such content is attributable, no *geistige* content derives; rather, in each composition, the content derives from its particular tonal structure as the spontaneous creation of mind out of material compatible with mind [i.e., the tones]’.¹⁸⁵

Gehalt is the second kind of end in art, akin to the expressive end discussed by Collingwood. This end is what separates art from craft, hence, any particularity need at least be considered in relation to this end. In other words, considering music’s content as *Inhalt* without the second kind of end of *Gehalt* will never say anything particular about music or its value. Hence, an investigation of the particularly musically beautiful cannot happen without a consideration and indeed awareness of both ends in music.

What Hanslick is suggesting is not merely that music need not have this form and matter distinction, rather, in virtue of it being art, music cannot have this distinction as what separates it from craft is the fact that there is no autonomous content, no independent content as opposed to its form. Seeing as, Hanslick will suggest that in art form and

¹⁸⁴ In the German text the passage reads as follows: Wie die Individualität sich in der Wahl und Bearbeitung der verschiedenen musikalischen Elemente ausprägt, haben wir im 3. Kapitel berührt. Gegenüber dem Vorwurf der Inhaltlosigkeit also hat die Musik Inhalt, allein musikalischen, welcher ein nicht geringerer Funke des göttlichen Feuers ist, als das Schöne jeder andern Kunst. Nur dadurch aber, daß man jeden andern »Inhalt« der Tonkunst unerbittlich negiert, rettet man deren »Gehalt«. Denn aus dem unbestimmten Gefühle, worauf sich jener Inhalt im besten Fall zurückführt, ist ihr eine geistige Bedeutung nicht abzuleiten, wohl aber aus der bestimmten schönen Tongestaltung als der freien Schöpfung des Geistes aus geistfähigem Material. Hanslick: 1922: 174.

¹⁸⁵ Hanslick 1986: 83

content comes into being as a unity. Thus, music is contentless as music has both *Inhalt* and *Gehalt*.

III.IV *Inhalt, Gehalt* and *Geist*.

What the quintessential distinction shows is that art has two kinds of ends, which rings true with what I interpret Hanslick to be suggesting by separating between *Inhalt* and *Gehalt*. This distinction between *Inhalt* and *Gehalt*, will be shown to be necessary in the art of music. The following section will consider the two different “contents” in music.

‘So far we have proceeded negatively and have sought merely to refute the erroneous assumption that the beauty of music has its being in the representation of feeling. To that sketch, we now have to fill the positive content [*Gehalt*].’¹⁸⁶

This is how Hanslick opens chapter three ‘The Musically Beautiful’ by suggesting that after we have denied the idea of the content of music being the representation of specific feeling we have an outline which is in need of positive *Gehalt*.

In the original German text we find the word *Inhalt* and the word *Gehalt*. However, in the translated text the words have both been translated as content. *Gehalt* and *Inhalt* can indeed both be used to mean content. Thus, the idea of this vital distinction is not made clear at all in the translation. Payzant defends this decision by arguing that the idea is not fully developed before chapter seven although it is mentioned already in chapter three. I suggest that this is not a good way to solve such an issue considering that it undermines the distinction between *Gehalt* and *Inhalt*, which I consider vital to understand Hanslick main positive story.

I suggest that the ignorance of this distinction is what has made, or at least what has contributed to the misunderstandings that have occurred in Hanslick’s account. As the way in which we understand *Inhalt* depends on a further understanding of *Gehalt*, and furthermore the way in which the main thesis is read, i.e., what music ‘contains’, is directly affected by our understanding of this. Thus, I suggest that an understanding of *Inhalt*, and *Gehalt*, is essential before trying to understand the positive thesis in the correct context.

¹⁸⁶ Hanslick 1986: 28

The current translation does indeed separate between ‘ideal content’ [*geistige Gehalt*] and ‘content’ [*Inhalt*], but from this it is not clear what kind of separation we should consider here and to what extent Hanslick’s account hinges on this conception. Again, I suggest that Hanslick did indeed use two different words for a reason, i.e., to really underline and separate the two. The context in which the different words are used is suggestive of how we should understand them, and by translating both as ‘content’, the difference between them dissipates and vital information is missed. Furthermore, using the word ‘ideal’ is not helping the matter. Ideal is a word which can be used in this context, however, it is not a very clear usage nor does it make the argument Hanslick is trying to make very clear. In actual fact, if the main argument of my readings and interpretations of Hanslick are right, or at least carries some merit, then not only does the previous translation render confusion, it fails to consider the idea of the distinction between *Inhalt* and *Gehalt* being the core which carries the entire positive story.

What is clear is that there is a distinction, and this distinction is not only apparent but necessary for music in the context of the musically beautiful. *Inhalt* and *Gehalt* carries striking resemblance to Collingwood’s two kinds of ends, and with the lack of clarity it is fruitful to consider *Inhalt* and *Gehalt* as akin to technical and expressive aspects of music. With these ideas in mind, the following section will discuss *Inhalt* and *Gehalt*.

Inhalt

Inhalt means content,¹⁸⁷ simply put, what a thing is or has. A book’s *Inhalt* is the story, the letters, the papers. There need not be anything evaluative or important in the statement of what something’s *Inhalt* is, it just is.¹⁸⁸ Hanslick suggests that music’s *Inhalt* is forms realised in tone.¹⁸⁹ This statement captures several aspects which constitutes what we consider to be the body, or indeed the *Inhalt*, of music. One of these aspects is captured in the idea of these forms having been part of an activity of realisation, of some sort of motion.

¹⁸⁷ *German Dictionary of Philosophical Terms* 1997: 136

¹⁸⁸ Or at least there need not be anything evaluative connected to the idea of content.

¹⁸⁹ A defence for this translation will feature later.

The way in which these forms move in the context of *Inhalt*, as here discussed is described by Hanslick with an analogy.

‘As children, all of us have much enjoyed the play of colour and shape in a kaleidoscope. Music is a kind of kaleidoscope, although it manifests itself on an incomparably higher level of ideality. Music produces beautiful forms and colours in ever more elaborate diversity, gently overflowing, sharply contrasted, always coherent and yet always new, self-contained and self-fulfilled. The main difference between such a musical audible kaleidoscope and the familiar visible one is that the former presents itself as a direct emanation of an artistically creative spirit, while the latter is no more than a mechanically ingenious plaything. If, not merely in thought but in actuality, we want to raise colour to the level of music, we get involved in the tasteless frivolity of colour organs and the like. The inventions of these devices, for all that, does at least show how the formal aspect of both music and colour rest on the same basis’.¹⁹⁰

The way in which these forms are here described as akin to colours and forms taking shape in front of our eyes may seem degrading to music. However, considering the outline or natural content aspect we are here considering, the idea may be fruitful nonetheless. The point of this analogy is not to say that this is all that music contains, but it is to say that the formalistic aspects of music functions in this manner. Which I suggest is a statement that we can agree to. Music and tones do indeed function in a similar manner, where the tones and relations between them create a sound picture much like the one the kaleidoscope creates with shapes and colours.

Some of these statements are taken directly out of Kant’s playbook.¹⁹¹ Although hours could be spent on comparing and discussing the two, the main profitable suggestion for this discussion is that the formalistic aspect relates to ‘art of the beautiful play of senses’,¹⁹² which is the arts of music and colour; of hearing and sight. Thus, when Hanslick

¹⁹⁰ Hanslick 1986: 29

¹⁹¹ Kant 1978 CJ: §LI

¹⁹² Kant 1978 CJ: §50

suggests that the formalistic aspects of music and colour rest on the same basis, it is likely that he is referring to this Kantian play on the senses.

Inhalt is thought to be merely the things that are materialised. This kind of interpretation rings true with the following quote where Hanslick states that: ‘Such analysis, of course, makes a skeleton out of a blossoming body [körper];¹⁹³ it is apt to destroy all beauty but also at the same time all misguided interpreting’.¹⁹⁴ What I suggest Hanslick is implying, is that when we are trying to consider what music contains, we cannot do that completely, considering the fact that music does not have content in the same sense as other activities. Therefore, either we have to think of content as asking about one part of music, i.e. akin to the technical kind of end, or we need to think of content in a specific musical way. Furthermore, and maybe even more importantly, he is stressing this distinction between this skeleton versus a blossoming body, suggesting that asking for content in this manner will merely give the frame but not the picture. Therefore, when we answer the question of content, all we can say is what is possible to state in words, which will be part of but not everything that constitutes music. The answer of *Inhalt* is one which can be explained by the body of music but it won’t say anything about the soul, so to speak.

‘If some sensitive music lover objects that our art is degraded by analogies [such as the kaleidoscope]...we reply that it is not much to the point whether the analogy is precise or not. We do not degrade a thing by becoming better acquainted with it. If we want to relinquish the attribute of motion,¹⁹⁵ of sequential development, for which the example of the kaleidoscope is particularly apt, we can of course find loftier analogy for the musically beautiful in architecture, in the human body, or in a landscape, which likewise have a primitive

¹⁹³ Hanslick 1922: 31

¹⁹⁴ Hanslick 1986: 14

¹⁹⁵ Motion seems thus not merely to be something connected to the idea of *Inhalt*, but furthermore there seems to be some other kind of motion, maybe a motion which is found in *Gehalt*, this will be elaborated on later. The motion attribute which the example of the kaleidoscope captures or embodies the more mechanical motion, whereas, the other analogies require more motion in the sense of understanding.

beauty of outline and colour (setting aside the soul [*seelen*], and the expression of the mind [*Geistige*]).¹⁹⁶

What this quote expresses, rather clearly, is that there is indeed, a distinction between *Inhalt* and *Gehalt*, with the idea of something having a primitive outline if we remove the soul and any mental expression. We can draw parallels here, between Collingwood's technical kind of end and Hanslick's *Inhalt*. It tells us something about what makes music the kind of thing it is, such as having harmony, rhythm and melody for example. *Inhalt* says something about how music impresses us and how it functions.

Gehalt

Inhalt is what a thing is, what a thing holds. *Gehalt*, on the other hand, should be read as what a thing means, what is its substance, subject matter, or important content.¹⁹⁷

Although substance may be the most common translation, I suggest that meaning suits the current context better, but we can think of it as substance as in the meaningful substance of something. Thus, when Hanslick suggests that we are going to have to fill the positive *Gehalt* of music,¹⁹⁸ he is referring to something more and or other than what can be attributed to *Inhalt*.

Hanslick uses *Gehalt* mainly when talking about *geistige Gehalt*. *Geistige Gehalt* has been translated as 'intellectual content', 'spiritual content', and 'ideal content'. Although the translator have used different words, Hanslick sticks to the same word throughout, namely *geistige Gehalt*. The German word *geistige* means spiritual, intellectual and ideal, depending on the context. Thus, rather than offer one correct translation I will use the word *geistige* and try to give the reader a sense of how it is used and what Hanslick intends by it.

¹⁹⁶ Hanslick 1986: 29

¹⁹⁷ *German Dictionary of Philosophical Terms* 1997: 100

¹⁹⁸ This is the first indication of the importance of *Gehalt* in the context of the musically beautiful, as Hanslick opens the positive story by suggesting that the positive parts of music are those which we connect with *Gehalt*. This can at least be understood as a hint towards the idea of *Gehalt* being what is particular to music.

Geistige is connected to *Geist*. *Geist* is normally translated to mean spirit or soul¹⁹⁹, i.e. that which is not material or physical. The main worry with using the word spirit is the connection to religion and theology, as spirit is often used in connection with a god or deity. However, spirit does also function in language as that which is lively, such as when we talk about someone having spirit, more akin to someone being full of energy, or power, or even creativity. The way in which Hanslick has implemented the word *Geist* is probably merely to distinguish between the physical and what he considered to be immaterial, i.e. the soul or more common nowadays the mind. However, I suggest that thinking of *Geist* as a combination between mind and spirit in the lively sense is what would be the best-suited interpretation of *Geist* in this context.²⁰⁰

Geist, in Kantian philosophy, which at this point can almost be used as a guideline to how Hanslick would have understood it,

‘in an aesthetical sense, signifies the animating principle in the mind. But that whereby this principle animates the psychic substance (*seele*)...this principle is nothing else than the faculty of presenting *aesthetic ideas*. But, by an aesthetical idea I mean that representation of the imagination which induces much thought, yet without the possibility of any definite thought, whatever, i.e. in concepts, being adequate to it, and which language, consequently, can never get quite on level terms with or render completely intelligible’.²⁰¹

Concerning the current context, what Kant is saying comes to this. *Geist* is the ability of the mind to make things come alive, it makes aesthetical ideas come to life, to animate in our psychic substance, i.e. the soul; these ideas makes us think, but it does not represent a clear thought which can be described, in full, in words.

What is being suggested here is that there are things which we consider as part of art, i.e., these aesthetical ideas, which cannot be described in full in words, *Geist* is that in the

¹⁹⁹ *German Dictionary of Philosophical Terms* 1997: 100

²⁰⁰ Bonds suggest in his book *Absolute Music: The History of an Idea* that the best translation would be something akin to the Latin *anima* 2014: p 147. I would happily concur to this suggestion, and offer some thoughts on this in my last chapter p 152.

²⁰¹ Kant 1978: §49

mind which can present these ideas, make them come alive, thus we do understand them. 'It is a kind of language which we speak, yet cannot translate'.²⁰²

Thus, we can refer back to the idea of *Inhalt*, *Inhalt* is what can be described in words, whereas, if we consider music to have something to do with these aesthetic ideas, there needs to be something that cannot be described in words, this is *geistige Gehalt*.

Geistige Gehalt

Geist would be this spirit or the ability to animate, and *geistige* would be something that either has the ability to be animated or which has been animated and thus been *geistige*. When *Geist* is used in combination with *Gehalt* it is meant to say something about the *Gehalt*. *Gehalt* is often talked about as having a specific quality or being specified towards something, thus the idea Hanslick is suggesting is that the *Gehalt* in music is of a *geistige* kind. In other words, that which is particular to music, and is connected to the aesthetic ideas is *geistige Gehalt*.

Geistige Gehalt merely means that the ideas which are expressed in music, i.e. the musical ideas are of a mental nature, they are ideas which are expressed by mind and understood by mind. This is a very important fact to keep in mind for the positive story. So far we have suggested that what separates art from craft is the idea of an expressive end of some sort, which in Hanslick's context seems to be the idea of *Gehalt*. *Gehalt* is thus what separates art from craft and if *Gehalt* in music is of a *geistige* kind then it follows from this that the meaningful ideas in music necessarily is connected to some sort of mental activity past the mere idea of tones and structure.

Thus far, we have gathered that there exists no form and matter distinction in art, this was argued via the quintessential distinction. This is because it is suggested that art has two kinds of ends, a technical kind of end and an expressive kind of end. This is mirrored in Hanslick's distinction between *Inhalt* and *Gehalt*,²⁰³ which is his foundation for suggesting that music is contentless. Music does not have independent content as opposed to its form. In other words, music does not have content in the same manner as other activities such as craft. Thus, music is contentless.

²⁰² Hanslick 1986: 30

²⁰³ Whenever *Gehalt* is mentioned one should read this as *geistige Gehalt*.

One of the major errors with missing the distinction between *Inhalt* and *Gehalt* is not only that there is no explanation or proper justification for the idea of contentlessness, but furthermore it misses vital points which the distinction highlights with regards to understanding. When we understand we usually mean that we understand the content of something, however, music does not have content in this way. What this means is that the idea of contentlessness suggests that we have to consider content in music in a different way, namely as both *Inhalt* and *Gehalt*. Roger Scruton suggests that 'if music has a content, that content must be understood'.²⁰⁴ Thus, not only does the previous discussion suggest that we have to rethink the idea of content, but it follows from this that we need to rethink and consider the way in which we understand music as well.

I suggest that the distinction between *Inhalt* and *Gehalt*, is not only saying something about music's content and meaning, but also about understanding. Being able to form something intelligible, something which can be understood, to be able to express complete musical ideas relies on the distinction between *Inhalt* and *Gehalt*. The following chapter will consider how this distinction which I suggest is the core of Hanslick's positive thesis is suggesting how music can have 'beautiful relationships without content'.²⁰⁵

²⁰⁴ Scruton 1983: 88

²⁰⁵ Hanslick 1986: 78

Chapter IV: Aspects of Understanding

'Genuine thought and empty phrases'.²⁰⁶



We move from the issues and questions of content to the question of understanding. What does it mean to understand music?

The idea of *Inhalt* and *Gehalt* is suggested by Hanslick to be a necessary distinction in art, as was suggested, it is not a distinction between form and matter. Rather, it is a distinction of a different kind, which has been suggested to separate between the body of something, and the meaning of something. In other words, *Gehalt* and *Inhalt* suggest something akin to *what is expressed* and *that which expresses it*. Which is a distinction, that is suggested by Collingwood, to exist in art. This distinction does not separate between form and matter but rather between different aspects which are both necessary for the possibility of something being understandable.

The following chapter will thus consider different aspects of understanding, starting with a discussion of Collingwood's art distinction. Concluding that there is always in art a distinction between *what is expressed* and *that which expresses it*, which means that there is both paraphrasable and non-paraphrasable aspects of art.

The second section of this chapter will consider how these two aspects correlate to the ideas Hanslick discusses concerning music's relation to nature. Music does not have a direct relation to nature, and vital aspects of music relies on understanding. Thus, the second section will conclude that basic musical understanding is necessary for musical experience.

Basic musical understanding is necessary but not sufficient for aesthetical understanding. The last section of this chapter will therefore discuss the difference between listening to music with a pathological versus an aesthetical perception.

²⁰⁶ Hanslick 1986: 30

IV.I The Art distinction

This section will consider how the ideas of two kinds of ends in art, i.e. the distinction between *Inhalt* and *Gehalt* necessitates a different kind of distinction which illuminates two aspects which constitutes our understanding. This will go some of the way towards the further consideration of how both ends are necessary for art and how we understand and experience art.

R.G. Collingwood suggests six distinctions, which occur in craft yet need not occur in art, to try and separate out what characteristics are those of craft from those of what he calls 'art proper'.²⁰⁷ However, as Collingwood himself states there is indeed a reason for why we have a tendency to consider aspects of craft to be aspects of art, not only because art often borrows characteristics from craft, but because they have similar although not identical aspects. Thus, after having denied the necessity of a form matter distinction in art²⁰⁸ Collingwood makes another suggestion.

'When people have spoken of matter and form in connection with art...they have in fact been doing one of two things, or both confusedly at once. Either they have been assimilating the work of art to an artefact, and the artist's to a craftsman's; or else they have been using these terms in a vaguely metaphorical way as means of referring to distinctions which really do exist in art, but are of a different kind.

There is always in art a distinction between what is expressed and that which expresses it'.²⁰⁹

This suggests that there is, indeed, a distinction found in art that is necessary for art yet it is not acting or functioning identical to anything found in craft. Hence, this distinction should tell us something peculiar about art proper. Furthermore, clarifying what this distinction entails will also clarify what kind of distinction I suggest Hanslick is trying to get

²⁰⁷ The main ideas have been borrowed and inspired by a chapter in Aaron Ridley's book. For a more mature and what I consider to be a better overview of these arguments, see Ridley 2004. Due to the fact that these ideas are borrowed and developed from Ridley's original thoughts, any objections or issues should be addressed directly to the original author.

²⁰⁸ I have suggested a strong reading of this, however, Collingwood merely suggests that these distinctions need not occur in art, which still makes the form and matter distinction not something which can be necessary for art, thus not what is particular to art proper.

²⁰⁹ Collingwood 1958: 24 (my emphasis).

at by suggesting that music is indeed contentless but also suggesting that music has both *Inhalt* and *Gehalt*. Which again, will create the intended understanding for what constitutes Hanslick's positive story, the main goal of this thesis.

The distinction between *what is expressed* and *that which expresses it*, is supposed to be a distinction which is not a form and matter distinction but a distinction of a different kind. The distinction follows readily from the idea of the two kinds of ends in art; the expressive end and the technical end. The distinction highlights two different yet necessary aspects of art, both of which constitutes and is a prerequisite for our understanding.

To establish the nature of this distinction, it might be useful to consider how this functions in a familiar expressive activity, namely language. Wittgenstein suggest that there is a fruitful analogy between music and language. Wittgenstein claims that 'Understanding a sentence in language is much more akin to understanding a theme in music than one may think',²¹⁰ this suggests that although we cannot or should not conceive of music as a language, we might understand the meaning of music and of language in the same way. With this in mind let us move on to the distinction.

The distinction

Collingwood says that there is a distinction between *what is expressed* and *that which expresses it*. In language that would be a distinction between what is expressed (what we want to say or convey, i.e., the thought) and that which expresses it (what we use to convey this thought namely words and sentences). In other words, there is a distinction between thoughts and words.

To make this distinction clear, consider the following sentences; 'I am writing on my laptop' and 'I am typing on my portable computer'. What the two sentences have in common is that they are both talking about the same thing. In other words, the two sentences are referring to the same meaning; the same thought. The sentences also differ on certain aspects. Consider the word 'Laptop' and the word 'portable computer', these are two different words though they refer to the same thing. Whether I use the word 'laptop', or the word 'portable computer', the same meaning would be conveyed and

²¹⁰ Wittgenstein PI: 151

understood. However, we do understand the words as two different words, as they are two ways of conveying the same thing, yet the words are not identical, they sound different, look different and can be used in many different ways. Hence, we understand two kinds of things here: both the words, and the thought which is conveyed.

If there were no such separation, if we could not understand the word and the thought conveyed with the word, we would not be able to use another word to say the same thing. It follows, that the words could not be used in different ways, as one word would only mean one thing. This would be the case of meaning atomism; however, I have already suggested that meaning atomism fails when considering language.

Paraphrase²¹¹

Using different words to say the same thing is called paraphrasing. The concept of paraphrasability may be difficult to grasp considering the vast spectrum of what counts as a paraphrase, everything from synonyms to elaborative explanations is considered a paraphrase. Thus, the way to grasp the practice in this context is simply to think of paraphrase as another way to say the same thing. In other words, to paraphrase literally means to rephrase or to say things in a different way by using or swapping the words 'laptop' for 'portable computer' for example.

However, this is not to say that the paraphrase is a reproduction of the original expression, rather, it is a paraphrase in virtue of not being a reproduction of the initial expression but another way to say the same thing. In other words, we use paraphrase to get at, or to show our understanding, and the way to do that is not to parrot or repeat the same initial phrase, i.e., reproduce it, but rather the understanding is shown in the ability to use different words to say the same thing. One can only use different words to say the same thing, if one has indeed understood the initial expression. For example, if I teach someone a new word, say the Norwegian word 'kaffe', a person who does not know Norwegian will not be able to paraphrase that word before having understood what it means. Only after I have told the person that the word 'kaffe' means coffee in Norwegian will the person be in a position to use different words to show their understanding. Such

²¹¹ This discussion is inspired by Ridley 2004.

as, saying that 'kaffe' is the black liquid drink with lots of caffeine, the same drink that the Americans refer to as a cup of Joe.

Being able to paraphrase thus shows that we have understood the initial meaning or what we could call the technical end; i.e. an end that we can arrive at by using a certain technique. In the same manner as in the activity of craft, when the end is understood we can find the appropriate means to achieve that end. So when we have understood an expression as conveying a certain thing, we can use other words as our means to convey the same meaning (end), and as long as the words convey the correct meaning it does not really matter what words they are.

When we paraphrase we are using words in an instrumental way, i.e. we are using the words as an instrument to convey a pre-determined or pre understood desired meaning. When we are using words in this manner *that which expresses it* has no intrinsic value but is rather of instrumental value. So being able to paraphrase something seems to show that we have grasped what has been said and furthermore be able to use words as instruments to convey the same thing.

Hence, what can be understood can be paraphrased, as being able to paraphrase something is basically just to say that you have understood something to such an extent that you are able to explain or describe it by finding other words that can be used as means to convey the desired content. Therefore, what we can paraphrase is something we have understood and whatever we can understand we can also paraphrase, i.e., everything that is understandable is paraphrasable.

Problems with this kind of reading.

On this ordinary reading, the art distinction refers to a distinction between what is said and that which says it. The distinction functions as a variation of a means/end distinction.²¹² Because of the understanding of the end we are able to paraphrase, i.e., use different means to reach the same end. This leads to several problems if this distinction is to say something particular about art. Firstly, on an ordinary reading this distinction seems to be very similar to both a form-matter distinction and a means-end distinction. This is an issue not only because I have suggested previously that such a

²¹² See Chapter III.

distinction need not exist in art, but I have argued that the distinction between form and matter *never* exist in art, which means that if this distinction is of a form-matter kind art collapses into craft. Secondly, the distinction seems to suggest that we can swap one piece of art for another, in the same manner as we can swap one sentence for another that says the same thing, both of which are undesirable for Hanslick, Collingwood, and indeed, for myself.

