

Anders Førisdal

Music of the Margins

*Radically Idiomatic Instrumental Practice
in Solo Guitar Works by Richard Barrett,
Brian Ferneyhough and Klaus K. Hübler*



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Oslo, October 10, 2016.

Abstract

The project seeks to assess the role of instrumental practice in works for guitar solo by Brian Ferneyhough, Richard Barrett and Klaus K. Hübler. In these works, the composers have extracted the musical material directly from the instrumental practice and the concrete physical properties of the instrument and the performing body, restructuring the relationship between musical material and practice from its most minute details in what Richard Barrett terms a radically idiomatic approach to composition. Although clearly central to the interests of the composers in question, the radically idiomatic has been largely ignored by the reception of their works.

The analytic framework of the study takes Foucault's notion of discursive practices as a point of departure in order to grasp the corporeal materiality of the compositions. Drawing heavily on the writings of Jacques Derrida, the inclusion of the physical conditions of musical realisation within compositional technique is understood as a deconstruction of the work/realisation-dichotomy.

Extending the Foucauldian perspective, the project also establishes a theory of instrumental practice as a means of subjectivation. The deconstruction of instrumental practice found in the radically idiomatic works is thus viewed as a critique of the concrete microphysics of power invested in the instrumental tradition, and as a critique of the notion of performer subjectivity so central to Western aesthetic thought.

Sammendrag

Studien er en undersøkelse av hvilken rolle instrumentalpraksis har i verk for solo gitar av Brian Ferneyhough, Richard Barrett og Klaus K. Hübler. I disse verkene er det musikalske materialet fundert i instrumentalpraksisen og instrumentets og den spillende kroppens fysiske og materielle egenskaper og betingelser. Dermed omdefineres forholdet mellom musikalsk materiale og praksis ut fra sine minste bestanddeler gjennom det Richard Barrett omtaler som en radikalt idiomatisk innfallsvinkel til å komponere. Selv om det radikalt idiomatiske elementet er et sentralt aspekt ved de aktuelle komponistenes verk, er dette aspektet i stor grad oversett av resepsjonen.

Undersøkelsens analytiske ramme tar utgangspunkt i Foucault begrep om diskursive praksiser for å kunne diskutere verkene materielle kroppslighet. Med referanse til Derrida forstås den komposisjonstekniske inkluderingen av de fysiske betingelsene som ligger i musikalsk fremføring som en dekonstruksjon av dikotomien verk/fremføring.

Referansen til Foucault muliggjør dessuten etableringen av en teori om instrumentalpraksis som middel til subjektivering. Den dekonstruksjonen av instrumentalpraksis som finnes i verkene kan dermed også betraktes som en konkretisert kritikk av den maktens mikrofysikk som gjennomsyrrer vår musikalske tradisjon. Dekonstruksjonen av praksisen kan videre forstås som en kritikk av forestillingen om utøver-subjektet, som er en sentral kategori i vestlig estetisk tenkning.

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Abbreviations

The following works are cited with abbreviations in the text.

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- WD Derrida, Jacques. 1978. *Writing and Difference*, translated by Alan Bass. London: Routledge.
- Dis Derrida, Jacques. 1981. *Dissemination*, translated by Barbara Johnson. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- MP Derrida, Jacques. 1982a. *Margins of Philosophy*, translated by Alan Bass. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Pos Derrida, Jacques. 1982b. *Positions*, translated by Alan Bass. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- OG Derrida, Jacques. 1997. *Of Grammatology*, translated by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press.
- FL Derrida, Jacques. 2002b. 'Force of Law. The "Mystical Foundations of Authority"', translated by Mary Quaintance. In *Acts of Religion*, edited by Gil Anidjar, 230–98. New York and London: Routledge.

Works by Brian Ferneyhough

- CW Ferneyhough, Brian. 1995. *Collected Writings*, edited by James Boros and Richard Toop. Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers.