The distinction read with expression in the ordinary sense tells us something true about expression; however, it does not tell us anything peculiar to art. Thus, what we need is to read it in a way which would make it peculiar to art. What this entails should be clear to the reader, as the ideas which have led us this far have been suggesting that in art there is not just one end but two kinds of ends. This was the foundation for denying the form and matter distinction, it was the basis for Hanslick's suggestion of contentlessness and the ideas captured in the distinction of *Inhalt* and *Gehalt*. Thus, the first ordinary reading does not take the expressive end or in other words *Gehalt* into account, which has been suggested to be what separates art from craft. Therefore, if we are to say something particular about art, we need to say something about the expressive kind of end, i.e., *Gehalt*, this is lacking in the previous reading, as we are merely considering the technical kind of end.

‘What is there in the case of art which these people misunderstood by assimilating it to the well-known distinction of means and end?...This, then, is the first point we have learnt from our criticism: there is in art proper a distinction resembling that between means and end, but not identical with it... Art has something to do with emotions;...but it is not arousing it... Art has something to do with making things, but these things are not...made by imposing form on matter, and they are not made by skills’.²¹³

Thus, we need to consider both ends in art, the technical end and the expressive end. Art expresses emotion, according to Collingwood, and whether or not one wants to agree to that, the ideas of expression versus the ideas of arousing, describing and betraying is significant. Art expresses and does not arouse emotion, because for arousal of emotion

²¹³ Collingwood 1958: 108

the emotion desired to be aroused must already be known, and this is precisely what is not available in art.²¹⁴ The *means* in craft are those which are predetermined by the *end* as the things needed to realise a certain *end*, however, we have just repeatedly claimed that art has two kinds of ends, thus *means* can only be found and used in art to a certain extent. In other words, to make it a thing of a certain kind, but there are no means to be found for making it a certain thing. What this entails is that surely there is something akin to *means* in art, for example, a composer who wants to compose a symphony uses the *means* of tones and tonality, and even a set plan of what a symphony is supposed to contain. Thus, even skill and technique is applied for a musical composition to take place. However, the point is not to say that these things do not occur in art, rather these kinds of things are not what make it art. We need both ends in art, thus, the end which is akin to the final product is indeed one which cannot have *means*, as part of what constitutes that end is not known. There is an activity, and something is being made in art, but it is not an activity which is determined by the technical end alone, i.e. 'expression [art] is an activity of which there can be no technique'.²¹⁵ Thus, if the art distinction is to be read in the correct way we need to read it with this definition of expression, i.e., include the expressive end.

The Art distinction

Collingwood suggests that art is expression, the artist is a person who is trying to make something unclear, clear, and he wants something very specific not just a thing of a certain kind. In other words, the artist does not merely want an expression rather he wants a specific expression.

The artist does not know what the end of his expression will be prior to his activity, thus the artist is working within a medium to make something clear, trying to work out what it is that he is trying to express. Thus, the expression, as the manifested artwork, becomes what is expressed and that which expresses it. The artwork constitutes both these ends, such that considering separating the two in some sort of form matter, or means end, kind

²¹⁴ For a deeper discussion of this, see Chapter III: 'The Principles of Art', or for an even better discussion, see Collingwood 1958.

²¹⁵ Collingwood 1958: 111

of way would lead to error.²¹⁶ In the case of a poem, it would be wrong to consider the distinction to separate between the words used in a poem and the meaning of that poem. Swapping words in a poem for words saying the same thing still seems to alter the poem. This would be the original thought behind the common saying ‘lost in translation’. In other words, if the distinction was one that separated between the words and the meaning then swapping one word for another that said the same would be unproblematic, but in reality, it can be shown to be very problematic. The art distinction is distinguishing between something more akin to aspects than means and ends, thus to get a better grasp of what the Art distinction is, indeed, distinguishing between, there would be no better source of reference than Wittgenstein himself.²¹⁷

Wittgenstein

Wittgenstein talks about understanding having two aspects, one that is paraphrasable, and one that is not. In language, this would translate to say that there is one aspect of understanding a sentence as we can swap it with another sentence that says the same, and another aspect of what a sentence says using these exact words.

‘We speak of understanding a sentence in the sense in which it can be replaced by another which says the same; but also in the sense in which it cannot be replaced by another. In the one case, the thought in the sentence is what is common to different sentences; in the other, something that is expressed only by these words in these positions’.²¹⁸

When the distinction was discussed above, it was focused on the paraphrasable aspects of understanding, namely, ‘in the sense in which it can be replaced by another that says the same thing’. However, when the second kind of end is added, the aspect of understanding we are talking about is the non-paraphrasable one: ‘something that is expressed only by these words in these positions’. Following Wittgenstein’s logic this

²¹⁶ This was discussed in Chapter III.

²¹⁷ For more articles on Wittgenstein and music, see for example Scruton 2004b, 2011, Levinson 2006, and Appelqvist 2013.

²¹⁸ Wittgenstein PI: 153

leads to the question: 'Then has "understanding" two different meanings here?'²¹⁹ But also the error of thinking in this manner. There are not two different meanings, rather 'these kinds of uses of "understanding" make up its meaning, make up my *concept* of understanding'.²²⁰

Both aspects are necessary for understanding, as was mentioned above; we need to be able to understand the meaning of a sentence, i.e., as the non-paraphrasable content before we can paraphrase it. Only if we have understood what it means can we use different words to convey the same meaning. Thus, paraphrasable and non-paraphrasable aspects are necessary for understanding and meaning. Indeed, the two aspects make up the concept we have of understanding.

Art is not excluded from this; art too needs both aspects to be understandable. In other words, art too has both non-paraphrasable content and paraphrasable content. In practice as with the sentence, what is paraphrasable is what we can say two pieces of music for example have in common, such as both being in a major key, having the same tempo and maybe even be in the same style. However, there will also be content which separates one piece of music from another: '[something that is expressed only by these words in these positions], how can one explain the expression, communicate what one understands? Ask yourself: How does one *lead* someone to understand a poem or a theme?'.²²¹

What Wittgenstein is hinting at here is the idea of paraphrasing, to lead a person to understand the specific meaning. In other words, we use the paraphrasable aspects to show and explain that we understand. We should keep this conception in mind when we consider Hanslick's positive story later on, he states that only by denying other kinds of content can we see music's meaning. In other words, when we see what two musical pieces have in common, such as the major key for example, as described above, we are also able to eventually see what the pieces of music do not have in common, which would be the particularity. In other words, the paraphrasable aspects of music are key to the

²¹⁹ Wittgenstein PI: 153

²²⁰ Wittgenstein PI: 153

²²¹ Wittgenstein PI: 153

non-paraphrasable aspects. This dependence, which will be shown to be mirrored in *Inhalt* and *Gehalt* will reappear in a different context, however, for the current discussion the main idea is that, we communicate what we understand by paraphrasing its content, hence for us to be able to do so there must be content that is, indeed, paraphrasable.

Musical meaning and paraphrasable content

The key is that we do not understand musical meaning in any different or lesser way than we do other types of meaning. It is not some mysterious power, rather, the emphasis is put on different aspect. Everything we understand has these aspects, we just value them for different reasons. The value of a coffee cup is related to its function of being able to hold the hot liquid, the value of a chair is that it can be sat on, the value of a musical piece is yet to be determined, but it is not the same value as the previous two.

[Music's] particularity, is not found in a special type of meaning, rather it is found in the particular context, which cannot be swapped or traded, as it is particular to that piece of music. In music, part of the value resides in what is being expressed and parts in that which expresses it. In other words, there is an intimate connection between the two such that using different tones to express the same musical meaning would not be possible, it would then be a different piece of music altogether.

Thus we cannot just express the same using different tones, because part of what constitutes what is being expressed is that which expresses it i.e. those specific tones. This is related to the way in which art is connected to its medium, because the tones are not merely a material serving to convey some end, rather, they are also part of the end of which they also convey.

Thus, art resists paraphrase, in the sense that you cannot swap one piece of art for another that says the same thing, because what is being said is intimately connected with that which says it, i.e., there is no other way to say it, it cannot be paraphrased. This relates back to the discussion about Collingwood's distinctions again. In art, we cannot see how the form could have been formed in another matter, or how different matter could have been used, because form and matter in art is not separate in the same sense as it is in craft. However, art is still paraphrasable as it has content which is shared with similar things and things of the same kind, thus we are able to see what is different and what is the same, i.e., some of it is parharasable and some is non-paraphrasable. If I ask

what two pieces of music have in common, in the same manner as I asked about the two sentences previously, I am sure that most people would be able to find some commonalities. Maybe they have the same rhythm, the same tempo or they could both be rock music.

What this suggests is that we can indeed paraphrase music and art, because to be able to paraphrase is to show what we have understood; however, showing ones understanding by paraphrasing and being able to swap one piece of music with another are two different things.

Why can we not swap art?

One might ask why this is the case, considering the fact that I have suggested that we can perfectly well paraphrase and show our understanding of a poem as we can with a sentence. In other words, what grounds do I have for claiming that we cannot swap one poem for another as long as they are able to express the same thought?

This is indeed a good question seeing as one can imagine a substitute or a paraphrase of a piece of art that is quite good. However, the question is not whether or not another piece of art or indeed a paraphrase would be able to express the same content, as this is a confused way of thinking about it, considering I have suggested that there is no such clear division between content or matter and form in art. Rather, the problem would be that a paraphrase, even an extremely good one, would not be able to express the same content as part of what constitutes that particular content is non-paraphrasable. In other words, because there is no form and matter distinction in art, we are not able to separate out the meaning or the end such that we can find a different way to achieve that end. In art, there are two kinds of ends and the expressive end is not an end which can be separated from that which expresses it.

What this amounts to is that because there is no form and content separation in art there is no such form or end which is understandable independently of the matter, in other words, the material which is used in art does not have merely an instrumental function such as words in a sentence, rather, the 'meaning' and the 'matter' are intimately connected.

But the idea of being able to paraphrase is not thusly excluded from the activity of art, rather it is necessary for our concept of understanding. Although, music ‘is a kind of language which we speak and understand yet cannot translate’.²²² However, we still want to claim that we do understand it, and if we do understand it we should be able to paraphrase. I suggest that the same ideas which are suggested here are reflected in Hanslick’s work when he is considering the idea of describing our musical experience. In some contexts the idea of describing and the idea of paraphrasing are two different activities, however, in the current context I suggest that they are referring to the same idea of being able to show our understanding of something. What this entails is the ideas which have been suggested in this passage, namely that there are two aspects that constitute our understanding, and although art leans almost completely over to the non-paraphrasable aspects this does not exclude the necessity of the paraphrasable part. The two aspects that constitute our understanding are necessary for any kind of understanding, which includes understanding of art.

‘Why is just *this* pattern of variations in intensity and tempo? One would like to say: “Because I know what it all means.” But what does that mean? **I’d not be able to say.** As an ‘explanation’, I could compare it with something else which has the same rhythm (I mean the same pattern)’.²²³

When we paraphrase in relation to art what we are paraphrasing is one part of what constitutes art. These different aspects will be considered in more detail in the following section when we are considering music’s relation to nature.

‘Quite rightly we describe a musical theme as majestic, graceful, tender, dull, hackneyed, but all these expressions describe the musical character of the passage. To characterize this musical expressiveness of a motif, we often choose terms from the vocabulary of our emotional life: arrogant, peevish, tender, spirited, yearning. We can also take our descriptions from other realms of appearance, however, and speak of fragrant, vernal, hazy, chilly music. Feelings are thus, for the description of musical characteristics, only one source among

²²² Hanslick 1986: 30

²²³ Wittgenstein PI: 151

others which offer similarities. We may use such epithets to describe music (indeed we cannot do without them), provided we never lose sight of the fact that we are using them only figuratively and take care not to say such things as “This music portrays arrogance,” etc.’.²²⁴

As music cannot be subsumed under concepts and be described in full or indeed be fully paraphrased, we stand freely to use any means of description as long as we bear in mind that it is used figuratively. To be able to describe in this way is necessary for understanding, however, it can also suggest the wrong idea, such as have been suggested by resemblance based theories. What happens in this kind of theory is that the idea of resembling as a way of describing and understanding becomes an answer to what music is or can do. Which is an error.

‘Detailed examination of all musical determinations of a theme convinces us, however, that, despite the inscrutableness of the ultimate ontological grounds, there is a multitude of proximate causes with which the ideal expression of a piece of music is in precise correlation. Each individual musical element (i.e. each interval, tone-colour, chord, rhythmic figures, etc.) has its own characteristic physiognomy, its specific mode of action. The artist is inscrutable, but the artwork is not’.²²⁵

What Hanslick calls ‘elements’ here is akin to the parts of music which can be thought of as paraphrasable. In the next section elemental aspects of music will be discussed with relation to nature. Each musical element has its own peculiar outward appearance, one can think of this as a generic tone without any context. When we are describing music using emotional terms we are describing the physiognomy, which says something about the outer appearance of something, however, it does not say anything about the inner. Which when considered in relation to the previous quotation is saying something about how being able to describe music using emotional words and refer to the elemental parts is vital for understanding, however, this is not the same as suggesting that these are what music express or mean.

²²⁴ Hanslick 1986: 32

²²⁵ Hanslick 1986: 32-33

What I interpret Hanslick as trying to argue here, resembles some of the major issues I had with any resemblance based theory. The fact that music does indeed have these characteristics, which are similar or resembling emotional characteristics in appearance or gestures does give us a way to describe and characterise musical themes, however, the connection is not unique. Furthermore it would be a grave misunderstanding to suggest that these characteristics or emotional descriptions have anything to do with what is expressed in art, i.e. the particularly musically beautiful, as the main idea suggested by Hanslick here, is that this kind of resemblance and description can be used only as a metaphor.

The musical elements will be akin to any other consideration of the material of which music is created, as the elements, the tones, the chords etc. are merely 'the by means of which the composer creates, not what he creates'. In one sense asking what the music is about and asking what elements constitute the piece are indeed two separate questions. One which can be described and answered by alluding to characteristics and such, and one which cannot. Again, we can say of a theme that is arrogant, however, we cannot say that music portrays arrogance; 'what in every other art is still description is in music already a metaphor'.²²⁶ Thus, when we describe music we can only describe certain aspects of it, we can never give a full description without playing the piece of music itself: 'If we want to specify the "content" of a theme [the closest concept we have for the musical idea as expressed] for someone, we will have to play for him the theme itself'.²²⁷

Therefore, any theory which is based on these elemental or general characteristics, will face the same worry. Stephen Davies, in his book *Musical Meaning and Expression*, offers a prime example of such a theory,²²⁸ he suggests that music expresses 'emotional characteristics in appearance'.²²⁹ The idea here is, in short, that music is able to sound like a sad dog looks and that these 'doggy feelings...are not those of doggy, but of human

²²⁶ Hanslick 1986: 30

²²⁷ Hanslick 1986: 81

²²⁸ Davies 1994.

²²⁹ Davies 1994: 221

emotions...we find a similarity with human...behaviours and physiognomy'.²³⁰ The worry with this kind of theory is that it seems to have missed one of Hanslick's main ideas, namely that we can never say that 'music portrays arrogance'. Even if we claim that music sounds like arrogance, we can never from this claim that music portrays arrogance. The idea of understanding music as having characteristics which resemble how we would portray arrogance, and saying that music portrays such arrogance, are two very different claims. Only if the music was in fact containing arrogance could it actually portray arrogance, and if we want to ask the question whether or not music can indeed contain arrogance I suggest I have failed in my task of this thesis so far. What theorists, such as Davies, appear to suggest, is that we should be content with being able to describe music as being similar to how an emotional characteristic in appearance may appear, and indeed, I do not think Hanslick would object to that. What I think Hanslick would object to is the idea of this kind of theory saying anything valuable about the particularly musically beautiful. Being able to describe and use things that resemble our musical experience as a means to an end of showing our understanding is one thing, and this is indeed necessary, however, using these resemblance based descriptions as a suggestion of what music expresses is quite another.

When Hanslick is suggesting that we 'cannot do without them', I suggest that what he is considering is the necessity of having to be able to describe music, although, the part which makes it particularly musical is not what we can subsume under concepts that would indeed do more than compare it with things that are similar. Thus being able to describe music is indeed evidence of having understood, it is just that a paraphrase of the actual understood *Gehalt* of music is not something that can be paraphrased in the sense of saying exactly the same thing just using different words. This relates back to the quintessential distinction again, seeing as we cannot separate the form from the content, i.e. the *Gehalt* is intimately related to the *Inhalt*. This will be further elaborated on in the following chapter where the idea of music's relation to nature furthers the idea of how art does not have material as such, rather an artist works within a medium.

²³⁰ Davies 1994: 227

In simple terms, what I am implying is that there is no such content of which we can say another expression can express as clearly as the original one, because what clarifies the expressed content in art cannot be separated from the way in which it is expressed. Thus no paraphrase no matter how good will be the same as the original, and what we value in art, at least in part resides in those original parts.

Conclusion

After having successfully separated art from craft with the quintessential distinction Collingwood proceeds to suggest another distinction that does indeed exist in art, the art distinction. This distinction is supposed to show something particular about the activity of art, or in Collingwood's words about 'art proper'. Although, the ordinary reading is saying something true, it fails to say something particular about art and rather it seems to dissolve into a variation of a means/end and a form/matter distinction, none of which need to exist in art,²³¹ effectively making art collapse into craft. Thus, I suggest that we need to introduce a second reading of the distinction which includes Collingwood's special definition of artistic expression.

This second reading of the art distinction will show that there is a distinction between paraphrasable properties and non-paraphrasable properties in art too. However, the difference in art compared to other activities such as craft, is that by agreeing that art has two kinds of ends, the focus or the value resides more on the non-paraphrasable aspects and very little on the paraphrasable aspects. However, the paraphrasable aspect is still necessary for both understanding and communication. Therefore, the art distinction shows how we are able to understand and communicate our understanding of art. The art distinction does indeed tell us something particular about art.

Therefore, in art there is always a distinction between what is expressed and that which expresses it, this is what enables us to create art and furthermore to understand art. However, this distinction is not one between form and matter, or means and end, rather it is one which highlights different aspects of art. Thus, art necessarily both resists paraphrase and is paraphrasable, in other words, art has both paraphrasable and non-paraphrasable content.

²³¹ See 'The quintessential distinction'.

In relation to the current context what the quintessential distinction provided justification for is the idea of music as contentless, as music has both *Inhalt* and *Gehalt*. Hanslick suggests that there is a distinction between *Inhalt* and *Gehalt*, and I suggest that his positive thesis relies on an understanding of this. An assumption which is given further justification when the next step in Collingwood's theory is considered, as the denial of the form and matter distinction necessitates another distinction in art namely the art distinction. The art distinction separates between different aspects of art, which correlates with art's two kinds of ends. The main importance for the following discussion is the idea of different aspects of art, these aspects correspond to different sides and the relation music has to nature.

IV.II Music's relation to nature and musical understanding

In *On the Musically Beautiful*, the chapter considering music's relation to nature is featured towards the end of the book. It is up for discussion whether or not this chapter was intended to be there all along or if it was merely an 'obligatory chapter'²³² as suggested by Payzant in his introduction, however, the main ideas which are suggested in this chapter are concerned with music's material and the idea of content. The issues which occupy Hanslick for the majority of the time are issues regarding material, means and different properties of music which lead to the necessity of basic musical understanding. Hence, one can easily see how this chapter reflects the ideas addressed by Collingwood in the previous chapter.

'And aesthetics, if it is not to have just a mere semblance of life, must get to know both the gnarled root and also the delicate strand by which each of the particular arts is linked to its natural first principle. For musical aesthetics, the relation to nature opens the way to conclusions of the greatest significance. The arrangement of its most troublesome data and the solutions of its most controversial problems hang upon the correct assessment of this relationship'.²³³

The following section will discuss how music's dual relation to nature, which mirrors the idea of *Inhalt* and *Gehalt*, makes art a different kind of activity than craft.

'Every particular thing stands in some relationship to nature. This relationship is for each thing the most fundamental, most venerable, and most influential. The arts...stands in a twofold relation our natural surroundings; first, through the crude physical material out of which they create; second, through the beautiful content which they come upon for artistic treatment...If one inquires into the extent to which nature provides material (*stoff*) for music, it turns out that nature does this only in the most inferior sense of supplying raw material which mankind makes into tones. Mute ore from the mountains, wood from the forests, the skin and entrails of animals, these are all we find in nature with which to make the proper building materials of music, namely, pure tones...we receive from mother

²³² Payzant 1986: xvii

²³³ Hanslick 1986: 68

nature material for material...[pure measurable tone] forms itself into melody and harmony, which are the two principle factors of music. Neither is encountered in nature; they are creations of the human mind (*Geist*)'.²³⁴

Music's relation to nature is not a direct relation to nature. Rather nature can be seen as the provider of the crude material which is made into the material of which we use when we create music. In other words, the relationship music has to nature is to the physical ability of sound, which enables us to make tones which are measurable sounds, and the ability to hear these sounds, i.e., the physical autonomy of the human ear, and then last but not least the ability to create or the fact that we have a mind. All of these things are necessary for music to exist, however, none of these are in a direct relation to music. In other words, when we listen to music we do not hear sounds, nor do we listen with just our ear, rather as was discussed in section II.I, we listen with what Hanslick calls 'auditory imagination'²³⁵ which is not to be confused with mere hearing. This is why Hanslick says that we receive material for material; we would not say that the wood that we create a guitar from is not the material for music rather it is the material which makes us able to make music.

The relation to nature is thus not a direct one nor is music found in nature, however, there is a significance and reason for dedicating an entire chapter to this relation between music and nature. I suggest that the main intention here is to underline the relation between what constitutes music and the idea of understanding and perception. As material in music is not found in nature as such, this will have effect on how it is formed, what is realised and again what is manifested. Although, Hanslick seems to suggest that this is merely the case for music and not for other arts, I suggest that this is a mere overstatement where the main idea is that some arts may have a more direct relation to nature than others. However, when it comes to value and understanding of the beautiful in any art the emphasis will not be on these aspects.

²³⁴ Hanslick 1986: 68-69 (Payzant used the word human 'spirit' here; however I suggest that 'human mind' is better suited).

²³⁵ Hanslick 1986: 30

Music, as everything else, has a connection to nature. However, music's relation to nature is not a direct relation, as the elements which constitutes music, i.e. the way in which pure measurable tones are constructed via melody and harmony are products of the human mind, and it is therefore a human creation. What this amounts to is that the main building blocks of music are not found in nature. These building blocks would still be the 'natural first principles'²³⁶ although they are not found *in* nature.

'Harmony and melody are not to be found in nature. Only a third element in music, this one being supported by the first two, existed prior and external to mankind: rhythm...What separates this natural rhythm from human music must be immediately evident. That is to say, in music there is no isolated rhythm as such, but only melody and harmony which are manifested rhythmically'.²³⁷

Rhythm exists in nature, but is not the same rhythm as the kind of rhythm we hear when we listen to a piece of music. In music 'there is no isolated rhythm as such, but only melody and harmony, which are manifested rhythmically'. This relates back to the idea of motion. As what music has in common with feelings is motion or dynamics, dynamics as pure motion is not something that is particular to music²³⁸. What this means is that motion or in this sense motion as rhythm or succession, is something that exists prior to or outside of music. However, this does not entail that musical rhythm which can only be understood when it moves melody and harmony is not the same kind of natural motion or rhythm which we know from other experiences. Thus, musical rhythm is not found in nature.

'Nowhere in nature is this phenomenon [music] to be heard...nature has endowed mankind only with the organs and the desire for singing and with the ability to construct a tonal system, bit by bit, upon the basis of the simplest relationships (the triad, the harmonic series)..."If the diatonic scale existed in nature, every human would always sing in tune, and always perfectly". When we call our tonal

²³⁶ Hanslick 1986: 68

²³⁷ Hanslick 1986: 69

²³⁸ However, although motion as pure and simple is not particular to music, this does not mean that the motion that can indeed be attributed to music is not of a kind that can be thought of as having to do with feeling in some way or other.

system “artificial”, we use this word not in the refined sense of something fabricated at will in a conventional manner. We mean it to designate merely something in the process of coming into being, in contrast to something already created by God'.²³⁹

Music is a system in an artificial manner, because it is not something already found in nature, it was not discovered. It is not the case that Beethoven walked in the forests and just happened upon his fifth symphony. Claiming anything of the sort seems to think little of music and even less of the creative abilities of Beethoven. What Hanslick is claiming, however, is merely the fact that the system of tones is manmade, yet it does not carry with it the sense of being used in the same instrumental manner. This relies on the distinction between medium and material.²⁴⁰ What Beethoven did when he was composing is an excavation of sorts, but not of things outside rather an excavation of the inside, the mind. The idea of music when being created is of creating something new, something which is not already existing. There is an important hint towards Hanslick's later ideas here, as the relation to nature is one where we have material for material, the sounds and our mind enables us to make tones, i.e., measurable sounds and a tonal system. However, this is not yet what music is, rather it is what enables the composer to create music. But the composer is not creating music from sounds, rather he is creating in tones. There is a distinction between sounds and tones, all tones are sounds but not all sounds are tones. This means that what defines a tone and what defines a soundwave is not the same.

In other words, there is a difference between hearing sounds and listening to music. But what we find in nature is nothing but sounds, however, 'Tones [and not sound] are the basic condition of all music'.²⁴¹ Thus, we need to clarify what the difference between these two are, which is a difference of aspects.

Tones have different properties than mere natural sounds. They are indeed measurable tones, as Hanslick suggests, which are heard in a different way. This way of hearing is

²³⁹ Hanslick1986: 69-70

²⁴⁰ See Chapter III: section III.I.

²⁴¹ Hanslick 1986: 71

hearing the sounds *as* something more, which firstly is hearing it as being part of a system. This means that when we hear music as music we hear a sound sequence *as* a melody, we hear it *as* harmonious and we hear it *as* rhythmical.²⁴² And we are considering this as distinct from non-musical sound events. The properties of tones compared to a non-musical sound is based on properties which are not physical or material, rather they are intentional aspects. To make this clear I will first present an example from Wittgenstein, before applying it to the current discussion to clarify the difference between sound and musical tones.

The Duck-rabbit example

The example in question is taken from Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations*, which is mainly an investigation into the nature of language.

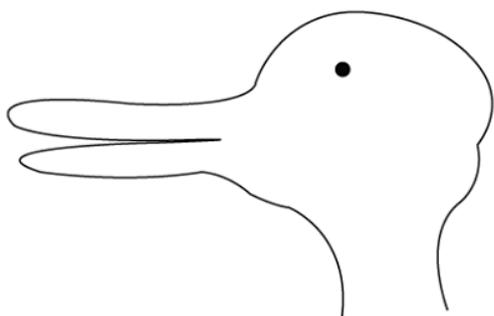


Fig 1: 'Duck-Rabbit'.²⁴³

This drawing²⁴⁴ can be perceived either as a duck's head or as a rabbit's head. Some experience the rabbit's head first, and some the duck's, however, most people are able to see them both after some time. The duck-rabbit can only be either the duck's or the rabbit's head at any one point in time, even though all the properties which belong to one or the other are there at all times. What this is supposed to show is that what changes

²⁴² Ridley 1995: 55

²⁴³ Wittgenstein PI: 166

²⁴⁴ See Fig 1.

when one reaches the understanding of the duck's head for example, is not a change in anything besides perception. In other words, the way we look at the drawing, or rather the way in which we 'see' it is changed, but the figure, the drawing, the material, all the lines and squiggles, remain unchanged. To quote Wittgenstein himself: 'The expression of a change of aspect is the expression of a *new* perception and at the same time of the perception's being unchanged'.²⁴⁵ In other words, what is changing is what aspects we perceive or what aspect we pay attention to. We still perceive the same object, in this case the drawing, but our focus or understanding is on other aspects making it a new way to 'look' at the already 'old' drawing. Hence, all the features of both heads are there, but only one 'focus' or way to perceive it is possible at one time. In other words, you either perceive this drawing as being a rabbit's head or as being a duck's head, where appropriate preconceptions of what such animal heads may look like are manifested in the perception; i.e. the way in which we 'see' the drawing is in a 'rabbit state of mind' or a 'duck state of mind'.

The relevance of Wittgenstein's example to our current discussion is this: aspect seeing can be translated into 'aspect hearing', and the duck/rabbit figure can be replaced with a piece of music. What changes when we understand music is akin to aspect hearing, we are able to hear different aspects of the music which we did not have access to prior to this understanding. The music as a pattern of notes does not change; nothing in the pure sound does, only the way in which we are hearing it. In other words, we are hearing music in a specific way, where specific aspects are apparent to us, or a part of that experience, such as hearing harmony, the difference lies in the intentionality of the experience.

Aspect seeing translated

Wittgenstein's example shows that the material properties of an object do not change when perceived under different aspects. However, there are other types of properties which something may have which are not material but rather are intentional. An intentional object in this respect is to be understood as akin to what Wittgenstein calls an aspect.

²⁴⁵ Wittgenstein PI: 167

The distinction between material and intentional aspects of music is one which is endorsed by many authors,²⁴⁶ where the emphasis is on introducing the intentional object to our understanding of music. I have borrowed the terminology mainly from Roger Scruton, which suggests that understanding music is understanding ‘the intentional object of a particular mental act’.²⁴⁷ The importance of this latter claim is that the intentional object is something which is grasped mentally more than seen or heard physically. In a manner of speaking, our mental state is, at least partly, shaping what we are hearing, in the sense that we are hearing music in a specific way. In other words, what is being referred to here, is listening to music as music, as the composer who created music is creating it with an understanding of music. Hence, for someone to be able to experience this piece of music it is necessary that he listens to it with at least the same basic musical understanding. Part of what is composed or created is necessarily related to things we do not ‘see’ in the music but rather experience.

These aspects of music are intentional because of the relation between music and nature. As music is not found in nature but is rather a construction of the human mind the aspects which separate tones from sounds will at least in part be based on intentional aspects. This is what Hanslick calls ‘auditory imagination’. In one sense one could think of it as distinguishing between merely sensing the sounds and hearing the tones. One activity is that of the mind but based on sound and the other activity is also based on the sensuous impression of the sound but the sounds are interpreted in a different way by being organised by the imagination and understood.²⁴⁸ Music is able to be not directly related to nature but still understood because it is part of an understood system,²⁴⁹ i.e. it is based on a common understanding of having certain rules and laws and so on.

In other words, the preconception we have formed of what music is, i.e. the way in which we listen to music as having rhythm and melody and so on, shapes our perception of it.

²⁴⁶ See for example: Ridley 1995, Budd 1985, 1985a, Kivy 1990, and Scruton 1983.

²⁴⁷ Scruton 1983: 88-89

²⁴⁸ There is indeed a further higher understanding if you will which is by considering pure intuition and disinterestedness, however, the kind of thing we are referring to here is merely between listening to music or hearing sounds.

²⁴⁹ This will be discussed further in section V.II.

What is added to, or changed from, a perception of sound to a perception of musical tone, is an intentional property rather than a material one.²⁵⁰ The distinction between hearing a natural sound and hearing a tone 'lie[s] in the experience (in its intentional object) and not in the material object perceived'.²⁵¹

When we experience music, which according to the previous discussion at least requires us to distinguish sounds from tones, we generally perceive tones as having some sort of logical sense, as having rhythm, melody and harmony. All of which are intentional properties not material ones, or rather they are properties of the intentional object which we understand the music as being. What this entails is that the basic structure or elemental aspects of music is indeed tones, tonality, and so on, and not sounds.

In other words, there is the material object of sounds, which are then perceived as the intentional object which we call music, and the intentional object is perceived or experienced as having the properties of harmony, rhythm, some sense and so on: '[I]ntentional understanding of something consists in a certain kind of experience of that thing'.²⁵²

The musical experience is an experience of a complex unity, and not a twofold experience of something material and then intentional. One does not understand or hear the material object of music first and then arrive at the conclusion that this is music; rather, one is already in that state of mind, by conceiving or listening to the event with the anticipation and expectation of its yielding a musical experience.

To listen to music with understanding is to perceive both the material and the intentional object, where the intentional object is perceived or interpreted under some prior understanding or description.²⁵³ Which means that we understand what we are hearing as an object of a certain kind, namely music, which normally has the description of being

²⁵⁰ And this musical perception seems to stick as after we have learned or gained some musical understanding, the way in which we hear music seems impossible or at least very difficult to undo, just imagine being able to hear a piece of music and only hear sounds.

²⁵¹ Scruton 1983: 91

²⁵² Budd 1985: 239

²⁵³ Ridley 1995: 56

a kind of thing that has harmony, rhythm or melody. Although some might object that there are many cases of music which does not have these three main building blocks. A prime example of this would be the 'Four minutes, thirty-three seconds' by the composer John Cage, which is four minutes and thirty-three seconds of silence. Surely, such a piece does not have any of the main building blocks referred to previously, and this proves my argument wrong. However, this kind of example does the exact opposite. This piece of music is still considered and experienced as being a piece of music, thus the silence is not actually silent but rather it is an intentional absence of tones.

To understand music is therefore to perceive it in a certain way. If we refer back to the duck-rabbit figure, the new perception is the one which is had when one listens to music with understanding, as opposed to listening without understanding and merely seeing a shape of some unidentified kind i.e. hearing random sounds. It follows from this that the unification, i.e., that which makes music say intelligible or understandable is an intentional property.

Understanding music and language

The way in which music relates to nature and the way in which music is understood resembles another common practice, namely languages.

'Language is an artefact in exactly the same sense as music, in that neither has its prototype in external nature, but both have come into being gradually, and both must be learned. Not linguists but nations built their language according to their character, incessantly improving and modifying it. Thus also our musicians have not "constructed" music but have simply established and consolidated that which the prevailing, musically competent mind [*Geist*] has, with rationality but with necessity, unselfconsciously devised'.²⁵⁴

What is being claimed here is not that music is some sort of language. This kind of suggestion that music is some sort of language or a variation thereof is a tempting and well mulled over idea; suggestions have varied from music being the language of

²⁵⁴ Hanslick 1986: 70-71

emotions to creating a musical dictionary.²⁵⁵ Nevertheless, the temptation of suggesting that music is akin to language is one which should be resisted as music is certainly not a language. However, the analogy between music and language may be helpful as long as we keep in mind that it cannot be the foundation of a theory of musical understanding.²⁵⁶ In other words, music may be similar to, but is not to be understood as, a language. Nevertheless, the way in which we tend to think and approach at least certain aspects of music is strikingly similar to our linguistic practice, especially when considering musical syntax and the intimate relation music and language have to the subject.

What Hanslick is referring to in the quote above is that language too is an artefact because language is a practice which is created by and used by human beings as a means of communication, and this practice is also dependent on the human mind, on the subject.

If the last sections have taught us anything, it is that understanding music requires certain cognitive abilities.²⁵⁷ The musical experience is something which requires a subject, and which occurs in the subject.

Some may object that if it is a personal experience which happens in the subject then indeed it is subjective and far removed from any sort of idea of disinterestedness and objectivity. Which is what we need for a principle of the musically beautiful. It is likely that Hanslick himself would make objections of this kind, as he is striving for an objective basis for his principle. However, I suggest that this is a gross misunderstanding of his account, as in no way does Hanslick claim that we do not need the subject, rather as we have just seen, the idea of the subject and the mind related aspects of music are essential for even listening to music.

²⁵⁵ See Davies 1994 for more overview of different theories and accounts on the matter. None of which are successful in providing a full blown argument for music being a language, rather, I suggest that Hanslick (1986:42) is right in his conviction when he says that using language as a way to understand music is helpful as long as we do not draw the conclusion of music being a language. And I do not see any reason do disagree with his conviction.

²⁵⁶ For a good argument about this, see Scruton 1997.

²⁵⁷ A cat for example would never be able to hear music as it would not be able to have a basic understanding of what music is. A cat could surely be in a room where music was played, but the cat would not perceive the sounds as music, like we do.

There is indeed a crucial difference between requiring a subject and something being subjective as in personal 'for my eyes only'. If something requires a subject this merely means that there are cognitive or other such abilities, which are necessary. If something is subjective, i.e., personal, that is something which is not only in requirement of a subject but which furthermore is seen through that person's experiences and ideas.

That it occurs in the subject and requires certain aspects of our cognition, judgment, beliefs and the like is no more reason for deeming it subjective than deeming language subjective; and surely the thought that language is something subjective would defeat the purpose of any linguistic practice. As language is a means of communication between subjects rather than a private activity, objectivity is necessary for success. Language is something which is universal, and which is publicly available; however, it also is a human creation and requires a subject. The same can be said for music, music is a system that is understandable and where we can communicate. There is understanding to be gained from comparing music and language, some of which will be highlighted in the following section, however, the analogy between music and language should always be read as an analogy between something more on the side of poetry than that of a dictionary.

Syntax and meaning:

Sound is merely material for the body of music, the physical aspect of music that is grounded in natural law. The difference between natural sounds and music is that music is comprehensible,²⁵⁸ what this means is that music is not mere sound, it is part of a system which can be understood and comprehended. In the same sense that language is not just sounds, music is not just sound music 'speaks'.

In the same manner as language music relies on something resembling syntax to make coherent 'musical sentences'. 'It is due to a kind of subconscious recognition that we speak of musical "thoughts"'.²⁵⁹ In language the idea of grammar and rules and laws together with the words determine the usage within the linguistic system, it determines what can be said and how we should say it, in the musical system of tonality we find something similar.

²⁵⁸ Hanslick 1986: 72

²⁵⁹ Hanslick 1986: 30

'[M]usic has sense and logic – but musical sense and logic. It is a kind of language that we speak and understand yet cannot translate. It is due to a kind of subconscious recognition that we speak of musical “thought”, and, as in the case of speech, the trained judgment easily distinguish between genuine thoughts and empty phrases. In the same way, we recognize the rational coherence of a group of tones and call it a sentence, exactly as with a logical proposition we have a sense of where it comes to an end, although what we might mean by “truth” in the two cases is not at all the same thing'.²⁶⁰

What Hanslick is saying, is that music does have both sense and logic, but that these are sense and logic as heard within the musical system. Thus, the sense of where it comes to an end is something we have learned and not something which is given to us by nature. One cannot understand the end of a sentence and then merely apply it to music, as the two are not just two different kind of languages, rather it is two different kind of systems. What we mean by truth or meaning here would not be the same.

Musical logic or syntax is an intentional property of music, i.e. it is something we hear²⁶¹ and not a material property of sound. In other words, when we listen to music with understanding we experience music as having some sort of syntax. Western tonality is one such intentional structural system, which frames the way in which music in the West is practiced. These rules are what enable us to consider music as right, wrong or surprising, depending on how the music moves within the web of these rules.

Musical syntax will not tell you what a chord means, but depending on the context it may tell you whether or not this chord is appropriate considering the surrounding chords, the style or genre, and other tonal elements. For example, a G major chord has different function depending on whether it is in a piece in G major or C major, in G major it would be the tonic chord and in a C major it would be the dominant chord, which, depending on the tonal context, would yield information about what moves were structurally appropriate. Therefore, our understanding and knowledge of music and its intentional properties such as those of genre, type, form, harmonies and so on, will alter the context

²⁶⁰ Hanslick 1986: 30

²⁶¹ Scruton 1997: 175, Kivy 1990: 111

in which a piece of music is heard. Peter Kivy suggests that not hearing music as having some sort of syntax is 'to almost totally fail to hear the music',²⁶² as our experience of hearing music is formed around this preconception not hearing music with this syntactical preconception would be to fail to understand what music is, i.e., it is not possible. One cannot hear music and random sounds at the same time in the same manner as one cannot see the duck and the rabbit at the same time.

Suggesting that music has something that resembles syntax is one thing, but we should refrain from suggesting that musical syntax is anything like linguistic syntax beyond mere analogy; as musical syntax does not share the relation which linguistic syntax shares with semantics.

'In language...syntax and semantics go hand in hand—the syntactic composition of a sentence is explained by the semantic goal... meaning is developed structurally: the meaning of any complex sign is a function of the meaning of its part';²⁶³ there is no semantic structure like this in music. Musical semantics, or musical meaning is 'given not by convention, but by perception',²⁶⁴ which means that they are too context dependent for any such consistency as words and their usage in language possesses. Musical semantics or '...meaning does not derive from the meaning of its parts: there is simply an accumulation of meaning, without articulate structure'.²⁶⁵

Different dimensions of understanding

Malcolm Budd²⁶⁶ suggests that there are several ways in which one may understand music, or what he calls several dimensions of musical understanding.²⁶⁷ One may have a *superficial* understanding of music, where one only gets part of the work whilst missing other significant parts of it, or one may have an *inaccurate* understanding of music, where

²⁶² Kivy 1990: 114

²⁶³ Scruton 1997: 176, 203

²⁶⁴ Scruton 1997: 210

²⁶⁵ Scruton 1997: 206

²⁶⁶ *Music and the Emotions* 1985

²⁶⁷ Budd 1985: 234

the conception of what the music should sound like is mistaken. One could have a *narrow* understanding of music, where one understands music but only in certain very limited styles or traditions.²⁶⁸ Budd finishes with his fourth category of a *primitive* understanding of music, which means that one may understand very simple aspects of music; this would be what I have suggested to be basic understanding of music. What this means for the current discussion is that basic musical understanding is necessary for any musical experience yet it is not sufficient for an aesthetical experience of the musically beautiful. It would follow from this that if this is not sufficient then different aspects might be necessary for an understanding which constitutes an aesthetical experience of music. This will be the topic of the discussion in the following section.

Different types of knowledge or dimensions of understanding would yield different aspects of the music to be heard. It is crucial to note that the aspects which are 'not there in the start' and then mystically 'appear' when we obtain certain types of knowledge, are not actually appearing at all, even if the experience of noticing them might make it feel that way. However, if we consider the duck-rabbit figure again, the duck as well as the rabbit are both there at the same time all the time, none of the material properties of the figure change at all. What changes is in the eyes or ears of the beholder.

To hear music with understanding is to hear music in a certain way, where our level of understanding or knowledge is reflected in the way in which we hear the music. In other words our understanding moulds our musical experience. As Scruton puts it 'what is perceived is affected by what we know';²⁶⁹ as we saw in the discussion of the duck-rabbit figure, the knowledge and understanding of what a rabbit is and would look like is necessary for there to be the potential to 'see' that aspect of the drawing. In the same manner certain types of knowledge will change what we are able to hear when we listen to music. What changes is our perception, our understanding, not the object as such. It follows from this that depending on our perception there are different kinds of musical value.

²⁶⁸ Budd 1985: 23

²⁶⁹ Scruton 1997: 160

Hanslick argues for a difference between listening to music and hearing sounds, and the difference is one of perception. This is referring to the way in which we hear or rather how the impression is organised in our imagination, the organ which receives the music.

‘The auditory imagination, however, which is something entirely different from the sense of hearing regarded as a mere funnel open to the surface of appearance, enjoys in conscious sensuousness the sounding shapes, the self-constructing tones, and dwells in free and immediate intuition of them’.²⁷⁰

The way in which music is organised, or the basic way in which music is understood is by hearing it as having harmony, rhythm, melody; i.e. with both material and intentional aspects or indeed elemental and intellectual aspects.²⁷¹ However, basic musical understanding is necessary for any musical experience but not sufficient for an aesthetic experience. Thus, we now need to look at what is meant by aesthetical understanding. To show what this entails, we can look at aesthetical versus pathological perception of music. As a pathological listener is not listening to sounds when he is listening non aesthetically, rather he is listening to the general impressions of tones, i.e. music in general, what separates one piece of music from another will elude him.

The music does not change, but we can change the way in which we perceive the music. There is not only a difference between listening to music with and without understanding, but there is a difference between listening to music with a pathological versus aesthetical perception.

²⁷⁰ Hanslick 1986: 30

²⁷¹ This latter terminology is used by Hanslick. This kind of separation between intellectual and elemental aspects might be a bit misleading, seeing as all aspects of music are in some way intellectual in the sense of mental, as music when listened to as tones and not sounds, i.e., with basic musical understanding. Music is not something that exists in nature i.e. it is in some sense not elemental as such, but rather already intellectual. However, the main idea here is that there are different ways to listen to music, some which might be more aesthetically inclined than other. This will be further discussed in the following section.

IV.III Musical Perception

Whatever constitutes the real 'content' of music, i.e. the basis for the positive story, relies not merely on basic musical understanding, but furthermore on having an aesthetical perception of music. Thus, before moving on to the positive story, a discussion of what such aesthetical perception or understanding would entail will follow.

'The form (as toneform),²⁷² as opposed to the feeling (as would-be content), is precisely the **real *Inhalt*** of the music, is the music itself...'.²⁷³ 'So what shall we say is the content? The tones themselves? Of course. But they are already formed. What shall we say is the form? Again, the tones themselves, but they are forms already fulfilled. Every attempt in practice to separate form from content in a theme leads to contradiction or caprice...form and content in no sense suffer themselves to be separated. If we want to specify the "content" of a theme for someone, we will have to play for him the theme itself. Thus, the content of a musical work can be grasped only musically, never objectively, i.e., as that which is specifically²⁷⁴ sounding in each musical piece'.²⁷⁵

What is concretely or specifically 'sounding' in a piece of music depends on listening to music with at least basic musical understanding. As has been suggested and argued before, we need at least basic musical understanding for any musical experience at all. Furthermore, the part of music which we value is found more in the intellectual aspects and less in the elemental aspect. This is because the meaning is found within the context and not the individual meaning of each elemental aspect. Rather the meaning is a unity.

Thus, if music is perceived with basic musical understanding but with lack of intellect then the particular in music will be missed. This is what Hanslick calls a 'pathological' perception of music which is opposite to the desired aesthetical perception of music. The pathological listener is listening with his body more than his mind, and thus feeling is

²⁷² Altered translation from (as tonal structure) to (toneform). The German word used is (das Tongebilde).

²⁷³ Hanslick 1986: 60

²⁷⁴ Altered translation of the word *Konkret*, as the opposite of abstract, i.e. not vague but what is sounding. That which is specified and sounding in a certain way, not mere sounds, nor mere tones, but tones as heard in the context of a piece of music.

²⁷⁵ Hanslick 1986: 80-81

again at the forefront of musical experiences. Understanding the difference between the two perceptions will highlight what Hanslick considers necessary for a 'proper' perception of music in the context of the particularly musically beautiful.

'Nothing has held back the development of musical aesthetics as noticeably as the excessive importance which some people have ascribed to the effects of music upon feeling. The more striking these effects were, the more highly they were extolled as harbingers of musical beauty. We, on the contrary, have seen that, on the hearer's part, a very powerful constituent of physical stimulation was mingled with precisely the most overwhelming impression of music. On music's part, this intense urgency is situated in the nervous system not so much in its **artistic moment**, which after all comes from mind and addresses itself to mind, as in its **material moment**, which nature has endowed with that unfathomable physiological affinity. It is the elemental in music, i.e., sound and motion, which shackles the defenceless feeling of so many music lovers in chains the rattle quite merrily. Far be it from us to want to underestimate the authority of feeling over music. But this feeling, which in fact to a greater or lesser degree unites itself with pure intuition [*reinen Anschauung*], can only be regarded as artistic when it remains aware of its aesthetic origin, i.e., the pleasure in just this one particular beauty'.²⁷⁶

In the material moment we find the elemental aspects of music, the material moment of music would be similar to the technical end, and what we have discussed as music's *Inhalt*. In the material moment we find the elements of sound and motion or rather tones and motion. The material moment is necessary for music and cannot be disregarded nor should it be suppressed, however, when we are considering the particularly musically beautiful we are not considering the general aspects of music, rather our focus is on the particularity, which is found in the artistic moment and not the material moment. This refers back to the idea of art's two kinds of ends, the artistic moment is akin to what Collingwood calls the expressive kind of end. The pathological listener will only consider the material moment, he will not become aware of the artistic moment and will only

²⁷⁶ Hanslick 1986: 58

experience 'what these pieces have in common, the effect of noisy cheerfulness, penetrates his awareness, while that which is special in every composition, namely, its artistic individuality, escapes him'.²⁷⁷

If we consider the idea of beauty, as was discussed in the very beginning of this thesis, the conception which Hanslick is suggesting was argued to resemble something akin to Kant's disinterestedness. What this means is that any interest is set aside and that what we are experiencing is the immediate, direct, pure impressions as organised by the appropriate organ, i.e., the auditory [musical] imagination. Thus, merely considering the general aspects of music would not be to misunderstand music, but it would not be to listen to music in the way in which is vital for the particularly musically beautiful.

'According to our view, all such pathological ways of being affected by a piece of music are opposed to the deliberate conscious²⁷⁸ pure intuition of it. This contemplative hearing is the only artistic, true form: the raw emotion of savages and the gushing of the music enthusiast can be lumped together in a single category contrary to it. To the beautiful corresponds an enjoying, not an undergoing, as the term *aesthetic enjoyment [Kunstgenuss]* neatly signifies. Of course the enthusiasts consider it a heresy against the omnipotence of music if a person denies the association with the revolutions and riots of the heart which they encounter in every piece of music and in which they sincerely participate. Obviously that person is "cold," "unfeeling," "rational"^{279,280}.

The pathological way of being affected by music is opposite to the conscious pure intuition of the aesthetic listener. What this entails is that the pathological listener lets the elemental work upon him, whereas, the aesthetical needs to be conscious, engaging and disinterested to the extent that he does not let disturbing interest affect his intuition and thus makes its impressions pure. What this means in a practical sense is merely something akin to being able to listen to the piece of music as the immediate impression,

²⁷⁷ Hanslick 1986: 59

²⁷⁸ Altered translation of the German word *bewußte* and *reine Anschauen*.