Works by Michel Foucault

- NGH Foucault, Michel. 1971. 'Nietzsche, Genealogy, History'. In *Aesthetics. Essential Works of Foucault 1954–1984*, Vol. 2, edited by James D. Faubion, 368–91. London: Penguin, 2000.
- AK Foucault, Michel. 1972. *The Archaeology of Knowledge and The Discourse on Language*, translated by A. M. Sheridan Smith. New York: Pantheon Books.
- DP Foucault, Michel. 1977. *Discipline and Punish*, translated by Alan Sheridan. New York: Random House.
- HS1 Foucault, Michel. 1980. 'Confessions of the Flesh'. In Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*, edited by Colin Gordon, 194–228. New York: Pantheon Books.
- SP Foucault, Michel. 1983. 'The Subject and Power'. In *Power. Essential Works of Foucault 1954–1984*, Vol. 3, edited by James D. Faubion, 326–48. London: Penguin, 2002b.
- A Foucault, Michel. 2003a. *Abnormal. Lectures at the Collège de France 1974–75*, translated by Graham Burchell, edited by Valerio Marchetti and Antonella Salomoni. London and New York: Verso.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Introducing the radically idiomatic

The latter half of the twentieth century saw an increasing focus on the performative in the arts, humanities and philosophy. This is evident in both contemporary composition and the growing field of performance studies. Certainly, twentieth- and twenty-first-century avant-garde composition can be seen as exploring the antagonism between structurality and performance. Writing in 2016, it seems the performative has the upper hand: in the work of the younger composers of today, like Simon Steen-Andersen, Stefan Prins, Johannes Kreidler or Michael Beil to name but a few, there is a distinct tendency to highlight the performative aspect of musical creation. In this they follow a lineage which includes composers like Vinko Globokar, Georges Aperghis, Mauricio Kagel and John Cage, but also Hans-Joachim Hespos, Mathias Spahlinger, György Ligeti, Carola Bauckholt, Manos Tsangaris and others, a lineage that stretches back to the Dadaist performances at the Cabaret Voltaire in Zurich. In musicology, an analogue shift was marked by a turn away from score-based analysis towards performance as the primary object of musical contemplation, or in Carolyn Abbate's famous, if somewhat belated, formulation, from the 'gnostic' towards the 'drastic' (Abbate 2004). However, since the reception of contemporary music is largely based on the work/performance dichotomy the authorial composer figure is for the most part left fully intact, discussions of actual performances are relegated to criticism, and the question of the performative is largely reduced to a description of appropriate playing techniques and performance practice. Therefore, the turn towards the performative resembles a changing of the guard rather

than a questioning of the guard, the guarding and what is guarded itself – the critical potential of the ‘performative turn’ in musicology seems somewhat wasted.

Within this field, some composers have sought to challenge the work/performance dichotomy addressed by Abbate in a way that explores the contingent relationship of the two terms within an apparently traditional work format. Rather than forcing a choice between the two, this approach seems to suspend the antagonism of the notions of work and musical practice. In integrating aspects of instrumental practice within the structural fabric of their work – an integration which is also an explicit opening towards the contingency of practice, indeed a traversal of the limit or margin which separates the two – Richard Barrett, Brian Ferneyhough and Klaus K. Hübler suggest a conception of music where work structure cannot be understood outside the horizon of its practical realization and the interaction of the corporeal and technology. This double bind of musical structure and instrumental practice made a decisive impression on me when I first practiced and performed the works. I was surprised, however, to find that this aspect of their music, which is explicitly addressed both in the scores and in their own statements, has escaped the reception, seemingly passing unnoticed below the radar of the work/performance dichotomy. Their work suggest a displacement of the epistemological categories of work and practice, and this displacement demands a new theoretical position. Indeed, such a displacement seems to privilege the position of the performer over that of the analyst or musical hermeneut, on one hand, or the reduced or embodied listener on the other, privileging a performer-analyst with access to the structural aspects of a work as well as the means with which the work is brought to life, presented, as sound.

The present study is an attempt to amend what I perceive to be a fault of the reception of these composers, an attempt to instigate a discourse based on agonism and heteronomy rather than antagonism and alienation. Thus, the topic of the present study is the relation between compositional technique and instrumental practice in the music of Ferneyhough, Barrett and Hübler. To be more precise, I am interested in the ways certain of these composers’ works expose an explicit and active engagement with matters of idiomatic working in the compositional practice. Although idiomatic composition has been a central topic of Western art music at least since the seventeenth century, in the works discussed in the present study idiomatic

considerations and the practical framework given in instrumental performance – say, the number of fingers of the human body, the number of frets on a fingerboard, or the number of strings on an instrument – take on a highly specific significance in governing structural details in the works. Following Richard Barrett, I refer to this approach to composition as *radically idiomatic*. A radically idiomatic compositional practice is an approach to composition that incorporates various idiomatic resources as musical material on a structural level in a composition.