²⁷⁹ Altered translation from 'cerebral' to 'rational', original German word: *verstandesnatur*.

²⁸⁰ Hanslick 1986: 63-64

and being in that moment, not letting anything but the tones spin in front of you, i.e. the imagination. And not deliberate with other interests in mind such as the history, the composer, the fact that you have to use the bathroom etc. Although in practice a completely disinterested way of perceiving things seems more akin to an ideal of what to strive towards than something that is possible, but the focus should still be there, as much as possible, in the immediate intuition of the piece and where the listener takes in nothing but the piece of music itself.

Thus when Hanslick says that the beautiful is an enjoying and not an undergoing what he means comes to this: we are supposed to find enjoyment or take pleasure in the beautiful which is put before us, and not just be a mere subject to the affects which can be produced. The idea of not letting ourselves be affected by the feelings which wash over us when we listen to music, to listen to music in this disinterested manner, is often thought to be clinical or cold in the sense that it seems to exclude the connections to emotions. However, this is a misunderstanding as this kind of listening does not exclude feeling or emotion, rather emotions are not felt in this manner but that does not exclude emotions from being either understood or expressed.

‘However, precisely the “specifically music” part is the creation of the artistic mind with which the intuitive mind unites in complete understanding. The *geistige Gehalt* of the composition is in these concrete toneformations, not in the vague general impression of an abstract feeling’.²⁸¹

We are often more prompted to merely let the beautiful play of tones wash over us, to not think and to merely feel. However, as Hanslick says:

‘Incidentally, for people who want the kind of effortless suppression of awareness... there is a wonderful recent discovery which far surpasses that art. We refer to ether and chloroform...According to this pathological type of view, musical achievements are to be included along with the products of nature which

²⁸¹ Hanslick 1986: 60

delight us but which do not make us think, do not make us aware of a conscious creative intelligence'.²⁸²

Thus what Hanslick seems to be suggesting is that the *geistige Gehalt*, the part which has meaning in a musical sense is the part that the composer adds. It is where he is active, choosing, deliberating, working out his musical idea in all its relationships to be able to clarify and make it comprehensible, such that it can be understood and animated by a listening mind.

'What remains, then, as the principle of the beauty in music, now that we have rejected the feeling theory as inadequate? A completely other, autonomous factor, which we shall proceed at once to examine...we now have to fill in the positive *Gehalt*. This we shall do by answering the question: what is the nature²⁸³ of the beauty of a musical composition? It is a specifically musical kind of beauty. By this we understand a beauty that is self-contained and in no need of content from outside itself, that consists simply and solely of tones and their artistic combination. The meaningful relationships²⁸⁴ of sounds which are in themselves charming²⁸⁵ – their congruity and opposition, their separating and combining, their soaring and subsiding – this is what comes in free²⁸⁶ forms before our *geistige* intuition and pleases us as beautiful'.²⁸⁷

The autonomous factor Hanslick is suggesting is whatever would be akin to the expressive end in music. But this autonomous factor which will be suggested to be *geistige Gehalt* depends on *Inhalt*. The relation between *Inhalt* and *Gehalt* is akin to two aspects of understanding. And in the same manner as we cannot understand the meaning of a

²⁸² Hanslick 1986: 59-60

²⁸³ Altered translation here from 'What kind of beauty is the beauty'.

²⁸⁴ Altered translation from 'fraught with significance'.

²⁸⁵ This phrase is very similar to the way in which Kant talks about sounds as being charming, this refers to the sounds or indeed tones having some qualities in and of themselves, although this does not entail that they have the same qualities when used in a musical piece.

²⁸⁶ Altered translation of *freie* to free instead of 'spontaneous'. Free is more suitable considering the Kantian conception of free forms, as well as Hanslick's idea of imagination.

²⁸⁷ Hanslick 1986: 27-28 (my italics)

sentence if we take away the words, we cannot understand the meaning of a piece of music if we take away the *Inhalt*. *Inhalt* and *Gehalt* and the distinction between them is not supposed to show two distinct things, rather it shows different aspects of a piece of music, both of which constitutes our experience. With different perceptions we may ignore certain aspects, however, this does not mean they are not there as they have to be as there is no music that is not formed, i.e. that is not beauty. Rather, what this is supposed to show is that because of music's subjective impression on us we can have different perceptions of the same thing. In other words, we may both be listening to the same piece of music yet one person can hear it as any other classical piece of music and one can hear it as a particular piece of music. The significance here lies in the idea that what we perceive also determines what we value: one cannot value a drawing of a duck for its rabbit features if one is in a duck state of mind. Thus, for aesthetical value and pleasure, it follows that what is necessary is a perception which 'sees' these aesthetical properties.

Because of music's contentlessness and lack of prototype in nature, music more than other art is liable for what Hanslick calls consumption.

'The best composition can be played as background music and help us digest the roast pheasant. Music is at once the most aggressive of the arts and the most forbearing. We cannot help hearing the most deplorable street organ in front of our house, but not even a Mendelssohn symphony can compel us to listen'.²⁸⁸

Therefore, we need aesthetical perception to be able to experience the particularly musically beautiful. Aspects of aesthetical understanding will be to listen to music as an end in itself, as something particular, i.e. that which separates one piece of music from another, namely *geistige Gehalt*. Which means that we need to have an aesthetical perception of music and not a pathological one.

Thus, we have arrived at the start of the positive story, as we now are in the position to see how *Inhalt* can only be properly understood if we understand that music has *geistige Gehalt* too. This distinction not only suggests the proper way in which we think of music with regards to its content, but furthermore it suggests the way in which we are able to

²⁸⁸ Hanslick 1986: 60

understand music without music having content in the conventional way. Music's relation to nature furthers this idea of how we understand music and suggests that basic musical understanding is necessary for having any musical experience. This is because part of what we consider the primary aspects of music is intentional aspect, such as melody, harmony and rhythm. This is what we will come to know as the musical system. However, basic musical understanding is not sufficient for an aesthetical one. Listening to music with an aesthetical understanding is necessary for experiencing *geisige Gehalt*, i.e., the specifically musical. With these ideas in mind we are in a better position to properly consider what Hanslick's positive story is suggesting.

Chapter V: The positive story

'To the aforementioned thesis there is an antithesis: that the beauty of a piece of music is specifically musical, i.e., is inherent in the tonal structure without reference to an extraneous, extramusical context'.²⁸⁹



After having suggested that the feeling-theory was wrong in the negative story, Hanslick moves on to suggest a positive story towards the aesthetics of music.

The beauty of a piece of music is specifically musical, thus, both *Inhalt*, *Gehalt*, and our perception, is musical. Thus, value is also based on these features, and aesthetical listening is being able to listen to music as an end in itself, i.e., where *Inhalt* and *Gehalt* is a unity. Only then is the pleasure found in the piece of music intrinsic and inherent to the piece itself.

The positive story is built up by three main parts, the idea of the form embodying the musical idea, *Inhalt*, the definite musical idea, *geistige Gehalt*, and the unity of the two, musical understanding. This picture is condensed in the positive statement: 'Der Inhalt der Musik sind *tönend bewegte Formen*'.²⁹⁰

This chapter starts with the reinterpretation and altered translation of the positive thesis. Which opens up the discussion of how music depends on a musical system to enable music *Gehalt*. This musical system is the medium which the composer works within, it is what enables his forming process, which will be discussed in the third section. The forming process gives us insight into the nature of musical beauty. The last section of this chapter will concern itself with musical value, or in other words, what it is that we value when we listen to music.

²⁸⁹ Hanslick 1986: xxiii

²⁹⁰ Hanslick 1922: 59

V.I The content of music is forms realised in tone.

With the previous chapters in mind, the reader should now be in a better position to understand what Hanslick intended with the following quote:

‘The primordial stuff of music is regular and pleasing sound, its animating principle is rhythm: rhythm in the large scale as the co-proportionality of a symmetrical structure; rhythm in the smaller scale as regular alternating motion of individual units within the metric period. The material out of which the composer creates, of which abundance can never be exaggerated, is the entire system of tones, with their latent possibilities for melodic, harmonic, and rhythmic variety. Unconsumed and inexhaustible, melody holds sway over all, as the basic form of musical beauty. Harmony, with its thousandfold transformation, inversions, and argumentations, provides always new foundations. The two combined are animated by rhythm, the artery which carries life to music, and they are enhanced by the charm of a diversity of timbres. If we now ask what it is that should be expressed by means of this tone-material, the answer is musical ideas. But a musical idea brought into complete manifestation in appearance is already self-subsistent beauty; it is an end in itself, and it is in no way primarily a medium or material for the representation of feelings or conceptions. **The Inhalt of music is forms realised in tone**’.²⁹¹

The previous translation of this core sentence was ‘the content of music is tonally moving form’.²⁹² I suggest that this translation is lacking. Payzant does indeed defend his translation in an essay included in the end of Hanslick’s work titled ‘Essay: towards a revised reading of Hanslick’,²⁹³ however I suggest that although his intentions are good his translation is not. He suggests that he had to find a compromise between the meaning and the ring of the sentence, and his compromise is ‘tonally moving form’.²⁹⁴ Payzant is suggesting that there are issues with the previous English translation, which was done by

²⁹¹ Hanslick 1986: 28-29 (my emphasis)

²⁹² Hanslick 1986: 29

²⁹³ Payzant in Hanslick 1986: 93-102. This is an interesting read and Payzant’s translation is superior to the previous translation done by Conan, which is proven and justified in that essay.

²⁹⁴ Hanslick 1986: 29

Gustav Cohen.²⁹⁵ The issues concern the main ideas being translated in a wrongful and misunderstood manner, which have been corrected by Payzant,²⁹⁶ e.g. the main title was translated as “The beautiful in music” which gives the indication of the work suggesting some property or something in music which is beautiful, which is to misunderstand Hanslick’s work. Payzant suggests the title ‘On the Musically Beautiful’ which indicates a very different kind of investigation.²⁹⁷

Cohan suggests that *tönend bewegte Formen* means ‘sound and motion’,²⁹⁸ which seems to misunderstand the main point. If nothing else, the chapter considering different aspects of understanding, has shown that music concerns itself with tones and not sound, which is why basic musical understanding is necessary. Thus, when Hanslick is considering the content of music it is logical to infer that he is considering tones and not sounds as whatever is audible. Furthermore, motion is not qualified at all in Cohen’s translation, whereas the idea of motion is indeed important, it is important as saying something about the state of the content. Payzant corrects Cohen and suggests that the content of music is *tonally moving forms*. This is indeed better than Cohen’s suggestion, but I suggest it misses one vital aspect which changes the main idea emphasised in this statement.

‘Der Inhalt der Musik sind *tönend bewegte Formen*’.²⁹⁹

The content of music is form, however, it is not just any kind of form³⁰⁰ but a musical kind of form. Thus, what makes it musical is that it has musical techniques and characteristics. In simple terms this means that, the musical form has to do with tones.³⁰¹

²⁹⁵ *The beautiful in music* 1891

²⁹⁶ See “Essay: Towards a revised reading of Hanslick”, 1986: 93-102

²⁹⁷ Payzant 1986: 93-94

²⁹⁸ Payzant 1986: 101

²⁹⁹ Hanslick 1922: 59

³⁰⁰ This refers back to the idea of beauty as mere form, as form in and of itself is not something, rather it is added to something.

³⁰¹ Obviously there is more to music than just tones, but tones is one of the essential basics of music.

The adverb *tönend*³⁰² does not have a direct translation in English, which Payzant also mentions.³⁰³ It would be something akin to ‘to sound’ in its present participle, or as used here: soundingly (tonally), or even resoundingly depending on the context. The word is not very often used and is rarely seen in connection with aesthetics and music. However, I suggest that there must indeed be some significance to using this word and not just *ton*, which is the German word for tone. By using *tönend* instead of *ton* Hanslick is suggesting a special kind of relation to the musical material, where what is contained in music is not tones as such, rather it is the resounding of tones. The same kind of thought is captured in Payzant’s translation where he suggests that it is moved tonally. Thus, what Payzant is suggesting is that these musical forms are moving tonally, which sounds as if the forms are currently and always moving, in the sense of moving in front of us independently of our perception or understanding of it. This seems to undermine the idea of aesthetical perception, of requiring a certain kind of awareness and activity to be able to experience music. There is not necessarily anything wrong with that, certainly not if one would suggest a traditional kind of reading of Hanslick, however, considering the motivation of this thesis being suggesting an alternate reading, there is indeed something to take issue with here.

These tonal forms are not moving, rather they have been moved.³⁰⁴ The German word *bewegte* is suggesting something that has happened,³⁰⁵ it is talking about something that has been moved from one thing to another. However, this does not necessarily entail movement in space, and Payzant suggests that Hanslick has indeed chosen this word because it ‘is the least special of German motion-words’.³⁰⁶ What moves or what is moving is not yet clear, but what is clear is that the emphasis of Hanslick’s statement is that these forms have been moved, and they have been moved in the resounding of

³⁰² This verb was completely ignored by Cohan, seeing as he translated it to sound instead of something having to do with tones.

³⁰³ Payzant 1986: 101 & 1981: 45

³⁰⁴ See Bonds 2014: 146, for discussion that agrees with this line of argument. He further suggests that we could translate it as ‘Tonally animating forms’, which is interesting and captures the kind of emphasis I wish to highlight, although I suggest that my ‘realised’ is just as good.

³⁰⁵ *Collins German Dictionary* 2017

³⁰⁶ Payzant 1981: 45

tones. The previous discussion serves as justification for this alternative translation, as if these forms were not moved but currently moving there would not be the emphasis of intellectual aspects of music, or the idea of aesthetic understanding.

Thus, I suggest an alternative translation of Hanslick here: *'The content of music is forms realised in tone'*.³⁰⁷ I emphasise *in* tone here and not *by* tone, as whatever is being moved would have to be moved in tone by the composer and not moved by tone. Motion is not to be understood as a property of tone rather, motion is a process of understanding or becoming aware. Something that is being formed is thusly being moved.

Although I could have used the word 'moved' to stay true to the German, I suggest that the word 'moved' does not capture the same essence as the German *bewegte* and considering that what is being moved is resulting in an end, the meaning here seems better captured by the word realised. Thus, the content of music is forms (toneforms) realised in tone. The moving process is the same as the realisation process, where when it has been moved it has indeed also been realised.

Motion, as was mentioned previously is an important aspect of Hanslick's positive story for two reasons. The first one is the need for a mover as the realisation of the toneform is something which has been moved. Secondly, motion is an integral part of music, as music is not static but when experienced is experienced as moving. We can therefore think of the toneform which is realised as a form of a definite motion. This thought will be central to the following discussion.

Although my translation does not deviate too far from Payzant's suggestion, I consider the alteration made to be of significance.³⁰⁸ Because considering something as moving and something as having been moved changes our conception of what music contains from something that is by itself 'alive' and something that is indeed 'dead' and in need of

³⁰⁷ Or even 'tonally moved forms' would suffice. However, I suggest that by using the word 'realised' the aspect of how the material is used or how tone's content in the sense of sounding instead of static is captured.

³⁰⁸ It has been suggested to me that the idea of movement in the positive thesis could simply mean that music is moving in tones as a way of its mechanics, as this is how music functions. However, as will be discussed later, this could be the case if we consider merely one aspect of motion, but it would fail to capture any other aspects intended such as mental motion.

‘animation’. This shift in understanding changes the necessity of the listener, and furthermore, emphasises the value of looking at the compositional activity.

As, the content is determined by being formed, and the form is determined by the content, what the previous statement means is that *geistige Gehalt*, i.e., the definite idea, that which is realised, is thus realised in the forming process. Which entails that any investigation of this particularity will include an investigation of the forming process, as this is the process which initiate the motion. Furthermore, this motion when realised is not moving on its own, rather it needs a ‘mover’ which necessities the idea of a listener as a mind is necessary for such animation.

‘[T]he particular artwork embodies a definite idea as beauty in sensuous appearance. This definite idea, its embodied form and the unity of the two are conditions of the concept of beauty from which scientific investigation of art can no longer be kept separate’.³⁰⁹

In other words, we need to consider *Inhalt*, *Gehalt*, and aesthetic understanding, in our following investigation of the musically beautiful.

The following section will consider the embodied form, which is based on the idea of a tonal system, i.e., the elemental aspects of music. The tonal system is the basis of what enables there to be a form which can embody the definite ideas. It is what makes music a able to be a medium of expression for musical ideas, it is what enables there to be any artistic motion of realisation. The musical system can be thought of as that which constitutes the technical kind of end, i.e. *Inhalt* that is not yet the *Inhalt* of something. ‘These alone will continue to be the changeless foundations of any further constructions’.³¹⁰

V.II The musical system

‘The gratifying reasonableness which can be found in a musical structure is based upon certain fundamental laws of nature governing both the human organism and the external manifestation of sound....All musical elements have mysterious bonds

³⁰⁹ Hanslick 1986: 8

³¹⁰ Hanslick 1986: 70

and affinities among themselves, determined by natural laws. These, imperceptibly regulating rhythm, melody, and harmony, require obedience from human music, and they stamp as caprice and ugliness every noncompliant relationship. They reside, though not in a manner open to scientific investigation, instinctively in every cultivated ear, which accordingly perceives the organic, rational coherence of a group of tones, or its absurdity and unnaturalness, by mere intuition [*Anschauung*], with no concept as its criterion *tertium comparationis*. This negative, intrinsic rationality is inherent in the tonal system by natural law. In it is grounded the further capacity of tones entering into the positive *Gehalt* of the beautiful'.³¹¹

Music's ability to obtain meaning or be expressive relies on the idea of a musical system, this system is more commonly referred to as tonality. This system of tonality is based on the basic elements of music, which have been suggested to be rhythm, harmony and melody.³¹² Tonality can be understood as a guide book for how to use, speak, and understand, the musical 'language', it is therefore necessary for 'saying' something meaningful in music, so to speak. These elements are heard when we listen to music with basic musical understanding. This is what separates mere sounds from tones. These musical laws require to be followed, as they are in fact the basis for what enables us to understand. Thus, anything that fails to adhere to this system will be considered ugly or arbitrary, in other words, it will not be considered as music at all.³¹³

These laws (tonality) reside not in a place that is open to scientific investigation, but rather they reside in the educated ear. The rightness and wrongness of a group of tones is not found in nature, in an object or a preconceived model, but rather within the understood musical system. Which is why basic musical understanding is necessary. Thus, the rational coherence is a way to understand and perceive organised measurable tones in a system. We do this with our intuition and there is no concept as its foundation, there

³¹¹ Hanslick 1986: 30-31

³¹² With some other aspects of course. I refer the reader back to the discussion in section IV.II.

³¹³ Basically what Hanslick means by this negative intrinsic rationality is that the measurable tones and the mathematical levels between them that which constitutes the system is based on natural law, and the system is one where if it is not music we will not consider it as such.

is no logical concept that stands as a measure for comparison; i.e., there is no preconceived meaning or end. Music's ability to be intelligible, i.e., for tones to be able to be used as a medium to express something that can be understood, relies on this negative intrinsic rationality of the musical system of tones. In other words, it relies on us hearing and understanding what we are hearing as adhering to the system of tonality, in other words, we hear it as music.

'It is mainly the law of harmonic progression (analogue to the circle in the visual arts) which produces the nucleus of the most significant development and the explanation (itself unfortunately almost inexplicable) of the various musical relationships'.³¹⁴

The reasons behind the human ear responding to certain levels of soundwaves and finding them pleasing, is a conundrum which if pursued would not necessarily yield any satisfactory relevant answers. Music is made more for the auditory imagination and not for the actual human ear.³¹⁵ The laws of harmonic progression are based on natural laws of mathematics and sound vibrations, it concerns itself with the biology and science, and although it is necessary and immensely important for music, it is not to be understood as the music itself. This would be an error of judging a part for a whole, or the error of thinking that music of nature and music were the same. The discussion of music's relation to nature has clarified any such misunderstandings. However, the musical system does have aspects which are similar to those found in nature.

'The music of nature and the musical art of mankind are two separate domains. The transition from the first to the second is by way of mathematics. This is an important assertion with many implications. Of course, one might not think it so important if we had systemized our musical tones by means of calculations used deliberately. On the contrary, however, it happened through instinctive application of latent measuring and reckoning of primitive representations of quantity and relations, the regularities which were later established by science. For the reason that in music everything must be commensurable, while in the

³¹⁴ Hanslick 1986: 30-31

³¹⁵ Hanslick 1986: 30

sound of nature nothing is so, these two realms of sound remain almost irreconcilable. Nature does not give us the artistic materials for a complete, ready-made tonal system but only the raw physical materials which we make subservient to music. Not the voices of animals but their entrails are important to us, and the animal to which is most indebted is not the nightingale but the sheep'.³¹⁶

In the original German text the first sentence here reads 'music' of nature,³¹⁷ the idea is not that there is music in nature, which would be contradictory to previous statements, rather, it is referring to the sounds in nature, which are in fact, not music. As Hanslick says, 'This is an important assertion with many implications'.³¹⁸ Sound is merely frequencies of incommensurable air vibrations, whereas, music is a comprehensible system of measurable tones. Sounds are found in nature, music is not; music is manmade, sounds are not. Sounds do provide the possibility of the manmade tonal system, but tones are not sounds, rather sound enables the human mind to construct what we call tones, which is linked to sound merely on a physical basis. Tones are a kind of sound in the sense that it too is an air vibration but of a certain frequency; thus, tones are sounds but not all sounds are tones, the two are not mutually exclusive. Which was discussed in the previous section about musical understanding. The main point here is that music has a system, thus within this system there are certain rules, laws and functions, which are necessary for us to be able to communicate within the system. The different parts of the system are similar to other systems such as language, however, there are no transfers from language to music, rather we are dealing with two different systems. Thus, we can say that the inherent logic in music is based on natural law of sound, which is calculable, the tonal system is built on triads and numbers, however, no composer uses a calculator to compose a symphony any more than a painter uses a calculator to paint.

Music is based on mathematics as in the material or medium is, however, 'in a composition nothing is mathematically worked out... The domain of aesthetics

³¹⁶ Hanslick 1986: 72

³¹⁷ Hanslick 1922: 150

³¹⁸ Hanslick 1986: 72

begins where these elementary relationships, however important, have left off. Mathematics merely puts in order the rudimentary material for artistic treatment and operates secretly in the simplest relations'.³¹⁹

-If we try to calculate a symphony, we might as well ask the calculator to sing.

We have now a comprehension of the instrumental aspects of the tonal system and the necessity of it. This is what enables us to understand tones as instrument, i.e., being able to convey musical ideas in music. In other words, this is what enables the medium of which the composer can work out his unsolved musical ideas. Thus, we may now ask what it is that the composer actually creates, as it is not the tones, the system or the rules? What is it that is changed from our conception of tonality and the piece of music? What was it that changed from the perception of the rabbit to the duck?

'This discussion, which has formed only a foundation (though an indispensable one) for our investigation of the conditions of the musically beautiful, brings us a step higher in the aesthetical domain. The measurable tone and the tonal system are, first of all, *that by means of which* the composer creates, not *what* he creates. As wood and ore were only material for tone, so the tone is only material for music. And there is yet a third and higher sense of *material*: the sense of the subject matter, the represented idea, the subject. *Whence* comes this material? From where does the content of a particular composition emerge, the subject which makes it an individual and differentiates it from other compositions?'³²⁰

The painter and the poet have a whole world filled with models to interpret, to transform and create, however, the composer has nothing to transform.

'[I]t is evident that before there can be art, something has to be there to be transformed. This is precisely the prototype offered by nature, the naturally beautiful...The composer cannot transform anything; he must create everything new. What the painter or poet encounters as a result of his contemplation of nature, the composer must elaborate out of his own introspection. He must wait

³¹⁹ Hanslick 1986: 41

³²⁰ Hanslick 1986: 73

for it, in its own good time, to sing and sound within him. He then becomes totally involved in it and creates from it something which has no counterpart in nature hence none in the other arts, indeed none in this world'.³²¹

What separates one piece of music from another, i.e., what is particular is something which can only be attributed to the compositional process. One way to read this could be to think that there needs to be a specific material of which the artist wants to transform, however, as we know this is not how art actually works, as the artist does not have a complete plan that he can find means to fulfil. Thus, I suggest that what Hanslick is considering when he says that there has to be something we can transform before there can be art, what he is referring to is that there needs to be the possibility of creating, there needs to be either some sort of medium or a material that can be used in the artistic activity. In simple terms, he is merely stating that for there to be paintings say, there first needs to be things that can be painted, and things that we can paint with, and so on. The composer, on the other hand, has nothing to transform in the same manner, as, his 'material' is less literal.³²² However, what I suggest that Hanslick is alluding to here, is not that the composer creates everything new each time as such, because arguably this would not be possible. However, in the same manner as a painter creates a new tree when he paints it, the composer creates something new each time he composes. It is just that the source of what is being transformed and where the idea originates is in the painters case easy to comprehend and trace, but basically impossible, incomprehensible, in the case of the composer.

The main idea here is merely the necessity of an appropriate medium which has both paraphrasable and non-paraphrasable aspects such that it can function as a medium which can have meaning, and this meaning and the parts expressing it, can be

³²¹ Hanslick 1986: 74

³²² It would be worth mentioning here that I do not think that Hanslick actually means that other arts transform the artwork anymore than the composer, I merely think that this is a way to overstate the fact that in music the medium is not one which can be transformed. It is a fact that the painter has a more literal material in one sense, seeing as he needs paint, but as the poet needs words, the composer needs tones. This is not to say that the painter is creating anything less original, rather Hanslick is emphasising the fact that the musical system is something which man has made and that exists in the mind sort of speak, thus, we cannot trace it to whatever it might have been before it became a musical idea, whereas, the tree in the case of the painter can be traced back to a real life tree, although the 'real' tree is no more the work of art than the c-e-g progression is the piece of music.

understood. Which means that the system of tones, as was discussed above, is what enables the composer to form or transform his ideas into something intelligible. The system of tonality stands as a measure for reason and truth in the same manner as nature and reality stands as measurement for other arts. Thus, the system of tones, the way in which music is structured as a comprehensible system, tonality with its laws and rules is what resembles the artist's knowledge of the tree. In the same manner as the existence of a tree is necessary for the painter painting a tree,³²³ the existence of tonality is necessary for the composer to compose tonal forms. What makes us able to comprehend the tree in the painting is founded upon knowledge of the tree in nature, and this stands as a model of truth or measure of resemblance. In music, this measure of truth and possibility of creating something that makes sense lies inherent in the laws of tonality. This is what Hanslick is referring to when he suggests that the ability of tones to enter 'into the positive *Gehalt* of the beautiful'.³²⁴

We have seen how the musical system stands as the basis for musical creation and experience. The musical system is the medium which the composer is able to use in his forming process to realise his expressive end. What is created is not the system, the system enables, thus we are now faced with a different question:

'[W]hat is it that is positive and creative in the musical artwork? The main question would still be: How is it formed?'.³²⁵

V.III Forming process

'The manner in which the creative act takes place in the mind of the composer of instrumental music gives us the most reliable insight into the nature of musical beauty. A musical idea simply turns up in the composer's imagination; he elaborates it. It takes shape progressively, like a crystal, until imperceptibly the form of the completed product stands before him in its main outlines, and there

³²³ An objection was brought to my attention that a unicorn does not need to exist for a painter to paint it. However, the unicorn still has to exist as a universal idea of a horse with a horn, and indeed one could say that the idea of a horse and the idea of a horn is necessary for the painter to be able to paint a unicorn. The point is merely that for the painter to paint something which is of a certain kind, that kind needs to be understandable and known.

³²⁴ Hanslick 1986: 31

³²⁵ Hanslick 1986: 21

remains only to realize it artistically, checking, measuring, revising. The composer of a piece of instrumental music does not have in mind the representation of a specific content. If he does this, he places himself at a wrong standpoint, more alongside music than within it. His composition becomes the translation of a program into tones which then are unintelligible without the program'.³²⁶

The creative process of the composer is supposed to yield insight into the nature of musical beauty. This is related to the fact that music does not have a direct relation to nature, hence, the forming process of the composer is the closest we get to the 'prototype' or raw music.

The composer works within the medium of tones but he does not have a specific material, 'The material out of which the composer creates, of which the abundance can never be extracted, is the entire system of tones'.³²⁷ The composer works with all the tones he know, and it is with this knowledge and understanding that he is able to work out a musical idea in this medium. The idea turns up in his mind, in his imagination, it might be a few tones, a theme or maybe even just a vague notion of a musical movement. The composer then tries to work it out, trying to make his idea clear. The way in which the compositional activity is discussed here sounds rather abstract, but the theory does not stray far from what happens when a composer is composing. If one has ever tried to compose anything one can relate to the activity of starting with some sort of idea, working, trying different notes, different chords, adding rhythm, some sections are effortless, other sections require more work, trying and failing. A composer does not know what tones to use, but he can easily tell which tones to not. This captures well the idea of this negative intrinsic rationality which was discussed with regards to the musical system. Composing is a process, of finding not only what we want to express but also how to express it. As Hanslick suggests, the composer does not have in mind a specific content as in what kind of tones or what form they will have, if he does he is performing the activity of craft, trying to achieve an already determined end.

³²⁶ Hanslick 1986: 35

³²⁷ Hanslick 1986: 28

‘Every art has as its goal to externalize an idea actively emerging in the artist’s imagination. In the case of music, this idea is a tonal idea, not a conceptual idea which has first been translated into tones. The starting point of all creative activity of the composer is not the intention to portray a specific feeling but the devising of a particular melody. Through this deep-seated, mysterious power, into the workings of which the human eye will never penetrate, there resounds in the mind of the composer a theme, a motif. We cannot trace this first seed back to its origins; we have to accept it simply as given. Once it has occurred in the composer’s imagination, his activity begins, which, starting from this principal theme or motif and always in relation to it, pursues the goal of presenting it in all its relationships’.³²⁸ ‘Initially the composer has only a vague notion of the outlines of a composition. It is chiselled, from the individual beats up to the distinctive shape of the completed work, perhaps directly into the responsive and variform orchestral guise. This labour, proceeding step by step as it does, is so deliberate and complex that nobody can be expected to comprehend it who has not so much as tried his hand at it. Not just fugal or contrapuntal movements, in which in measured fashions we sustain note against note, but also the most smoothly flowing rondo and the most melodious aria demands in minutest detail a “working out”. The composer’s activity is in its way plastic and comparable to the visual artist’s. Just as little as the visual artist should the composer be dependently involved with his physical material for like him the composer has his (in this case musical) ideal to set forth objectively to create pure form. And, it is not feeling which composes music, but the specifically musical, artistically trained talent... without spiritual ardour, nothing great or beautiful has ever been accomplished in this life. In the composer, as in every poet, feeling will be found to be highly developed, only it is not the creative factor in the composer. Even when a powerful, specific emotion possesses him totally, so that it becomes the cause and inauguration of many an artwork, yet that emotion never becomes the subject of the work’.³²⁹

³²⁸ Hanslick 1986: 31-32

³²⁹ Hanslick 1986: 46

Suggesting that a musical composition is a mere improvised outburst of the composer's inner feeling is considering the composer as something much less than what Hanslick considers correct. The idea is presented as offensive and lacking in the sense that it does not take into account the hours of work and intense labour that goes in to working out and realising a musical idea. This intense reaction to the lack of consideration of the meticulous labour of a composer tells something about Hanslick's own relation to composing and musicians. As a music critic and the son of a musician he has indeed tried his hand at both composing and performing. Thus, the insistence on this idea is twofold, firstly because of his background in the musical field and furthermore because the idea of something being improvised as such would not cohere with the idea of 'pure form'.

The artist has to be free of his material, because he needs to place his musical ideal objectively to be able to form a 'pure form'. This latter part needs some elaboration to be understood. I suggest that what Hanslick is trying to express here, is merely that a composer or any sort of artist is not dependent on his material in such a way as say for example a carpenter. The artist uses his 'material' as a medium, which means that tones and tonality for example is what he works within, not a specific chunk of which is the material for his piece of music. In other words, the composer works within the medium of tones, however, this is not material for his composition, rather tones is the material that enables him to create a piece of music, it is not what he creates. Thus the idea of pure form is of a form which is not a form dependent on anything or resembling anything but is rather referring to a pure form in the sense of a new form which does nothing more than be itself. For example if we were to use a cookie cutter to cut out cookies this would be a general kind of form and not one which was created, rather it would be more akin to a craft. However, if the cookie dough was cut by hand and the shape was a product of an artistic mind trying to make some sort of interesting shape out of this cookie dough and ended up with some sort of construction, his form would be a 'pure form' in this context. In other words, pure form is one which is free from the material or medium of which it is formed in, because the medium does not determine the meaning so to speak. This again relates to the idea of having a different kind of perspective, as, what is considered here is to hear music as a unity. A unity, which indeed has *Inhalt* and *Gehalt*, but which in the moment of experience is not a distinction we are weary of.

One of the main important aspects of this quote is to highlight the fact that although feeling is part of the process of composing, and that the composer often has a wider emotional spectrum than others. 'In the composer, as in every poet, feeling will be found to be highly developed, only it is not the creative factor in the composer'.³³⁰ However, it does not follow from this that it is feeling that is the source of the creative process or the skill in which enables the composer to compose. Rather, the passion and feeling is what inspires and fuels his compositional activity but not what is created nor his skill. When we look at a painting or hear a piece of music we do not usually consider his skill being in his ability to feel, but rather in his skill of being able to manifest or express his ideas in the relevant medium. We can again draw parallels to Collingwood, who discussed the idea of there being a separation between the emotional element and the intellectual element, and the impulse to write or compose. 'There is a distinction between the initial impulse to write or paint or compose and the finished poem or picture or music; there is a distinction between an emotional element in the artist's experience and what may be called an intellectual element'.³³¹

One cannot deny that the emotions of an artist are very highly developed, which may be a contributing factor to why he is so skilled in being able to express himself in a medium. However, the error would be to attribute his elaborate emotional range as producing the work, or being contained in the work, none of which are true.

Feeling such as passion may contribute to the creative process, but it is not the creative factor. No matter what the composer is feeling the feeling will never become the subject of that piece. To be able to form a pure form, the artist thus needs to be free from his material such that the formation becomes a pure form which is not tied to any other meaning than the meaning this pure form is uniquely expressing.

'We have established that the activity of the composer is a kind of forming; as much, it is altogether objective. The composer shapes something autonomously beautiful. The limitlessly expressive mental material of the tones permits the subjectivity of his inner formative process to make its mark upon the product of

³³⁰ Hanslick 1986: 46

³³¹ Collingwood 1958: 24

his forming. Since the individual musical elements already possess their own characteristic expressiveness, the predominant characteristics of the composer turns out to be such things as sentimentality, energy, serenity. These clearly reveal themselves through the composer's consistent partiality towards certain tonalities, rhythms, transitions, in accordance with the general moments which music is able to reproduce. Once they have been absorbed out of the artistic process into the product, however, these characteristics are of interest as musical determinations, i.e., as the character of the composition, not of the composer'.³³²

The pieces of music reflect these particularities of their composers, but the particularities are now a part of the music and the particularly musically beautiful, and not part of the composer. Such that when we consider music as a particular beauty, the unique traits that separate one piece of music from another, which is indeed what the composer did in his activity and which is related to him subjectively as a composer, is not 'part' of the composer anymore but rather is part of the manifested object. As the musical object is indeed an end in itself it needs no outside content, thus it does not require that we know the composer or his style, but merely that we can listen to the particularities as they are manifested in the piece in question.

'[I]t is not actual feeling of the composer, as a merely subjective emotional state, that evokes the corresponding feeling in the hearer. If we do concede so coercive a power to music, we thereby acknowledge its cause to be something objective in the music, since only something objective can coerce in any kind of beauty. In the present instance, this something objective is the musical determinants of a particular piece. In a strictly aesthetical sense, we can say of any theme at all that it sounds noble or sad or whatever. We cannot say, however, that it is an expression of the noble or sad feeling of the composer...The aforementioned musical expression of the theme is a necessary consequence of its musical determinants having been selected just as they were and not

³³² Hanslick 1986: 47

otherwise...Aesthetical contemplation cannot be based upon any features which are outside the work itself'.³³³

What this means is that any personal, historical or other non-music facts about the composer should not have any impact on our aesthetical contemplation, as they are features which are outside the work itself. When we contemplate something aesthetically we are supposed to view it completely disinterestedly, and any such information would be an interest. 'In the act of composing a piece of music, the artist can divest himself of only as much of his personal emotional state as the limits of a predominantly objective and formative activity permit'.³³⁴ To clarify, the composer can give as much of himself as can be obtained in the objective work. In other words, he can choose and structure and play around with all the elements of music, he can feel strongly for certain features and be moved to certain tonalities and so forth, however, what will feature in the objective work is not his passion or feelings but rather the tonal elements, the musical features and the structure. Thus, the artist may do as he pleases and "play around" as long as what he concludes can be manifested in tones and music.

'The act in which the direct emanation in tones of a feeling can take place is not so much the fabrication as the reproduction of a musical work [i.e. the performance³³⁵]. That, philosophically speaking, the composed piece, regardless of whether it is performed or not, is the completed artwork ought not to keep us from giving consideration to the division of music into composition and reproduction, which is one of the most important special features of our art, wherever this division contributes to our understanding of a musical phenomenon. It makes itself felt preeminently in the investigation of the subjective impression of music. To the performer it is granted to release directly

³³³ Hanslick 1986: 47-48

³³⁴ Hanslick 1986: 48

³³⁵ What is inside the brackets was added in the ninth edition of *On the Musically Beautiful*. Basically the reproduction and the performance is seen as the same thing according to Hanslick. I see no reason to dispute this. A performance is a reproduction of the piece of music so to speak, as music needs to be animated or 'played' for us to be able to hear it, the tones indeed need to be reproduced or resounded as in retuned.

the feeling which possesses him, through his instrument, and breathe into his performance the wild storms, the passionate fervour, the serene power and joy of his inwardness. The bodily ardour that through my fingertips suddenly presses the soulful vibrato upon the string, or pulls the bow, or indeed makes itself audible in song, in actual fact makes possible the most personal outpouring of feeling in music making. Here a personal attitude becomes directly audibly effective in tones, not just silently formative in them... The musical artwork is formed; the performance we experience. Thus the emotionally cathartic and stimulating aspect of music is situated in the reproductive act, which coaxes the electric spark out of its obscure secret place and flashes it across to the listener. Of course the performer can deliver only what is already in the composition; this demands not much more than playing the right notes. Some say that the performer has only to fathom and reveal the *Geist* of the composer. Fair enough. In the instance of re-creation, however, this very assimilation is the work of his, the performance *Geist*. The same piece disturbs and delights, according to how it is animated into resounding actuality'.³³⁶

A piece of music is not a completed work in virtue of its performance, or not at least in principle. A work which has been formed, i.e., that has been composed is in fact a completed work of art. Although, going into such a discussion as to whether or not we would know it was a completed work of art would be akin to the argument of the tree that falls in the forest when no one is around. Hence, it is neither the time nor the place for such frivolous discussion.

Thus, the division between a performance and the composition is still as Hanslick says one of the most important special features of music no matter where we stand on the necessity of performance of a completed work.³³⁷ This division is highlighted when we investigate the subjective impression of music; because the feeling that is emanated acts differently in the two activities. The performer is given instant release of his feelings into

³³⁶ Hanslick 1986: 49

³³⁷ Especially when we consider understanding and value, the completed work will not be able to be understood if it is not experienced, nor would the composer arguably know if he was successful in his manifestation if no one ever were able to experience and understand it.

the tones as he interacts with his instrument, whereas the process for the composer, can at least, be dragged out and happen over time, sporadically and maybe even without the actual activity of having the hands on any instrument as such. Thus this, at least possible division between the compositional activity and the performers activity is what leads Hanslick's to conclude that a musical artwork is formed whereas the performance is experienced.

There is a difference between the forming process and the performing process. When the composer is forming his piece it is not yet clear, however when the piece of music is completed, the expression is indeed clarified, i.e., expressed. This kind of idea relates back to the Collingwood discussion, where it was suggested that the experience which was had by the listener can never be exactly the same as the composer. The composer forms it, but the listener experiences it, however, the composer can also experience it after it has been formed.

The performer is performing a piece of music where the end is realised and the composer only has his initial idea to hold on to whilst working it out until it becomes clear. Thus, the forming process is not a process where the artist is experiencing the work yet, rather he is forming it, and then when the work is finished, it has become something which can be experienced which happens when it is performed.

The reason Hanslick suggests that we will gain most insight into the nature of the musically beautiful by considering the forming process of the composer is because it is this forming which constitutes what has been called *geistige Gehalt*. The tones, which act as some sort of material in the way of a medium of expression for musical ideas is not what the composer creates. Nor does the composer create a new sort of meaning or new tones. Rather, he is clarifying a musical idea in the only medium where such an idea can be clarified ,i.e., in music. What determines a piece of music as a specific piece is thus not the tones nor the system but rather whatever it is that the composer adds, which is captured in the process of realising the tonal form, to express the definite ideas, which are thus expressed by being formed. This would be the *geistige Gehalt*, which separates one piece of music from another, i.e., the particularly musically beautiful. Hanslick suggests that the closest we can get to explaining what this is would be by suggesting that it is the theme of a piece of music.

The musical system makes it possible to create music, however, it is the composer who forms it, and his forming process is where *Inhalt* and *Gehalt* comes into being together. The following section will discuss this further.

The main idea is that the forming process is what creates the *geistige Gehalt*, thusly we can understand why Hanslick suggests that the forming process gives us the best insight into the nature of musical beauty. The forming process which is enabled by the musical system is the process which is able to realise a coherent and intelligible form. This process is thus connected to the composer's *Geist*, but also to the ideas and elements of the tonal system. However, as *Inhalt* and *Gehalt*, these two aspects of art come into being together. 'The *Geist* is a unity, and so is the musical creation of the artist'.³³⁸ 'The *geistige Gehalt* is due only to the conjunction of them all; mutilation of any one part damages also the expression of the remainder'.³³⁹

Musical meaning, i.e., *geistige Gehalt*, is intrinsic there cannot be such a thing as meaningless music. As the previous chapter discussed, the distinction between *Inhalt* and *Gehalt* is necessary, yet this distinction is more akin to two aspects that constitutes our and enables or understanding, rather than a distinction between words and thoughts.

'Nothing could be more misguided and prevalent than the view which distinguishes between beautiful music which possesses *geistige Gehalt* and beautiful music which does not. This view has a much too narrow conception of the beautiful in music, representing both the elaborately constructed form and the *geistige Gehalt* with which the form is filled as self-subsistent. Consequently this view divides all compositions into two categories, the full and the empty; like champagne bottles. Musical champagne, however, has the peculiarity that it grows along with the bottle'.³⁴⁰

This system is what enables us to 'work things out' in music, i.e., make a comprehensible structure. However, if we separate the champagne from the bottle in a way then the

³³⁸ Hanslick 1986: 34

³³⁹ Hanslick 1986: 34

³⁴⁰ Hanslick 1986: 32 (my italics)

bottle is nothing more than any ordinary bottle, which has very little to do with the champagne other than being a vessel to carry it around in. However, such an empty or indeed meaningless object would not be what we consider music to be. As Hanslick states, musical champagne grows with the bottle: as we have discussed at length, there is no form and content distinction. 'The mind is a unity and so is the musical creation of an artist'.³⁴¹ In other words, because of the musical determinants being part of the process which enables music to be grasped, i.e., formed, there is no such form without this activity and there is no such activity without *Geist*, and thus there is no such completed activity without a definite idea being expressed.

In a way one could think of it as a bike wheel, and if you poke a hole in it all the air will run out, and it won't keep its previous completed shape although all we did was poke one or two holes in it. Thus, the point here is that changing two notes is more akin to poking a hole in a bike wheel than it is akin to removing to pieces of a puzzle. In the latter case, we may still be able to make out the image and structure of the puzzle, whereas in the former case, the air runs out and the shape is flat.

'In brief, each individual factor in a musical passage necessarily contributes to its taking on its own unique *geistige* expression and having its effect upon the listener in this way and no other'.³⁴² 'The *geistige Gehalt* is due only to the conjunction of them all; mutilation of any one part damages also the expression of the remainder. That melody or harmony or rhythm should be able to predominate is to the advantage of all, and to consider on the one hand all *Geist* to be in chords, and on the other all triviality to be in the lack of them, is sheer pendency. The camellia blooms without scent; the lily without colour; the rose delights us with both colour and scent. These qualities cannot be transferred from one to another, yet each of the blossoms is beautiful'.³⁴³

The *Geist* that he is referring to here is not something which exists either in the rhythm or the tone or the chords, if we consider this we have indeed misunderstood Hanslick's

³⁴¹ Hanslick 1986: 34

³⁴² Hanslick 1986: 33

³⁴³ Hanslick 1986: 43-35

convictions. The idea is that *geistige Gehalt*, this mental meaning, is the expression, the expression or realisation if you will is what is expressed by this piece of music as a whole, the idea which have now been made comprehensible by achieving form. The expression is not something that can be understood in any other way, or by any other words, it would be akin to the non-paraphrasable aspect referred to in the art distinction.

The main issues discussed here are the dependency and confused way to look at the elemental or material in music and art. The *geistige Gehalt*: the mental meaning, is only part of it as a whole, if we mutilate or remove any of the parts we also mutilate change or destroy the expression of the parts that are left. In the same manner as the bike-wheel, the air inside, i.e. the *geistige Gehalt* will not be the same if we let some of the air out, and the entire shape and function of the wheel. The main idea here is that we cannot change the exterior parts and keep the mental meaning or *geistige Gehalt*, the whole and all its particular parts is indeed dependent on the unity of all the parts in this way and no other – that is indeed the particular expression.

The lily has no colour, and the camellia no scent, yet the rose went for both. We find all the flowers beautiful, yet one of them indeed lacks scent, one lacks colour and one has both. Does this then mean that the lily is less beautiful than the rose as it lacks colour, or indeed the camellia without the smell? Do we appreciate the rose as being more beautiful than the others as it does not lack any of the two? But we cannot transfer here, the elemental qualities of one does not tell us anything about how to judge another.

This would be a misunderstanding, as, in music, there cannot be such a separation. Music is formed and thus whatever constitutes musical content is formed by certain musical ideas being expressed. They are expressed when they are formed and the form will be finished when it is meaning what it is supposed to mean. Thus, there is no musical piece that does not have *geistige Gehalt*. Therefore, when Hanslick suggests that the content of music is forms realised in tone he is indeed considering both *Inhalt* and *Gehalt* to be captured by this phrase. As *Inhalt* is necessarily related to the *Gehalt*, *Gehalt* is what has been realised, and the *Inhalt* is what has realised it. In other words, *geistige Gehalt* is what is expressed and *Inhalt* is that which expresses it. Yet one cannot understand one without the other, although one can focus one's attention on some aspects more than other, but in the same manner as the duck's head is always there although we might only

see the rabbit, the *geistige Gehalt* is always there although some pathological listeners may not be aware of it. This co-dependent relation between *Inhalt* and *Gehalt* is described by Hanslick as that between the tones and the theme:

‘The independent, aesthetically not further reducible unit of musical thought in every composition is the theme. The ultimate determinations which one ascribes to music as such must always be manifest in the theme, the musical microcosm... Since the composition follows formal laws of beauty, it does not improvise itself in haphazard ramblings but develops itself in organically distinct gradations, like sumptuous blossoming from a bud. This bud is the principal theme, the actual material and content (in the sense of a subject matter) of the whole tonal structure. Everything in the structure is a spontaneous continuation and consequence of the theme, conditioned and shaped by it, controlled and fulfilled by it. It is as if it were a logical axiom, the rightness of which we take in at a glance, but which needs to be challenged and expounded by our intelligence in order for us to see what happens in the musical development of it, analogous to a logical demonstration. The composer puts the theme, like the principal character in a novel, into different situations and surroundings, in varying occurrences and moods – these and all the rest, no matter how sharply contrasted, are thought and shaped with reference to it’.³⁴⁴

The theme is what determines the actions and behaviour of the tones. The goal for the rest of the tones is to clarify or make the theme emerge, such that the listener can understand the principles of the theme. ‘The theme or, rather, the themes of a piece of music are therefore its essential content...the theme reveals the mind which produced the whole work’.³⁴⁵ What Hanslick is suggesting here is again that the forming process of the composer is what is particular, thus whatever constitutes the idea of a theme is what separates one piece of music from another. However, ‘if we want to specify the “content” of a theme for someone, we will have to play for him the theme itself’.³⁴⁶ This refers back

³⁴⁴ Hanslick 1986: 80-82

³⁴⁵ Hanslick 1986: 82

³⁴⁶ Hanslick 1986: 81

to the previous discussion about paraphrasable versus non-paraphrasable content. The idea is that what specifies a theme, what the composer is adding, is the musical realisation of a musical form, which is not paraphrasable. Thus *geistige Gehalt*, which can be assimilated with the theme, cannot be said it can only be heard.

This idea of *geistige Gehalt*, which is formed by the composer is at least in the proximity of trying to say something about the aesthetic ideas or in this context musical aesthetic ideas. The problem with any argument or suggestion of this kind is that we cannot describe or state in full what it is that we are trying explain, namely because part of what constitutes art is non-paraphrasable, and in virtue of it being art it resists paraphrase. In Hanslick's own words:

‘It is extraordinarily difficult to describe this specifically musical, autonomous beauty. Since music has no prototype in nature and expresses no conceptual content, it can be talked about only in dry technical definitions or with poetical fiction...All fanciful portrayals, characterizations, circumscriptions of a musical work are either figurative or perverse’.³⁴⁷

With this in mind we continue to look at and discuss, as far as words allow, what it is that we value when we listen to music.