Taking the cue from the composers' own statements about their interest in the possibilities for structuring instrumental practice, at the core of the study lies an attempt to illuminate certain questions arising out of the radically idiomatic approach, namely:

- What is the position and structural function occupied by instrumental practice in the solo guitar works of Brian Ferneyhough, Richard Barrett and Klaus K. Hübler?
- How can this position and function be said to carry out a critique of the instrumental tradition viewed as a means of subjectivation?

The trajectory pursued throughout the dissertation is one of a relative shift of focus from the former question to the latter.

As far as I know, this is the first study of its kind that carries out in-depth analyses of how instrumental practice is structured in the process of composition. It is therefore my hope that the present work not only manages to shed light on a central and strangely neglected – even seemingly marginalized – aspect of the music of Ferneyhough, Barrett and Hübler, but also that it manages, through the analytical methods developed and its critical approach to instrumental practice as a form of subjectivation, to open up a field demanding further research.

1.2 Material

The primary focus of this dissertation is the works for solo guitar by Brian Ferneyhough (*Kurze Schatten II*, 1983–99), Richard Barrett (*colloid*, 1987–91) and Klaus K. Hübler (*Reißwerck*, 1987). The choice of works discussed is partly determined by my own practical experience of the music as a

performer. I believe that there are secrets lurking in the physical, practical scaffolds of these works that are not immediately accessible to the listener or analyst, and that the performer is in a privileged epistemological position with regards to this specific repertoire. When nothing else is specified, my comments on instrumental practice and idiomatics in this text are made only in relation to the three works. Although other works by the same composers will be discussed as well, these are the ones with which I have hands-on experience, and with works for other instruments my relation is that of the analyst – even though my analytical approach will feed on the findings in the guitar pieces.

The three works to be studied are important contributions to the twentieth century guitar repertoire, and have made a strong impact on contemporary guitar writing. Together, the works make explicit a great diversity of approaches to the question of radically idiomatic composition. The three composers all have a professed interest in the expansion and exploration of performance practice, and the works are clearly the result of thorough investigations of the specific idiomatic possibilities and limitations of the guitar.

Additionally, I will claim that the pieces presently discussed and the role that the instrument itself takes in the actual compositional/structural fabric can be read as a critique, or, more precisely, as a proper Derridean deconstruction of the whole expressive apparatus of the instrument, and by extension of performance, musical structure and meaning, the ideals of individual expressivity, and so on. I will however hesitate to extend this claim to *all* works by the composers discussed. For such a general claim to be valid, a much more thorough investigation of other works would have to be carried out. Nonetheless, in order to deepen my own argument, I will briefly discuss other works by the same composers. The historical outline in Chapter 5 will read certain canonical works of the twentieth century through the lens of the radically idiomatic. This reading will contrast the radically idiomatic works to related explorations of idiomatic writing. In order to do this, I have placed the discussion of other composers after two analytic chapters which will provide a clear conception of the radically idiomatic and the problematic of the work and the body against which earlier works will be projected.

Ferneyhough, Barrett and Hübler are often subsumed under the stylistic label *new complexity*. However, the topos of style or new complexity as such will not be a part of the discussion of the present study. Rather than searching for common stylistic traits, I would like to highlight the diversity

of strategies employed by the composers, and their relation to the different aesthetic projects represented by the different pieces.

1.3 A brief survey of existing literature

The literature available on the three composers varies greatly, from roughly 40 years of continuous reception in the case of Ferneyhough to a few scattered articles and interviews on or by Hübler. Recent years have seen the appearance of several extensive studies of Ferneyhough's music, in particular work done by Francis Cortout (2009), Lois Fitch (2004; 2013) and Cordula Pätzold (2002). The many articles, interviews and analytical writings by Richard Toop (e.g 1990; 1991; 1994) should also be mentioned in this context, in addition to work by Pietro Cavallotti (2002). The reception of Ferneyhough's music is primarily concerned with questions of structure and compositional process, often heavily informed by the sketch material held at the Paul Sacher Stiftung. However, even though the theme of performance practice is a recurring one in Ferneyhough's writings, lectures and interviews, and even though many of his works explicitly address aspects of performativity – and not only the *Time and Motion Studies* of the seventies – within this growing body of commentary on his music, discussions of performance practice and related themes are surprisingly few and shallow.