V.IV Musical Value

Thus far we have gathered that the idea of content and the idea of beauty is connected. The content is that which is beautifully formed, in other words, the content, which we have established is forms realised in tone, is what is made intelligible. And what we value, is being able to appreciate this intelligibility.

There are different ways to value music, as was shown in the discussion of musical perception. However, the value which is significant in the current context is that of aesthetical value, in other words, what Hanslick calls the musically beautiful. By a specifically musical kind of beautiful Hanslick suggests that we understand ‘a beauty that is self-contained and in no need of content from outside itself, that consists simply and solely of tones and their artistic combination...this is what comes in spontaneous forms

³⁴⁷ Hanslick 1986: 30

before our inner contemplation and pleases us as beautiful'.³⁴⁸ Hence, what we are valuing is our own ability to understand, to follow the creative mind and its movements, to be able to see the forms realised in tone and thus see and experience the piece of music as an end in itself, i.e., as a particular.

'It is a splendid and significant thing to follow the creative *Geist* as it magically opens up before us a new world of elements, coaxes them into all imaginable relationships with one another, and thus builds up, demolishes, produces, and destroys, controlling the entire wealth of a domain which elevates the ear into the subtlest and most highly developed of the sense organs. This is not a feigned emotion lacerating us with compassion. Joyfully, in unemotional yet heartfelt pleasure, we behold the artwork passing before us and realize better what Schelling so felicitously called "the sublime indifference of the beautiful." Thus to take pleasure in one's own *Geiste* alertness is the worthiest, the wholesomest, and not the easiest manner of listening to music'.³⁴⁹

The pleasure of our own mental awareness here, of *Geist*, is difficult to grasp, although it seems to be what Hanslick is suggesting and building towards in his positive story. This is what we can become aware of if we listen with the intellectual aspects in mind, or in other words, with aesthetical perception and understanding.

'The most significant factor in the mental process which accompanies the comprehending of a musical work and makes it enjoyable will most frequently be overlooked. It is the *geistige* satisfaction which the listener finds in continuously following and anticipating the composer's intentions³⁵⁰ here to be confirmed in his expectations, there to be agreeably led astray. It goes without saying that this intellectual streaming this way and that, this continual give and take, occurs unconsciously and at the speed of lightning. Only such music as brings about and

³⁴⁸ Hanslick 1986: 28

³⁴⁹ Hanslick 1986: 64

³⁵⁰ Altered translation from 'design' to 'intention'. The German word: *Absichten* can be translated as aim, purpose or intention, *German Dictionary of Philosophical Terms 1997*.

rewards this *geistige* pursuing, which could quite properly be called a reflection³⁵¹ [*Nachdenken*] of the imagination, will provide fully artistic satisfaction. Without mental activity, there can be no aesthetical pleasure whatever. But music is characteristically this type of mental activity par excellence, for the reason that its achievements are not static; they do not come into being all at once but spin themselves out sequentially before the hearer, hence they demand from him not an arbitrarily granted, lingering, and intermittent inspection, but an unflagging attendance [*Begleiten*] in keenest vigilance. This attendance can, in the case of intricate compositions, become intensified to the level of spiritual achievement'.³⁵²

What we take pleasure in is the ability to follow the composer in his composition. What I mean by that is that we are following the artistic *Geist* in his process when he is realising his musical ideas in his medium. We are taking pleasure in what in music is the *geistige Gehalt*, i.e., the mental ideas which have been expressed or realised in these mental animated forms. We are following the mind, the activity which gave life to the ideas in the sense that it took the ideas and made them into something which we can understand, i.e., into a form. Thus, they are not merely motion, rather they are a definite mental motion in virtue of being a definite toneform.

The reward if this *geistige* pursuing is a reflection of the imagination, in a sense we are able to reflect over our own ability to create or indeed animate sound-images in our minds. What this entails is that we are able to follow the movement of the composer and thus realise the same definite ideas that he realised in the sense that we are able to understand what is being said. We are reflecting over the image which is created by the composer, which has been brought to life by the composer in his mind, but which is comprehensible and understandable by another mind who can bring it back to life and experience the same image, and thus be able to reflect on the ideas which were manifested by the composer and take pleasure in following them.

³⁵¹ Altered translation from 'musing' to 'reflection'.

³⁵² Hanslick 1986: 64

Fully artistic satisfaction occurs when what is expressed can be understood, and the way in which we understand music or are led to understand a musical theme, is to follow the choices made by the composer. The way in which we are able to describe our understanding of the *geistige Gehalt* is by means of metaphors. A quote by Wittgenstein comes to mind here: 'How does one lead someone to understand a poem or a theme?'³⁵³ This refers back to the idea of different aspects of our understanding and how we understand pieces of music.

'Composing is a work of *Geistes* upon *geistfähigem material*³⁵⁴ [material compatible with mind]. This material is immensely abundant and adaptable in the composer's imagination, which builds, not like the architect, out of crude, ponderous stone, but out of the aftereffects of audible tones already faded away. Being subtler and more ideal than the material of any other art, the tones readily absorb every idea of the composer. Since tonal connections, upon the relationships of which musical beauty is based, are achieved not through being linked up mechanically into a series, but by spontaneous activity of the imagination, the *geistige* energy and distinctiveness of each composer's imagination make their mark upon the product as character. Accordingly, as the creation of a thinking and feeling mind, a musical composition has in high degree the capacity to be itself full of *Geist* and feeling. This *geistigen Gehalt* we demand of every musical artwork. It is to be found only on the tone-structure itself, however, and not in any other aspect [moment] of the work. Concerning the place of *Geistes* and feeling in a musical composition, our view is to the prevailing view as the notion of immanence is to that of transcendence'.³⁵⁵

The *geistige Gehalt* that we demand for aesthetic perception and enjoyment is found in the musical structure itself. As the *Inhalt* of a piece of music is the result of the forming process and *geistige Gehalt* also being what is realised, there is no formed piece of music that does not have *geistige Gehalt*. In other words, there exists no unformed piece of

³⁵³ Wittgenstein PI: 534

³⁵⁴ Hanslick 1922: 65

³⁵⁵ Hanslick 1986: 31 (my italics)

music. The composer enables the particularly musically beautiful, as he in his artistic process infuses the relations between the tones, the musical movements with meaning by forming them and making them intelligible within the musical system.

Hanslick suggested that by answering the question of the nature of the beauty of a musical composition would help in filling the positive *Gehalt* of music. The nature of the kind of beauty a musical composition is a beauty which has no separation between form and content, thus there is no end or meaning which is predetermined or understandable independently. Thus, there is no material or means, rather the form of which is beauty is intimately related to the content, and the content to the form. Thus, the kind of beauty is particularly musical. This means that anything that is of value or of meaning is intrinsic to what we understand as music, which consists of the medium of tones and tonal relations. The tones have their own elemental kind of meaning, but the particular meaning is added by the composer, in the meaningful relations between the tones which is a product of his artistic activity. But, these relationships, the coherence and adherence to the musical system reside in the educated ear, which means that musical meaning depends on an understanding of a musical system.

‘With every artistic pleasure, there is an indispensable *geistige* aspect, as can be effectively demonstrated by the very different levels on which one and the same musical work can be listened to: With sensuous and sentimental people, the intellectual aspect can diminish to a minimum; with predominantly intellectual people, it becomes nothing short of a crucial. ...To become drunk requires only weakness, but true aesthetical hearing is an art’.³⁵⁶

When we are listening to music not merely as music but as art, i.e. as beauty, we are listening with aesthetical perception. This kind of perception entails listening to mainly the intellectual aspects and let the intellectual aspects shape our understanding. We are now at a position where we can revisit the idea of beauty. Hanslick suggests that beauty is mere form, which depending on the content can be applied to different purposes. Thus in the case of music, beauty is toneform, the content of which the beauty as form is applied

³⁵⁶ Hanslick 1986: 65

to is tones and it is made intelligible by being formed by the composer. This form is also what is being realised, it is what is particular to music.

What separates art from craft is the expressive end, i.e. *geistige Gehalt*, in relation to the current discussion and to Hanslick what is akin to the expressive end is the form as realised, as expressed. The particularly musically beautiful is thus this realised form in music, hence, the particular musically beautiful is toneform. What we value is thus the form as realised, and being able to become aware of this.

Hanslick has in one sense come full circle, beauty is mere form, which in music is specifically musical, i.e., toneform, this form is not separate from the matter thus the content of music is forms realised in tone. The expressive end, the result of the artistic process is the finished form as intelligible to the listener. What is understood is this process or mental motion which is defined by being formed.

‘Thoughts and feelings run like blood in the arteries of the harmonious body of beautiful sounds. They are not that body; they are not perceivable, but they animate it. The composer composes and thinks. He composes and thinks, however, at a remove from all objective reality, in tones. This is obvious, but it must be expressly repeated here, because it is all too often denied and violated by the very people who acknowledge it in principle. They think that composing is the translating of some kind of conceptual content into tones. But the tones themselves are the untranslatable, ultimate language. Indeed, from the very fact that the composer is forced to think in tones, it follows that music has no content, while every conceptual content must be capable of being thought in words’.³⁵⁷

Thus, music is full of meaning and feeling but meaning and feeling here is to be understood as adhering to musical law in the musical system. Therefore, a feeling will not be specified, as a feeling is specified through objects and concepts, and meaning will not be determined by a concept or a predetermined end. Truth in music has nothing to do with what we can describe, however, truth and understanding is based on our ability to describe. As what can be expressed can also be understood and what can be understood must be able to be expressed, thus we have to be able to both express ourselves and

³⁵⁷ Hanslick 1986: 82

show how we have understood it. We need thoughts and feeling, but thoughts and feeling is not the content of music. Music can only be understood and grasped musically, and not described in full by concepts. Thus, what defines a piece of music, that which is particular is what the composer realises, and what the composer realises is the form as manifested or as expressed, which is forms realised in tone.

The content of music is forms realised in tone, this process of being able to be a realisation of *Geist* is enabled by the musical system. The toneform is the result of the composer's forming process. Which is a process of 'working out' an intelligible toneform. When this form has been realised it can be experienced by the listener, who values the motions of the composers realisation of toneform by reflection of the imagination.

In other words, a realised toneform is intelligible, it makes sense, it has been formed. Thus, what we value, what is particularly musically beautiful is an intelligible definite mental motion in toneform.

Chapter VI: The particularly musically beautiful

'Composing is a work of mind, upon material compatible with mind'.³⁵⁸



The previous chapter concerned itself with the positive story. The main aim for Hanslick, as mentioned in the beginning of this thesis, was to show that the feeling-theory was wrong and to further at least some aspects to the discussion of musical aesthetics. He succeeded in the first, and thus provided meat for the second. The content of music is not the representation of specific feeling, rather the content of music is forms realised in tone. Beauty is mere form, in music this translates to toneforms. The composer realises these toneforms in his forming process and it is these toneforms which are the source of aesthetic value.

The current chapter will discuss two possible ways to read this story, one traditional way and one alternative way. The traditional way of reading Hanslick is by suggesting that his positive story is presenting a pure formalistic theory of musical aesthetics.³⁵⁹ Although I suggest that this is a misunderstanding of Hanslick, I do concede that this is the traditional way to interpret Hanslick's account. Other philosophers such as Kant, which Hanslick took great inspiration from, also support this type of account. However, I will offer a second alternative reading of Hanslick, which will be a direct objection to Kant. The ideas, which are suggested in this alternative reading, might not suffice to offer a full clear argument of what Hanslick intended to say, but it offers enough textual evidence to claim that the traditional reading could be one way but it is certainly not the only supported way of reading Hanslick.

I have suggested in the positive story that what is realised and valued is an awareness of a definite mental motion of some kind. In other words, what we become aware of is the

³⁵⁸ Hanslick 1986: 31

³⁵⁹ For a classical formalistic account, see Bell 1904. For musical formalism, see Pratt 1931 and Kivy 1980-onwards.

artistic mental motions of the composer working within his medium to realise a tonal form. The forming activity of the composer is some sort of mental process of clarifying or realising a certain musical idea, i.e., to create a musical form. What separates art from craft was suggested to be the expressive end, something which was shown to be akin to what Hanslick calls *Gehalt*. *Gehalt* in music is of a *geistige* kind, it is content or meaning which is of a mental nature. What this means is that whatever is realised, the expression, is something which is both made from a mind, or indeed *Geist*, and it is something which can be understood by a mind, by bringing it back to life when we hear it, i.e., listening with understanding. As a result, what we have come to know as forms realised in tone, is in a specific piece the definite form as expression of an expressive end, i.e., a definite mental motion. However, what constitutes this realisation, or in other words, what these *definite mental motions* have the ability to do, is what separates the one reading from the other.

VI.I Traditional reading ‘music does not have to do with feeling’.

The traditional way of reading Hanslick is to agree to his negative story and conclude that this entails that feeling is not the purpose of, nor the content represented in music.³⁶⁰

This kind of reading is supported both in contemporary and older philosophical theories.³⁶¹

The traditional reading considers the negative story and the objections to the feeling-theory as excluding feeling all together. In the sense that, feeling is admittedly part of the process both in the listener and in the composer, but it is never the creative factor, and not found in the piece of music in itself. Thus, any feeling felt is not caused by nor contained in the music; rather, it is a secondary effect of the musical experience.

Therefore, any suggestion of feeling when considering music will be subjective, symbolic,

³⁶⁰ See Davies 1994, Scruton 1983, and Levinson 1990. Kivy 1990 and Payzant 1986, 1989, agrees to Hanslick’s negative story but does not draw the conclusion that this excludes everything that goes by the name of feeling.

³⁶¹ The majority of the literature that is available on Hanslick, see bibliography, considers Hanslick a formalist of some kind. Some consider him as a purist or a pure formalist, see Zangwill 2004, Davies 1994, Budd 1980, to name a few.

associative, or other, and have nothing to do with the music itself and the aesthetic thereof.

Beauty is mere form, as was discussed in the second chapter; this form takes on the purposes of its medium, so to speak, such that each thing is beautiful in connection with its characteristics and technique. Thus, musical beauty is a particular kind of beauty, namely musical, this translates to beauty being forms in tone, i.e., toneforms. This fits the overall presented picture of the content of music being forms realised in tone. The form is content and the content is form, and the value or significance is found intrinsically in the tonal structure, i.e., in the toneforms.

On a traditional reading, Hanslick is not only a formalist but a pure formalist, which is a kind of formalism which suggests that there is nothing besides the pure forms which is of value. Kant would be a formalist in this way. Depending on how one reads Hanslick it is easy to see why he is often suggested to be a formalist of this kind. On a traditional reading we can summarise Hanslick's story with the following quotes:

'Beauty has no purpose at all. For it is mere form'.³⁶² 'Tones...are the basic condition for all music'.³⁶³ '[T]ones, like colours, possess symbolic meanings intrinsically and individually, which are effective apart from and prior to all artistic intentions'.³⁶⁴ 'For if the effect of each musical element were necessary and discoverable, we could play upon the feelings of the hearer as on a keyboard'.³⁶⁵ 'Music begins where those isolated effects leave off'.³⁶⁶ 'Can we call it the representation of specific feeling when nobody knows what feeling was actually represented? Concerning the beauty of a piece of music, probably everyone will agree. Yet concerning the content of music, everyone differs'.³⁶⁷ 'Even if it were possible for feeling to be represented by music, the degree of beauty in the music

³⁶² Hanslick1986: 3

³⁶³ Hanslick 1986: 71

³⁶⁴ Hanslick 1986: 11

³⁶⁵ Hanslick 1986: 57

³⁶⁶ Hanslick 1986: 52

³⁶⁷ Hanslick 1986: 14

would not correspond to the degree of exactitude with which the music represented them'.³⁶⁸ 'What makes the difference between these two compositions? That the one represents a heightened emotion, perhaps, or the same emotion more faithfully? No, rather that it is constructed in more beautiful tone-forms'.³⁶⁹ 'The content of music is forms realised in tone. How music is able to produce beautiful forms without specific feeling as its content is already to some extent illustrated for us by a branch of ornamentation in the visual arts, namely arabesque'.³⁷⁰ 'Music is a kind of kaleidoscope, although it manifest itself on an incomparable higher level of ideality'.³⁷¹ 'Thus, in order to make our case for musical beauty, we have not excluded *geistigen Gehalt* but, on the contrary, have insisted on it. For we acknowledge no beauty without its full share of *Geist*. Basically what we have done is transfer the beauty of music to tonal forms. This already implies that the *geistige Gehalt* of music is in the most intimate relationship with these forms'.³⁷² 'This *geistige Gehalt* we demand of every artwork. It is to be found only in the tone-structure itself, however, and not in any other aspect of the work'.³⁷³ 'The *geistige Gehalt* of the composition is in these concrete tonal structures...the form'.³⁷⁴ Thus, music is 'contentless play of forms'.³⁷⁵

One can easily see how this argument has led philosophers to conclude that Hanslick is a formalist. The following section will elaborate a bit on the idea of formalism, and how different philosophers have declared Hanslick not only a formalist but a pure formalist.

³⁶⁸ Hanslick 1986: 21

³⁶⁹ Hanslick 1986: 35

³⁷⁰ Hanslick 1986: 29

³⁷¹ Hanslick 1986: 29

³⁷² Hanslick 1986: 30 (my italics)

³⁷³ Hanslick 1986: 31 (my italics)

³⁷⁴ Hanslick 1986: 60 (my italics)

³⁷⁵ Hanslick 1986: 51

Formalism is a theory of aesthetics which considers the value to be based on form or formalistic aspects.³⁷⁶ The main difference between a pure formalist and other kinds of formalism, in the current context, is the exclusion of anything that goes by the name of feeling when we consider aesthetic value. Several philosophers, such as Kivy, Budd and Hoaglund,³⁷⁷ consider Hanslick as a pure formalist, i.e., excluding emotions altogether. Stephen Davies, another contemporary philosopher who engages in this discussion, writes in his book *Musical Meaning and Expression*³⁷⁸ that

‘it might be suggested- and has been by Eduard Hanslick – that emotions are not expressed in music. To the extent that music is beautiful and significant, its beauty and significance is purely formal, since music cannot directly embody the world of human experience. Moreover, if music invites understanding and appreciation, a concern with emotions has no part to play in (indeed, is a hindrance to) the enjoyment of music’.³⁷⁹

If we read and understand Davies as suggesting something akin to a pathological perception of music, Hanslick would agree with it being a hindrance to the aesthetic enjoyment of music.

‘The number of people who hear music (or, strictly speaking *feel* it) in this fashion is very considerable. While they in passive receptivity allow the elemental in music to work upon them, they subside into a fuzzy state of supersensuously sensuous agitation determined only by the general character of the piece. Their attitude towards the music is not contemplative but pathological. It is a constant twilight state of sensation and reverie, a drooping and yearning in resounding emptiness’.³⁸⁰

³⁷⁶ *The Penguin Dictionary of Philosophy* 2005

³⁷⁷ See Kivy 1990, Budd 1980, 1985, and Hoaglund 1980.

³⁷⁸ 1994

³⁷⁹ Davies 1994: 202

³⁸⁰ Hanslick 1986: 58

This kind of felt feeling cannot stand as the basis of any account of musical value or as a principle of musical aesthetics. Davies relies on Malcolm Budd's³⁸¹ argument in his discussion of Hanslick, which I suggest is one of the better discussions of Hanslick's book. Budd does not make any claims as such, rather he identifies the key claims of Hanslick's account and offers a foundation for what any theory of musical aesthetics has to consider.

Budd identifies three negative claims Hanslick establishes against the idea of musical value being found in the relation between music and feeling:

1. It is impossible for any definite **(specific) emotion** to be expressed by music.
2. **Emotional terms** cannot be used to describe music in a way which is irreplaceable and purely musical at the same time.³⁸²
3. The **aim** or purpose of music is not to evoke definite feeling in the listener, as music can be beautiful without such feelings being experienced.³⁸³

'(i) Music cannot represent thoughts. (ii) Definite feelings and emotions, hope, sadness and love, for example, involve or contain thoughts. Therefore, (iii) music cannot represent definite feelings or emotions'.³⁸⁴

The main idea here is that music cannot express thoughts; thoughts are understood by concepts and words. The same goes for feeling, if we consider what Hanslick says about feeling being specified through objects and concepts, and that they cannot be understood in any other way as they are made for the purpose of understanding our mental states towards these things, then it is a reasonable conclusion excluding them from music.

Several attempts have been made to suggest theories which are able to connect feeling to music, although still agreeing with Hanslick's main negative claim. Jerrold Levinson

³⁸¹ For the original argument, see Malcolm Budd 1985. This account is especially helpful considering various objections and difficulties any aesthetic theory which wants to connect music an emotion has to worry about. This is a helpful read although Budd does not offer a clear counter account himself.

³⁸² Budd 1985: 20

³⁸³ Budd 1985: 20

³⁸⁴ Budd 1985: 21

offers one such theory where he claims that music is able to 'hook into' enough of feeling such that we are able to understand the feeling expressed.^{385,386} This kind of theory is based on the idea, which is presented by Budd, that feelings might be only 'partly constituted by thought',³⁸⁷ and that there might be other ways to define a feeling. Levinson's theory makes good headway suggesting that there are emotions expressed in music, where music is able to present object intentionality without said object and where the conceptual context is offered by the musical sphere instead of the conceptual one. In theory, this sounds reasonable, and indeed, in the same neck of the woods as my own suggestion, however, the practical application of this theory meets some difficult complications. Levinson suggests that:

'P expresses (or is expressive of) α iff P is most readily and aptly heard by the appropriate reference class of listeners as (or as if it were) a sui generis personal expression of α by some (imaginatively indeterminate) individual'.³⁸⁸

A piece of music is only expressive of an emotion say hope, if the appropriate listener is aptly and readily heard as being the logical or appropriate expression of a hypothetical musical persona in the presented musical context. The individual in question is what Levinson calls the musical persona,³⁸⁹ which is supposed to be understood as a complete person which is the one who is expressing whatever it is that the music expresses, such that what is being expressed can be heard as a person expressing something through different means.

What Jerrold Levinson achieves and suggests in this paper is that music is able to express more than mere unspecific stirrings and happy or sad; as he can account for the missing object by suggesting 'object intentionality'³⁹⁰ and the non-cognitive aspects of

³⁸⁵ See Levinson 1990. Levinson offers a more recent discussion of this view, see Levinson 2006. For objections to this account, see Davies 2006, Kivy 2002, and Ridley 2007.

³⁸⁶ For further discussion, see Davies 2006 and Levinson 2006b.

³⁸⁷ Budd 1985: 24

³⁸⁸ Levinson 1990: 338

³⁸⁹ Levinson 1990: 339

³⁹⁰ Levinson 1990: 347

emotion.³⁹¹ Levinson successfully attributes the expression of hope to a piece of music. He suggests that the music may be able to hook into enough of the non-cognitive aspects of an emotion to regularly call the emotion to mind, and furthermore enabling emotions to be represented without a specific object by introducing the aspect of an intentional object. Furthermore, Levinson suggests that music may in and of itself provide us with a complex context getting us into the musical sphere, which at least gets us out from under previous accounts and suggestions of dogs and trees. Levinson has successfully provided a theory which can attribute certain general or emotion types as being expressed by music.

However, this kind of theory, although it has its merit is not a theory of which claims would be able to stand as a principle for the musically beautiful. The worry is that this would result in the material being the only thing which separated one piece of art from another, as both can be argued to express the feeling of hope. My main concern is not with the idea of music being expressive, rather, it is with the idea of calling this expressiveness an expression of hope, love or happiness, as this seems to entail that hope, love and happiness have appropriate expressions which are already known and understood by anyone who understands the musical system. This kind of idea is not one that would suit the current 'Hanslickian' picture. Furthermore, it seems to lack the autonomous aspects, which separates a piece of music from another.

'The *geistige Gehalt* of the composition is in these concrete tonal structures, not in the vague general impressions of abstract feeling. The form (as tonal structure), as opposed to the feeling (as would-be content), is precisely the real content of the music, is the music itself, while the feeling produced can be called neither content nor form, but actual effect'.³⁹²

Hanslick suggests that we cannot find the basis for a principle of the musically beautiful on these general abstract feelings. Rather, the value is in the toneform, where form is content and content is form; the content of music is forms realised in tone. What is of value is intrinsic to the toneforms. These are specific and also what constitute what is akin to meaning. 'The representation of a specific or emotional state is not at all among the

³⁹¹ Levinson 1990: 344

³⁹² Hanslick 1986: 60

characteristic powers of music'.³⁹³ Davies' suggestions follows readily from this, he suggests that; 'Because he does not believe music to be expressive of emotions, he does not see musical beauty as depending on such expressiveness'.³⁹⁴ In other words, Hanslick claims that music is not able to express feelings but still suggests that music is beautiful, so the musically beautiful cannot depend on this expression of feeling.

On this kind of reading music is beautiful much in the same manner as an arabesque, ornamentation, and a kaleidoscope or indeed wallpaper, in other words, pretty patterns appreciated for their pretty forms. A formalistic conception of this kind is mirroring the formalistic ideas of music offered by Kant. In other words, the traditional way of reading Hanslick would be a way to read his positive story as agreeing with the main convictions Kant has about music. Kant discusses the art of music on a few occasions, and as the following quotes will show, the ideas which have been suggested above clearly suggest that Hanslick and Kant are in agreement.

'Many birds (such as the parrot, the humming bird, the bird of paradise), and many sea shells are beauties in themselves, which do not belong to any object determined in respect of its purpose by concepts, but please freely and in themselves. So also delineations à la grecque, foliage for borders or **wall-papers**, mean nothing in themselves; they represent nothing—no Object under a definite concept,—and are free beauties. We can refer to the same class what are called in **music phantasies** (i.e. pieces without any theme), and in fact all music without words'.³⁹⁵ 'If... we estimate the worth of the Beautiful Arts by the culture they supply to the mind, and take as a standard the expansion of the faculties which must concur in the Judgement for cognition, Music will have the lowest place among them (as it has perhaps the highest among those arts which are valued for their pleasantness), because it merely plays with sensations'.³⁹⁶ Music 'the **play of tone...** requires merely the change of sensations, all of which have a relation to

³⁹³ Hanslick 1986: 9

³⁹⁴ Davies 1994: 205

³⁹⁵ Kant 2016 CJ: §16

³⁹⁶ Kant 2016 CJ: §53

affection, though they have not the degree of affection, and excite aesthetical Ideas...music and that which excites laughter are two different kinds of play with aesthetical Ideas, or with representations of the understanding through which ultimately nothing is thought; and yet they can give lively gratification merely by their changes. Thus we recognise pretty clearly that the **animation in both cases is merely bodily**, although it is excited by Ideas of the mind; and that the feeling of health produced by a motion of the intestines corresponding to the play in question makes up that whole gratification of a gay party, which is regarded as so refined and so spiritual. It is not the judging the harmony in tones or sallies of wit,—which serves only in combination with their beauty as a necessary vehicle,—but the furtherance of the vital bodily processes, the affection that moves the intestines and the diaphragm'.³⁹⁷

The idea of music as described above represents an idea of music as having no object, no meaning, and no content. Kant, as was discussed previously, was a proponent for the idea of music as contentless: music does not have content in the sense of conceptual content, which can be described independently of its form. Thus, as music is lacking of conceptual content music can only have a very slight value and should be thought of as bordering on agreeable art in Kant's opinion. What this entails is that there is indeed some sort of *Geist* present here, which would ring true with the necessity of *Geist* for beauty suggested by Hanslick. However, the amount of *Geist* is very slight.

If the claim is that music does not have to do with concepts and objects, then I would have to agree that this is true. The main arguments of Hanslick's work and this thesis is based on those grounds. Furthermore, the idea that music cannot represent specific feelings as these are specified through their conceptual essence, is also something this thesis and Hanslick, would agree too. We can conclude that, on a traditional reading such as this, Hanslick is not only a formalist, but, a pure formalist; and that there is textual evidence supporting the claim that he is excluding everything that goes by the name of feeling.

³⁹⁷ Kant 2016 CJ: §54 (my emphasis)

Although I am sympathetic to this kind of reading, I do consider this to be a misreading. In the following section I will suggest how firstly it does not follow from these suggestions that Hanslick excludes everything that goes by the name of feeling, secondly that it is an error to consider Hanslick as agreeing with Kant. Suggesting that music is more akin to a joke than a painting is conceding very little to Hanslick and even less to the art of music.

The following section will consider an alternative reading of Hanslick's positive story, where it is suggested that Hanslick was a formalist, but that he does not exclude music from being expressive, nor does he exclude everything that goes by the name of feeling, rather he embraces it.

V.II Alternative reading 'music is expressive of something that goes by the name of feeling'

'Ardent opponents have accused me from time to time of mounting a full-scale polemic against everything that goes by the name of feeling, whereas every impartial and attentive reader can easily see that I protest only against the erroneous involvement of feeling in science and thus strive against these aesthetic visionaries who, while pretending to tell musicians what to do, merely expose their own tinkling opium dreams'.³⁹⁸

The following section will suggest that there is good textual evidence which supports an alternative reading of Hanslick's positive story, suggesting that Hanslick did not protest against everything that goes by the name of feeling.³⁹⁹

Hanslick is a formalist, however, firstly I do not think this automatically means his theory is one which needs to be objected to, and secondly I suggest that he is not the kind of formalist which the traditional reading claims.⁴⁰⁰ There is a difference between being a formalist which excludes everything that goes by the name of feeling and one that does not. I will suggest the following section that there are reasons for believing that Hanslick was a formalist of the latter kind.

³⁹⁸ Hanslick 1986: xxii

³⁹⁹ A few others have suggested that Hanslick might not have intended his negative story to exclude everything that goes by the name of feeling, see Payzant 1986, Kivy 1990, and Hall 1967.

⁴⁰⁰ There are others who share my inclination here, see for example Sousa 2017.

A formalist is one who considers musical meaning to be determined by its form⁴⁰¹, and there is no question to whether or not Hanslick was a formalist. On several occasions he claims that the musical determinants are in the music, in the toneforms and that beauty is mere form. Furthermore, he objects to the opposing view, that of expressionism on multiple occasions. Thus, it is safe to conclude that Hanslick is a formalist and that the theory he is suggesting is a variation thereof. However, for Hanslick, form is not just what we have come to know as *Inhalt* so it is not just structure and other formalistic aspects, form for Hanslick is constituted by both *Inhalt* and *Gehalt*, thus there are other aspects which constitute the forms which determines the meaning of music.

The main key to this alternative reading is therefore founded on a vital premise of Hanslick's book and this thesis, namely the separation between *Inhalt* and *Gehalt*. What this separation entailed was that music was contentless, however, it was not meaningless. In other words, the whole separation between *Inhalt* and *Gehalt* is suggested to retain the idea of meaning in music, not exclude it. This was furthered in the idea of altering the translation of Hanslick's positive thesis from something that was suggested to be currently moving to something that has been moved. *Inhalt and Gehalt* is a unity and both have been realised.

The following discussion will show that the suggestion of *geistige Gehalt* entails that music may be able to express something that goes by the name of feeling and this is justified by suggesting that *geistige Gehalt* is a definite mental motion which has the potentiality to be reanimated or in other words to make us understand and become aware of something mental, such as thought, idea or indeed intellectual feeling. But before we launch into the alternative way of reading Hanslick we should consider the textual evidence of suggesting that Hanslick is directly objecting to Kant's ideas of music.

The problem with Kant is that he has not dispensed with content. He still thinks that for there to be content that is valuable we need to be able to grasp them in concepts and objects, and as music lacks this it is by virtue contentless, there is only the structural aspects left to consider. This results in the claims about how music is an art but a very slight one.

⁴⁰¹ For more on formalism, see Bell 1914, Zangwill 2001, Kivy 1990, and Pratt 1931.

When Hanslick suggests that music is contentless what he means is that in one sense music does not have *Inhalt*, it does not have *Inhalt* as opposed to its form, nor does music have *Inhalt* independently of *Gehalt*, rather, *Inhalt and Gehalt* come into being together. This is why Hanslick claims that form is content and content is form. What this means is that music only has *Inhalt* in combination with *Gehalt*. Therefore, Kant is only right in his convictions if there is no significance in *geistige Gehalt*. However, if significance can be proven to reside in *geistige Gehalt* then Kant would be wrong and the traditional reading would need to answer for this significance being ignored.

It is on this foundation that I suggest that Hanslick is objecting to rather than agreeing to the following convictions from Kant:

‘The difference in our definition, according as we adopt the one or the other opinion in judging of the grounds of Music, would be just this: either, as we have done, we must explain it as the **beautiful play of sensations (of hearing)**...’⁴⁰²

Music ‘the **play of tone**... requires merely the change of sensations, all of which have a relation to affection, though they have not the degree of affection, and excite aesthetical Ideas... which ultimately nothing is thought... Thus we recognise pretty clearly that the **animation in both cases is merely bodily**, although it is excited by Ideas of the mind... It is not the judging the harmony in tones or sallies of wit,—which serves only in combination with their beauty as a necessary vehicle,—but the furtherance of the vital bodily processes, the affection that moves the intestines and the diaphragm...’⁴⁰³

The view which is suggested by Kant is one where music is an art because it has to do with aesthetic ideas and free play of the imagination, however, it is at the very lower end of the scale as music is merely a beautiful pattern and does not have content. Kant’s conclusion of music being a mere play of sensation follows from this, suggesting that any motion connected with music is merely bodily motion. The problem with this kind of account is the neglect of the idea of *geistige Gehalt*. As Hanslick clearly states:

⁴⁰² Kant 2016 CJ: 51 (my emphasis)

⁴⁰³ Kant 2016 CJ: 54 (my emphasis)

‘In no way is the specifically musically beautiful to be understood as mere acoustical beauty or as symmetry of proportion –it embraces both as ancillary- and still less can we talk about an **ear-pleasing play of tones** or other such images by which the lack of a **geistige source of animation** tends to become emphasised’.^{404, 405}

The problem with the Kantian picture is this lack of a *geistige* source of animation, in other words, there is no consideration for *geistige Gehalt*, which is essential for music, according to Hanslick.

‘[I]n order to make our case for musical beauty, we have not excluded *geistigen Gehalt* but, on the contrary, have insisted on it. For we acknowledge no beauty without its full share of *Geist*. Basically what we have done is transfer the beauty of music to tonal forms. This already implies that the *geistige Gehalt* of music is in the most intimate relationship with these forms. In music the concept of “form” is materialized in a specifically musical way. The forms which construct themselves out of tones are not empty but filled; they are not mere contours of a vacuum but mind giving shape to itself from within. Accordingly, by contrast with arabesque, music is actually a picture, but one whose subject we cannot grasp in words and subsume under a concepts’.⁴⁰⁶

The idea of Hanslick suggesting that music is something akin to an arabesque is to neglect the main idea of the necessity and meaning of the *Inhalt* and *Gehalt* distinction and the significance thereof. The idea that music is on the lower end of art and more akin to wallpaper than to a marvellous painting seems erroneous, and the following passage will provide further justification for why such a conception of music is lacking.

‘How music is able to produce beautiful tone forms without a specific feeling as its content is already to some extent illustrated for us by a branch of ornamentation in the visual arts, namely arabesque. We follow sweeping lines, here dipping

⁴⁰⁴ Hanslick 1986: 30 (my emphasis)

⁴⁰⁵ This seems to have a direct link to Kant, especially if we consider the way in which Hanslick has phrased this.

⁴⁰⁶ Hanslick 1986: 30 (my italics)

gently, there boldly soaring, approaching and separating, corresponding curves large and small, seemingly incommensurable yet always well connected together, to every part a counterpart, a collection of small details but yet a whole. Now let us think of an arabesque not dead and static, but coming into being in continuous self-formation before our eyes. How the lines, some robust and some delicate, pursue one another!... Finally, let us think of this lively arabesque as the dynamic emanation of an artistic *Geist* who unceasingly pours the whole abundance of his inventiveness into the arteries of this dynamism. Does this mental impression not come close to that of music?...analogy for the musically beautiful (setting aside the soul, the *geistige* expression)'.⁴⁰⁷

What Hanslick clarifies in the end of this discussion is that this is an analogy and that analogies like the arabesque, or kaleidoscope or good ways to understand the formalistic aspects of music, however, these analogies do not consider the *geistige* expression i.e., *geistige Gehalt*. As Hanslick states, these work if we are 'setting aside the soul, the *geistige* expression'.⁴⁰⁸

Hanslick suggests that any such claim as the one offered by Kant lacks mental source of animation. This mental source of animation, together with the idea of *Geist*, and the necessity of *geistige Gehalt* merits further investigation into these ideas. To that end, I will consider aspects from Aristotle's philosophy, which enables a different kind of reading. Aristotle considers the idea of motion, which is suggested by Hanslick to be a very fruitful concept, and to be the connection between music and emotions. And as this alternative reading wishes to make claims about such a connection, elaborating on the idea of motion is a reasonable place to start.

Aristotle:

Aristotle discusses the main ideas of motion in his books on physics.⁴⁰⁹ Where he suggests that motion or change is divided into four main categories, the change of substance is what is relevant for the current discussion. Motion is not something that is a part of or a

⁴⁰⁷ Hanslick 1986: 29 (my italics)

⁴⁰⁸ Hanslick 1986: 29 my italics

⁴⁰⁹ Aristotle *Physics* (8 books).

property of something, rather, motion or change is a possibility and then there is a someone that has the ability to move it. Thus, for there to be change there must be ability and possibility. This relates back to the idea of transformation which is discussed by Hanslick in his chapter about music's relation to nature, where Hanslick mentions the 'Aristotelian thesis about the imitation of nature in art'.⁴¹⁰ 'Art should not slavishly imitate nature; it has to transform it',⁴¹¹ and as was discussed what is transformed in the case of the composer is something inner. But for this change or motion to happen there must be something that can be transformed, as this process of forming is essential to art. However, different things have different kinds of motion or changes. Motion is that which fulfils a potential, but motion is just there when it is moving and not before or after that. Aristotle suggests that 'Everything that is in motion must be moved by something'.⁴¹² What moves is the soul, in other words, the soul is the principle of animal life.

Aristotle talks about the soul in his work with the original title *De Anima*,⁴¹³ Anima or Animus is Latin for living or breathing, and it is nowadays translated more as mind rather than soul. When Aristotle is considering the soul, he is suggesting that which is separate from the body, but not independent of it, that which brings life, that which breathes. The main characteristic of *De Anima* is the ability to move, to breathe life, in other words, animate. This kind of conception does not shy far from the idea of *Geist*, *Geist* is considered as that which has the ability to animate, to give life to things in our minds.

Aristotle further suggests that 'what produces the impact must have soul in it and must be accompanied by an act of imagination'.⁴¹⁴ In other words, what makes the soul move must be something that has the force or power to make the soul move. Something that has been filled with soul can possess the potentiality for soulful actuality. This again seems to capture the aspects discussed in the previous chapter, the music which has been

⁴¹⁰ Hanslick 1986: 73

⁴¹¹ Hanslick 1986: 73

⁴¹² Aristotle, *Physics*, book VII: 1

⁴¹³ Aristotle, *De Anima* 3 books

⁴¹⁴ Aristotle, *De Anima*, book II: 8

formed is indeed infused with *Geist* as it has been formed and it then has the ability to be heard in a certain way and thus be animated.

Geist or anima is characterised by the ability to move things that has the potentiality, this potential needs to be actualised, which is why a mover is necessary, as things do not move by themselves.

‘The mover or agent will always be the vehicle of a form, either a “this” or “such”, which, when it acts, will be the source and cause of the change....It is the fulfilment of this potentiality, and by the action of that which has the power of causing motion; and the actuality of that which has the power of causing motion is no other than the actuality of the movable, for it must be the fulfilment of both’.⁴¹⁵ ‘Take for instance the buildable as buildable. The actuality of the buildable as buildable is the process of building. For the actuality of the buildable must be either this or the house. But when there is a house, the buildable is no longer buildable. On the other hand, it is the buildable which is being built. The process then of being built must be the kind of actuality required. But building is a kind of motion, and the same account will apply to the other kinds also’.⁴¹⁶

In Hanslick’s positive story, we discussed how the content of music is forms realised in tones. These toneforms were suggested to having been moved, which means they are not currently moving. The idea described above would function as that which made the music move again, i.e., the *Geist* would reanimate the music enabling a musical experience which would at least be similar to the one had by the composer during his forming process. The realisation of a musical form as musical form is the forming process or the form as formed, or indeed as Hanslick would have suggested, both. But when the form is realised it is no longer formable, because it has been formed, but it can be reanimated seeing as it has a potentiality for motion. This echoes a previously discussed quote by Hanslick where he states that ‘musical artwork is formed; the performance we experience’.⁴¹⁷

⁴¹⁵ Aristotle, *Physics*, book III: 3

⁴¹⁶ Aristotle, *Physics*, book III: 1

⁴¹⁷ Hanslick 1986: 49

Thus, we could think of the process of forming as a way to infuse the tones with life and meaning in virtue of moving it in the mind and realising a form. Much like Hanslick says when he says that ‘Composing is a work of mind upon material compatible with mind’.⁴¹⁸ The process of realisation, the forming process can be thought of as a mental motion, which makes the form tangible and understandable i.e., makes it into a definite mental motion. A particular mental motion would then be a mental motion that through being moved in the mind in a medium has been realised in a form which expresses what it was supposed to express. Which in turn makes it intelligible as a definite mental motion which can be understood by another mind.

Aristotle further suggests ideas which are similar to the different aspects of art, paraphrasable and non-paraphrasable aspects, which constitutes our understanding.

‘The faculty of knowing is never moved but remains at rest. Since the one premises or judgement is universal and the other deals with the particular...it is the latter opinion that really originates movement, not the universal; or rather it is both, but the one does so while it remains in a state more like rest, while the other partakes in movement...they must perceive not only by immediate contact but also at a distance from the object...This will be possible if they can perceive through a medium, the medium being affected and moved by the perceptible object, and the animal by the medium’.⁴¹⁹

What I interpret the quote above as suggesting in relation to our current context is that there are different kinds of motions which are akin to the different kinds of aspects of understanding. Both kinds of motion constitute our understanding.

This would suit the suggested picture of Hanslick as *Inhalt* and *Gehalt* both constitute music, however, *Inhalt* moves and functions in one way akin to a technical kind of end whereas *Gehalt* moves in a different way akin to the expressive kind of end. *Inhalt* would be in one sense universal, whereas *Gehalt* would be particular, thus the motion which is valuable and which has meaning would be the particular motion of which potential lies in *geistige Gehalt*. This would fit well with the previous discussion of the particularity and

⁴¹⁸ Hanslick 1986: 31

⁴¹⁹ Aristotle, *De Anima*, book III: 11

intellectual aspects of music originating in *geistige Gehalt* as that which the composer adds.

The mental motion is realised through a medium by someone who can move it, and the human being is moved by the medium. This again carries resemblance to the previous discussion. The idea of *Inhalt*, the technical end and the tonal system enables us to create music, it enables the composer to move within the musical medium to realise his expression or in other words define his motion. We cannot comprehend motion that is not defined: 'mental motion as motion pure and simple with no content, cannot be a subject for artistic embodiment, because there is no way of taking hold of them without answering questions about what moves or what is moved'.⁴²⁰ In other words, motion is defined by what moves, what moves or is moved are tones, and what defines these tones is the mental motion as the realisation of toneform.

Geistige Gehalt is thus a definite mental motion, which has the potentiality of being reanimated by something that can move it. If this is the case it would explain why Hanslick would say that 'composing is a work of mind upon material compatible with mind'.⁴²¹ The music can be thought of as 'an efficacious mediator between two kinetic powers, its whence and its whither, i.e., the composer and the hearer'.⁴²² The particular part of music, that which separates art from craft, is this *geistige Gehalt*, this is also what is realised and can be thought of as the expressive end. This has then been moved in tones when it was realised, i.e. in the process of forming. When it has been formed it is not moving anymore, but it has the potential of moving, both in the sense of bodily movement in the structure and mental movement of becoming aware of what is being expressed.

The following section will consider how the ideas suggested above do not make Hanslick liable to the objections of other formalists which have made the same connection between music and motion. Other such accounts mainly focus on one kind of motion, or

⁴²⁰ Hanslick 1986: 20

⁴²¹ Hanslick 1986: 31

⁴²² Hanslick 1986: 45

suggest that the motion is an illusion and not actual motion. Whereas, for Hanslick, motion is not just how music impresses us, but it is also part of music's content and value. Malcolm Budd⁴²³ raises some important objections with regards to the relation between music and motion.

'However, the notion of musical movement is problematic...If we throw a ball into the air, as it gets higher it moves from one position to another. But if a note is succeeded by a higher note there is nothing that in fact moves from one position through an intervening gap to a higher position. Furthermore, nothing even seems to move from one position to another...movement requires not only something that moves but also positions between which movement takes place. Does the temporal art of music have a spatial or quasi-spatial aspect of the required kind?'⁴²⁴

The main claim offered by Budd is developed as an objection to Carroll C. Pratt's⁴²⁵ suggestion of how we can claim that music is expressive of emotion. Budd suggests that Pratt claims that music can be described by using the same emotional words as long as the bodily movement which accompanies an emotion can be expressed and recognised in tones too.⁴²⁶ This suggestion might work for some emotions, but certainly not for all emotions. This is connected to the fact that motion is merely part of an emotion. As Hanslick states, it is merely 'one moment of feeling, not feeling itself'.⁴²⁷ Furthermore, the idea of suggesting that we may use certain emotional words to describe the motion in music does not seem to connect music to emotion in any way which could be valued. The musical motion would only sound like a certain emotional motion could feel.

This theory reads as a resemblance based theory of musical expression where the resemblance is based on bodily movement. Any such resemblance based theories have been suggested to lack in certain vital areas. Stephen Davies also offers objections of this

⁴²³ Budd 1985

⁴²⁴ Budd 1985: 39

⁴²⁵ For the entire account, see Pratt 1931.

⁴²⁶ Budd 1985: 46

⁴²⁷ Hanslick 1986: 11

kind, suggesting that Pratt does make this kind of suggestion but that such a suggestion does not merit anything, as describing music using emotional words is not the same as saying what music expresses.⁴²⁸

Although Davies suggests a resemblance based theory of musical expressiveness himself, which I have concluded does not suffice in the current investigation, he makes some interesting points with regards to music and motion.⁴²⁹ Davies identifies motion as essential to Hanslick's account, which I suggest is correct. Furthermore, he suggests that musical motion is phenomenological motion more than actual spatial or temporal motion. However, Davies further suggests that music is heard as moving in space and time. 'The experience is not merely one of succession, but of connection'.⁴³⁰ The main motivation for suggesting these points made by Davies is because they are applicable to Hanslick's own theory and my suggested reading. Motion is an integral and essential aspect of music, motion is part of the main building blocks which constitutes basic musical understanding. As was discussed in chapter five, music is thought to have three main building blocks, harmony, melody and rhythm. None of these elements makes much sense if the idea of motion is excluded, as melody and harmony are 'animated by rhythm, the artery which carries life to music'.⁴³¹

Motion in music has been suggested to be metaphorical, illusionary, essence of motion, special motion, mysterious motion,⁴³² all of which have been suggested by various authors⁴³³ as we want to claim that we experience music as moving although explaining why and how this is possible is not always doable. The main reason for confusion seems to be the idea of trying to explain musical motion with relation to actual space and time. As Davies states 'Sometimes alterations other than straightforward spatial ones are

⁴²⁸ Davies 1994: 136

⁴²⁹ Davies 1994: 229-238

⁴³⁰ Davies 1994: 232

⁴³¹ Hanslick 1986: 28

⁴³² Davies 1994: 234

⁴³³ See Budd 2003

described as involving movement'.⁴³⁴ Music should not be thought of as something that moves in space and time as such, rather it should be thought of as a process, 'The river does not move but it is constituted by the motion of the water it contains'.⁴³⁵ This kind of suggestion mirrors Hanslick's thinking, as music does not move by itself, but music is constituted by the motion of the tones of which it contains.

If we consider the main positive thesis again, that the content of music is forms realised in tone, this captures both the form and content of music. This thesis contains everything we need to know about what music is about, one of the key aspects of this statement is the idea of realisation, of the process of motion of moving the idea in the tones to enable a pure form to be realised. I will stick to my previous translation and suggest that realisation does the statement justice, as the motion and the way in which music moves is more akin to that of a realisation than that of something that physically moves from place to place. Furthermore, the main idea of *Inhalt* and *Gehalt* is to enable this process of realisation, in this way there is a place for moving from one conception to another, there are different aspects which constitute our understanding thus enabling a motion process in the mind.

The idea of motion⁴³⁶ in Hanslick's writings carries similarities with the suggestion made by Donald Ferguson in his book *Music as a Metaphor*.⁴³⁷ What he suggests is compatible with the alternative reading and objection to the Kantian picture:

'If all this could be indicated graphically, our bare rhythm-outline for the Beethoven theme would be filled in at every instant *between* the marked moments of accent or non-accent, and would indicate no longer a mere pattern but a reality of motion. Nor is this all. Dynamic emphasis, additional to that required for the definition of basic meter, may suggest distinctive characteristics of physical or nervous energy; and all the features, conjoined with the intrinsic

⁴³⁴ Davies 1994: 235

⁴³⁵ Davies 1994: 235

⁴³⁶ For other articles on motion and movement in music, see Scruton 2004a, Budd 2003, and Scruton 1997. For further discussion of motion and Hanslick, see Bonds 2014, Levitz 2017.

⁴³⁷ 1960

motor-impulses of consonant or dissonant harmony, may embody the depicted motion in an apparently corporeal musical mass whose weight and volume may be adjusted (as, for instance, no dancer's body could be adjusted) to the portrayal, not merely of motion but of the vital impulse to motion activating a sentient being'.⁴³⁸

What is suggested here is that motion is something akin to *geistige Gehalt* can 'activate a sentient being', or in other words, motion can make us think and become aware. It is this kind of proposition I am suggesting that Hanslick is trying to make. There are parts of motion, which we hear, understand and regard as constituting music which is not explicable by the mere structure. There is an actuality of motion, when the piece of music is animated, which can only be experienced. Which is what we experience and are able to become aware of if we listen to music with aesthetic understanding.

What is essential is not movement in and of itself, but rather what is moved, how it is moved, and how we can value such motion. In other words, what is moved is tones, it is moved by the composer when formed and moved again by the listener; what we value is not the motion itself, but rather what is moved both as toneform and in mind.

Motion in music is saying something about how we come to understand our experience and how we experience it. In other words, the way in which music impresses us is via motion, both bodily motion and mental motion. Hence, I suggest that Hanslick's idea of *geistige Gehalt*, or that which is animated, is concerned with mental motion, which entails that the motion which is significant cannot be merely bodily motion. In other words, it is not just the senses that are being moved, but also mental motion which I will later suggest could possibly have a connection to something that goes by the name of feeling.

Motion and feeling

The dualism which penetrates the ideas of content, understanding, form, and motion in music, can also be found in the idea and discussion of feeling. Hanslick suggests in the very beginning of his work that there is a need for separating between sensations and

⁴³⁸ Ferguson 1960: 75

feeling, because only if we do that can we separate between variations of feeling, to wit: intellectual feeling and sensation based feeling.⁴³⁹

One kind of feeling is clearly excluded as being significant for aesthetical value and appreciation of music, which would be the feelings which are connected with the elemental aspects of music, those which have 'chronic manifestation in temperament and...acute manifestation in affect'.⁴⁴⁰ These feelings are the general impressions which would be what the pathological listener would experience when he listens to music. However, if we consider the basis of the musically beautiful residing in the secondary effect of the elementary aspects of feeling we might as well swap opera with opium. A claim that no aesthetician would want to commit to. However, there is a different kind or indeed there is a different aspect of feeling, and that is what Hanslick calls intellectual feeling.

The claim here is not that there is no connection to sensation: Sensation is the beginning and prerequisite of aesthetical pleasure, and it constitutes initially the basis of feeling; feeling always presuppose a relation (often a complex one) between itself and sensation'.⁴⁴¹ Rather, the claim is that there might be different ways to be impressed by or understand feelings where it would be possible to understand it intellectually and without feeling as such. This kind of suggestion is similar to how I interpret Collingwood when he considers emotions. Clarified emotions for Collingwood is something that has obtained meaning, and it has to do with being aware and conscious of them and not feeling them.

The connection between music and feeling has been addressed in a negative sense in the negative story, however, it has also been addressed in a positive. Feelings are indeed important and crucial for music, both with respect by motion and with respect to inspiration, passion and other aspects of feeling which can be said to drive and enable the composer and the listener. What Hanslick does object to, is to the idea of the defining purpose of music being the arousal of feeling, and that the content of music is the

⁴³⁹ Hanslick 1986: 5n

⁴⁴⁰ Hanslick 1986: 5n

⁴⁴¹ Hanslick 1986: 4

representation of specific feeling. However, in no way is this the same as saying that music has nothing to do with feeling or that music is not expressive, rather, the idea is to make a case for what music is expressing.

There is without a doubt no case to be made for the aesthetical significance of feeling as sensuous based feeling with regards to music. However, there might be a case to be made for what Hanslick calls intellectual feeling. Hanslick is insisting on intellectual feeling being part of *geistige Gehalt*.

In second chapter of this thesis the quote below was discussed with the aim to highlight the Kantian connection and the idea of imagination and seeing with understanding, i.e., intuition. However, the development of the thesis has underlined another way to understand what Hanslick was suggesting here, which is worth some consideration.

‘It is remarkable how musicians and the older aestheticians only move in the contrast between feeling and understanding, as if the main thing was not the very centre of this alleged dilemma. Out of the imagination of the composer, the piece of music arises for the imagination of the listener. Certainly with regards to beauty, imagining is not mere contemplating, but contemplating with active understanding, i.e., conceiving and judging. Of course these processes occur so swiftly that we are unaware of them and are deceived into thinking that what, in truth, depends on several intermediate processes occurs immediately. The word contemplation has long since been extended to include all sense appearances and not merely the visual. And it serves very well for what we do when we listen attentively to the sequence of tonal forms that is music’.⁴⁴²

What I suggest Hanslick is alluding to is that music is not felt nor is it understood, rather it is a bit of both, where the free play of imagination comes in, but it is not nonsense or without meaning. Nor can we suggest that feeling is not present, as feeling need not mean sensation nor pathological feeling but rather intellectual feeling.

The reflection of the imagination, contains both understanding and intellectual feeling. What is suggested is that there is a connection between what Hanslick calls intellectual

⁴⁴² Hanslick 1986: 4

feeling and *geistige Gehalt*. If such a connection can be proven, then we have justification for suggesting that Hanslick did not exclude everything that goes by the name of feeling and furthermore evidence of the validity of this alternative reading.

The definite mental motion is necessarily in *Geistige Gehalt*, as this is what separates one piece of music from another.

‘In every art, the naïve audience takes pleasure in the merely sensuous aspect, while the ideal *Gehalt* is perceived only by the educated understanding. However, the reprehensible kind of musical hearing which we have been describing is surely not the same thing as this naïve pleasure. This unartistic apprehension of a piece of music does not single out the *strictly* sensuous aspect, i.e., the rich variety of succession of sounds in itself, but rather its abstract general impression, **as mere feeling**. From this the pre-eminence in music which the *geistige Gehalt* assumes with regard to the categories of form and *Inhalt* becomes apparent’.⁴⁴³

Hanslick is here suggesting that we are now in a position to see how *geistige Gehalt* has authority over the categories of form and *Inhalt*. In other words, the suggestion of the naïve listener as taking pleasure in the mere elemental aspects or rather the general effect of feeling is supposed to show how *geistige Gehalt* takes up a special position with regards to form and *Inhalt*. In one sense there are two kinds of conceptions of form lurking about here. There is the form as considered in connection to content which could be understood as the mere structure, the shape of something, i.e., the technical end. And then there is the form as considered something akin to the purpose, the aim or the meaning, this would be akin to the expressive end. And if music is considered with both ends then feeling would not be general but particular and furthermore musical.

What Hanslick is suggesting is that it would be a misunderstanding to think of feelings as mere general feelings; rather we are listening with understanding, and feeling. In other words, listening to music with understanding and aesthetical perception would be listening to anything that goes by the name of feeling as adhering to the particular end, which is thus particular and unique, effectively making the ‘feeling’ specific in some way.

⁴⁴³ Hanslick 1986: 60 (my italics)

Wittgenstein is often guiding more than stating, and his question seems to offer a suitable answer in the current context. ‘What happens when we learn to *feel* the ending of a church mode as an ending?’⁴⁴⁴ It means that we feel with musical understanding.

‘If this consciousness [*Bewußtsein*] is lacking, if there is no free intuition [*freie Anschauung*] of the specifically musical beauty, and if feeling thinks of **itself as only involved in the natural power of tones**, then, the more vigorously the impression makes its appearance, all the less can art ascribe such impression to itself’.⁴⁴⁵

Feeling is not only involved in the natural power of tones, rather Hanslick’s seems to be suggesting that there is feeling found in the pure intuition or in the intellectual aspects of music, i.e., *geistige Gehalt*.

‘Speaking more rationally, one can only mean by this that music should embody the motion of feeling, abstracted from the content itself, i.e., from what is felt. This we have called the dynamics of feeling and have entirely conceded it to music. This ingredient of music, however, is not a representation of unspecified feelings. The terms *unspecific* and *representation* are contradictory. Mental motion as motion pure and simple with no content, cannot be the subject for artistic embodiment, because there is no way of taking hold of them without answering questions about what moves or what is moved. That which is correct in the proposition, namely, the implied support of the view that music should not portray specific feelings, is a purely negative moment. But what is it that is positive and creative in the musical artwork? An unspecified feeling as such is not a content. If an art were to take possession of it, then, the main question would still be: How is it formed?’

Hanslick is giving the reader a hint here as to where we should look for the positive creative factor of music. Hanslick suggests in the chapter concerning the subjective impression of music that feeling is always important and present yet never the creative factor nor the content of the composed work. Furthermore, as we have encountered, the

⁴⁴⁴ Wittgenstein PI: 535

⁴⁴⁵ Hanslick 1986: 20-12 (my italics and emphasis)

idea of music containing or arousing feeling is not a possibility on this account. However, the positive creative factor of music, that which the composer adds is of a mental kind, what forms the piece of music is something to do with mind, and thus it would not be unreasonable to suggest that this particularity is akin to a definite mental motion. And furthermore, to suggest that what is being animated is indeed this definite mental motion. In other words, experiencing music is becoming aware of something, it makes us think, and what we value is this process as well as the conclusion.

‘The works of the art of music are for such a conception [pathological] to be included along with natural products, which delights us but that cannot compel us to think of a conscious *Geiste* [mind]. We can dreamily inhale the sweet fragrance of the acacia even with our eyes closed. However, creations of the human *Geistes* completely denies this, if they are not to be degraded to the level of the sensuous pleasure of nature’.⁴⁴⁶

The emphasis here is that music does indeed make us think, and not merely to a general almost non-intellectual level, rather music makes us think very specifically.

‘Only the person who retains not just the general aftereffects of feeling, but also the unforgettable, specific image of just this particular piece of music, has heard it and enjoyed it’.⁴⁴⁷ ‘But this feeling which in fact to greater or less degree unites itself with pure intuition,⁴⁴⁸ can only be regarded as artistic when it remains aware of its aesthetic origin, i.e., the pleasure in just this one particular beauty’.⁴⁴⁹ ‘precisely the “specifically musical” part is the creation of the artistic *Geist*, with which the contemplating *Geist* unites in complete understanding’.⁴⁵⁰

The specific image which is referred to as what is particular in music would be akin to what was discussed as the expressive end. The idea is that this expressive end, this

⁴⁴⁶ Hanslick 1986: 60 (altered translation)

⁴⁴⁷ Hanslick 1986: 66

⁴⁴⁸ Altered translation from ‘contemplation’ to ‘intuition’, for justification of this, see section II.I

⁴⁴⁹ Hanslick 1986: 58

⁴⁵⁰ Hanslick 1986: 60 (my italics)

specific picture, *Gehalt*, is indeed of a mental nature. Furthermore, the process of realising this is a process of mental motion.

The composer's *Geist* is what realises the *Gehalt*, thus this is the reason for suggesting that this *Gehalt* is what is particular in music is indeed also *geistige*. This is what another *Geist*, such as the listener, is able to animate by completely understanding it; not merely as music but furthermore as an end in itself and thus unites the definite idea and the form embodying it effectively being able to experience the music in pure intuition. This *geistige Gehalt*, and thus also what is animated, has something to do with intellectual feeling.

In the foreword Hanslick states that: 'I share completely the view that the ultimate worth of the beautiful is always based on the immediate manifestness of feeling. However, I hold just as firmly the conviction that, from all the customary appeals to feeling, we can derive not a single musical law'.⁴⁵¹

The word which has been translated as 'manifestness' is the German word *Evidenz* which has a rather particular use. *Evidenz* in German is according to Payzant: 'a technical term in German Idealistic philosophy and in Phenomenology. It signifies that in our awareness which is simply given, not subject to proof or disproof; that which thought and knowledge illuminate'.⁴⁵² Doing an ordinary search the word *Evidenz* refers to an immediate insight, which cannot be doubted. If we consider this and rephrase the quote above, what Hanslick is saying comes to this: The ultimate worth of the beautiful is always based on immediate or direct intuitiveness (awareness) of feeling.

The ultimate value of the beautiful comes from feeling, this feeling is something that is evident. The German word *Evidenz* is not used as the word proof rather it signifies something that is beyond proof, it just is, it cannot be doubted or indeed proven. This kind of immediate awareness of feeling, is not a specific feeling, not a feeling connected to anything as such, rather it is an awareness of a mental state, a mental motion or indeed intellectual feeling.

⁴⁵¹ Hanslick 1986: xxii

⁴⁵² 1986: 105, Translators notes, foreword, n2.

I suggest that what Hanslick is trying to express here is that the ultimate value of the beautiful is always based on the ability to make us think, that we can become aware, that we can comprehend, i.e., hear it as an end, and that end being music. This would be something akin to an intellectual feeling. This ability to make us think and become aware or understand this mental aspect, is what the *Geist* adds and what is reanimated by *Geist*. In other words, the in virtue of being able to move mentally in the potentiality of movement which is actualised by *Geist* music is both particular, definite and has something to do with something that can go by the name of feeling.

The forming process shows that what enables the composer to create music is the musical system, however, what is created is not the tones or chords etc, rather it is an intelligible form which in music is a kind of motion. The motion in music is both motion as material motion and furthermore a mental motion. This second kind of motion is motion which is the process of realisation, it is indeed the process which leads music to be formed, to be intelligible. Thus, motion in this sense is essential to music, and this definite mental motion which is a potential in the *geistige Gehalt*. This particular mental motion can at least be suggested to be the same kind of thing as the intellectual feelings which Hanslick consider as possible in music. What this would entail is that music is indeed expressive of some kind of feeling, as music makes us aware, it makes us think. What we would like to call these definite mental motion feeling things is another question.

I suggest that there is at least good evidence supporting the claim that Hanslick was not a pure formalist, whether or not the suggestions towards the connections between motion and feeling is the best alternative reading is still debatable. However, I do consider the textual evidence as suggesting something along these lines, where the idea was not to suggest a musical aesthetic which considered music less or mere structure, but rather Hanslick attempt to grapple with and try and explain a theory of musical aesthetics which was scientific, objective and not feeling-theory.

Concluding remarks

'To produce one [a complete theory of musical aesthetics] is beyond my present intentions and capabilities. It will suffice if I succeed in bringing triumphant battering-rams against the decaying walls of the "feeling-theory" and in setting out a few cornerstones for future reconstructions'.⁴⁵³



The main aim for this thesis was to justify Hanslick's claim of the content of music being form. This thesis has shown that there is indeed evidence to support this claim. Furthermore, this thesis has shown that Hanslick did not only successfully deconstruct the feeling-theory, but reconstructed a foundation which can stand as a principle for the particularly musically beautiful.

Everything Hanslick claims is connected to the idea of *Inhalt* and *Gehalt*; this distinction is, I suggest the essence not only of Hanslick's theory but of any valid theory of musical aesthetics. By reconsidering *Inhalt* Hanslick was able to make a case for music's *Gehalt*, effectively getting music closer to art.

[O]nly by firmly denying any other kind of "*Inhalt*"⁴⁵⁴ to music can we preserve music's "*Gehalt*". This is because from indefinite feelings, to which at best such content is attributable, no *Geistige* sense derives; rather, in each composition, the content derives from its particular tonal structure as the spontaneous creation of mind out of material compatible with mind [i.e., the tones]'.⁴⁵⁵

⁴⁵³ Hanslick 1986: xii-xxii (forewords to the first edition).

⁴⁵⁴ Hanslick 1922: 174 "Nur dadurch aber, daß man jeden andern »Inhalt« der Tonkunst unerbittlich negiert, rettet man deren »Gehalt«. Denn aus dem unbestimmten Gefühle, worauf sich jener Inhalt im besten Fall zurückführt, ist ihr eine geistige Bedeutung nicht abzuleiten, wohl aber aus der bestimmten schönen Tongestaltung als der freien Schöpfung des Geistes aus geistfähigem Material."

⁴⁵⁵ Hanslick 1986: 83

This is how Hanslick concludes his book, and it might not be a very satisfactory conclusion. Payzant, suggests that it is not a conclusion but merely an ending.⁴⁵⁶ This would be in keeping with Hanslick's main intention of not offering a complete account but merely making some suggestions towards a foundation of which any such theory would have to stand on. Even if Hanslick did not offer a full account, I suggest that there is enough to his foundation to be able to give a good suggestion to what kind of picture he had in mind.

His book and this thesis started with the idea of trying to investigate what is particularly musically beautiful, or in other words, what in music could stand as a principle of aesthetics. To enable this end Hanslick firstly suggests that we needed to get rid of previous misconceptions and erroneous theories, especially what he calls the feeling-theory. The feeling-theory is a theory which claims that the value of and basis of aesthetics has to do with feeling, where feeling is the purpose of and the content which music represents. This kind of theory does not fit Hanslick's conception of trying to look at the thing itself to find what is particular to it, as feeling is not a power found in music, rather feeling is a secondary effect.

Hanslick suggests a cognitive theory of feeling, where feeling has to do with awareness of our mental state and is separated from mere sensations. Feelings and sensations are often connected, however they are distinct, a sensation is becoming aware of some sense based impression, whereas feeling is an awareness of the mind, of becoming aware of how one feels towards something. A cognitive theory of emotion would be able to explain how we might have different feelings towards the same situation. Feelings are connected to our cognitive apparatus, and are a way we understand the world. We first see and experience the world and then we feel about it. These feelings are specified as a way to understand our mental state towards or about something. Thus, for feelings to be the content of which music represents, the expression of such feeling must be a capability of music. On a cognitive theory of feelings, such capability requires a mind or a cognitive apparatus; music, as a thing in itself does not have a mind or a cognitive apparatus. 'Music can, in fact, whisper, rage, and rustle. But Love and anger occur only within our

⁴⁵⁶ Translators preface 1986: xvii

hearts'.⁴⁵⁷ These feelings are such that they cannot be deposited in the music nor do they walk around 'in the earthly body of physical sounds',⁴⁵⁸ as, 'love cannot be thought without the representation of a beloved person'.⁴⁵⁹ It is neither in music's power to represent these specific feelings, nor is it music's purpose to be a vehicle for these feelings. As such Hanslick concludes that the content of music is not the representation of specific feelings.

This was Hanslick's negative story, which effectively removes any misconception or erroneous thinking of where the beauty resides; it is in the music itself, not in the feeling subject. This leads Hanslick to the positive story which claims that the content of music is forms realised in tone. However, this suggestion was not without its difficulties and needed further investigation to improve its justification and clarity.

The main ideas and arguments all go back to the essential core claim of Hanslick's argument, which is the distinction between *Inhalt* and *Gehalt*. *Inhalt* and *Gehalt* explains the idea of contentlessness, music does not have independent content as separable from its form, it does not have content which can be defined in words, nor content which is synonymous with meaning. The separation between *Inhalt* and *Gehalt* separates music from having ordinary content, in one sense music has two aspects which constitutes its meaning, but neither of those can be considered as content which is definable independently of its form.

Collingwood served as a means of clarification, as his quintessential distinction directly applied as a justification for the suggested distinction between *Inhalt* and *Gehalt*. Collingwood highlighted in virtue of the quintessential distinction the two kinds of ends that constitute art. These two kinds of ends were captured in the main distinction between *Inhalt* and *Gehalt*.

Music is contentless because it does not have content in this way. When Hanslick suggests that music is contentless, he is merely saying that music does not have content in this way, and one reason for making this suggestion is to enable a different way to

⁴⁵⁷ Hanslick 1986: 9

⁴⁵⁸ Hanslick 1986: 8

⁴⁵⁹ Hanslick 1986: 9

explain understanding, seeing as we need to explain how we understand something that in one sense does not have content.

This issue was dealt with, again by the aid of Collingwood, in the discussion of the quintessential distinction. There is always a distinction between what is expressed and that which expresses it, as without such a distinction we cannot understand. This is because understanding is constituted by two aspects, we understand a sentence as can be swapped with another that says the same and also in a way where it cannot be swapped. Both these aspects constitute our understanding, as was suggested by Wittgenstein and further argued by Ridley.⁴⁶⁰ Understanding music is not understanding in any peculiar way, thus these two aspects apply to art too; however, the value in art resides mainly on the non-paraphrasable aspects.

This conclusion lead to the discussion of the different aspects of art and its relation to nature. Music is not found in nature, and relies on basic musical understanding to be experienced. This was discussed understanding that music is different from sounds, by hearing music as having melody, rhythm and harmony.

If we merely focus on the elemental in music, we are only focusing on certain more physical or elemental aspects rather than the entirety of music, which includes the intellectual aspects. The intellectual aspects are of great importance, as these are the aspects which separates one piece of music from another. Often we are mistaken in our conception and appraisal of music:

‘The elemental in music is forever being mistaken for artistic beauty itself, a part being taken for a whole, thereby giving rise to unutterable confusion. Many pronouncements about “the art of music” apply not to that art but to the sensuous effect of its physical materials’.⁴⁶¹

The pathological listener is one who is guilty of such mistakes. He is one which does not listen to the particular aspects of music. Rather, he lets the generic aspects of music wash over him, and it is of no worries to him whether he takes a bath or listens to Mozart.

⁴⁶⁰ For the entire discussion, see Ridley 2004.

⁴⁶¹ Hanslick 1986: 66

‘Music loosens the feet or the heart as the wine the tongue. Such conquest tell us only about the vulnerability of the vanquished. To undergo unmotivated, aimless, and causal emotional disturbance through a power that is not *en rapport* with our willing and thinking is unworthy of the human mind [*Menschengeistes*].’⁴⁶²

Music is not and should not be valued in this way, as music is as unique and valuable as any other art. The worry with music is the idea of the lack of conceptual definiteness; this is the view Hanslick is trying to correct.

‘The *gegenstandlose Formschönheit*⁴⁶³ of music does not preclude its productions from bearing the imprint of individuality. The manner of artistic treatment, like the invention of this or that particular theme, is in each case unique: It can never be dissolved into a higher unity, but remains an individual. Thus, a theme by Mozart or Beethoven stands on its own feet as firmly and unadulteratedly as a stanza by Goethe, a dictum of Lessing’s, a statue by Thorwaldsen, or a painting by Overbeck. Autonomous musical concepts (i.e., themes) have the trustworthiness of a quotation and the vividness of a painting: They are individual, personal, everlasting’.⁴⁶⁴

The particularly musically beautiful was suggested to be something akin to a definite mental motion. This kind of motion, which is not merely in the elemental aspects but in the intellectual aspects of art, are able to move the mind, this is what Hanslick suggests as *Seelenbewegung*,⁴⁶⁵ the ability to move the soul. This places the idea and Aristotelian suggestion of animation into proper context, where music is animated and carries the potentiality to move the soul.

‘If some sensitive music lover object’s that our art is degraded by analogies [such as the kaleidoscope]...we reply that it is not much to the point whether the analogy is precise or not. We do not degrade a thing by becoming better acquainted with it. If we want to relinquish the attribute of motion, of sequential

⁴⁶² Hanslick 1986: 61

⁴⁶³ Hanslick 1922: 173

⁴⁶⁴ Hanslick 1986: 83

⁴⁶⁵ Hanslick 1922: 23

development, for which the example of the kaleidoscope is particularly apt, we can of course find loftier analogy for the musically beautiful in architecture, in the human body, or in a landscape, which likewise have a primitive beauty of outline and colour (setting aside the soul [*seelen*], and the expression of the mind [*Geistige*]).⁴⁶⁶

Hanslick talks about music's power of animating things, to bring things to life.⁴⁶⁷ Music can thus be understood as something that can contain the possibility of motion, which can be actualized. This motion is important, as this is the mental motion of which the composer realises and which can be understood by the listener. 'Thoughts and feelings run like blood in the arteries of the harmonious body of beautiful sounds. They are not that body; they are not perceivable, but they animate it'.⁴⁶⁸

The forming process, the motion of the *Geist* results in music's *Gehalt*, which is a product of *Geist* and is therefore *geistige Gehalt*. This *Gehalt* needs animation, it needs thoughts and feeling to be brought back to life. '[I]n each composition, the content derives from its particular tonal structure as the spontaneous creation of *Geist* out of material compatible with *Geist* [i.e., the tones]'.⁴⁶⁹

As to the question of whether or not Hanslick was a formalist, there is no doubt that he was, although this thesis proves that he was not a pure formalist. Although I have offered suggestions towards what the particularly musically beautiful is, as well as what can stand as a foundation for such a principle, the main idea of *geistige Gehalt* is not perfectly clear. But as with Hanslick, I believe this thesis has gone some of the way towards saying something valuable about the particularly musically beautiful, about Hanslick, and about musical expression of feelings.

- Music is animated by the soul and moves the mind.

⁴⁶⁶ Hanslick 1986: 29

⁴⁶⁷ Hanslick 1986: 21

⁴⁶⁸ Hanslick 1986: 82

⁴⁶⁹ Hanslick 1986: 83

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"I see now, said the blind man and struck a chord."