On the other hand, the few documents from performers of Ferneyhough's music deal more or less exclusively with issues related to performance or interpretation – technical matters, questions regarding practicing and so on. This material, by central performers such as Magnus Andersson (1988), Pierre-Yves Artaud (1987) and Steven Schick (1994), will not play any major role in the present study, as I will try to situate my investigation somewhere between traditional analysis and actual performance.

In comparison, the existing literature on Barrett and Hübler is rather scarce. In the case of Barrett there are no large scale analyses or in-depth studies available. There is a wealth of composer statements in the form of papers and interviews, but no in-depth analytic material. The existing commentaries on Barrett mostly deal with the composer's outspoken relation to literature and nihilistic world-view (e.g. Toop 1988; Fox 1995 Laws 2013). The literature is therefore highly biased on the side of the composer's opinions.

In the case of Hübler, the material available is limited to a handful of shorter texts from the mid to late eighties, interviews, short presentations of works and so on. Apart from this, the only published texts on Hübler are two short items by composer Wieland Hoban (2000; 2005).

1.4 Theoretical models

In the musicological debate surrounding performance studies and in the field of musical pedagogics, one of the main objectives has been to establish normative criteria for proper performance. In particular, the study of historical practices has been of major importance over the last decades. In the field of contemporary music a proliferating discourse related to performance practice is well established, the lineage of which can be traced at least back to violinist Rudolf Kolisch's attempt at establishing an explicitly new and contemporary performance practice as a soloist and chamber musician based on his longstanding collaboration with Arnold Schoenberg and the aesthetics of twelve-tone music.

However, I have found no suitable models, either in the existing musicological literature nor in the field of artistic research, for treating idiomatic composition in terms of the structuring of practice as a compositional method, at least not in the form suggested by the present composers. I have therefore sought to establish a working basis elsewhere, namely in relation to the work of Michel Foucault. Foucault's attempt to grasp 'the implicit systems which determine our most familiar behaviour' (Foucault 1971: 201) is very close to my own concerns in this dissertation, in that the composition process of the works discussed seems to be primarily concerned with investigating just those same systems. Foucault is important in the present study in suggesting methodological tools for the handling of instrumental practice analytically as well as providing a critical framework of subjectivation. The analyses of practices carried out by Foucault, in particular from *Discipline and Punish* and onwards, seem to form a good model with which to approach the question of the (often sub-surface and implicit) idiomatic structures involved in the radically idiomatic, to the extent that a work is viewed as explicitly structuring the instrumental practice itself. In this model, the instrumental tradition is treated as a *discursive practice*, and Foucault's notion of a multi-layered discourse seems particularly suited to

bring out instrumental practice as a separate strand of musical analysis even when this is not explicitly highlighted by the notation (as it is in Barrett), not least due to the strong affinities between this particular notion of discourse and the parametric thinking which informs the works investigated. Additionally, adopting Foucault's strategic notion of the *apparatus* will provide an interesting opportunity to vastly extend the scope of the investigation in terms of establishing a critical position in relation to the performer subject. According to Giorgio Agamben, for Foucault the apparatus designates any possible means of subjectivation (Agamben 2009b). In the present context, the process through which an individual submits him- or herself to the tradition of an instrument is seen as implying a process of subjectivation by way of the apparatus of instrumental practice. Finally, to elaborate the deconstructive critique to be outlined below, I will take Foucault's notion of power as my point of departure in order to posit the works in relation to the tradition of the instrument and its practice. I would already at this point like to stress that for Foucault power is not necessarily something negative; in Foucault, power designates the forces that form individuals or ideas into what they are (Ransom 1997: 80). This argument is fleshed out in Chapter 2. Foucault also provides the genealogical framework for the discussion in Chapter 5. The implications of Foucault's work are thus manifold: it enables a focus on the instrumental practice as a separate strand of analysis; it supplies a critical tool for handling processes of subjectivation; it implies a historical model; and it suggests the critique of a certain oppressive notion of power.

The relationship between instrumental practice and subjectivation, which is at the core of my critical argument, also finds support in pedagogical and didactic literature. In these traditions, the focus is taken away from the representation of the composer subject in favour of establishing a relation between the performer subject and her instrument. However, since this relation is by necessity determined by its object – the instrument and its practice, i.e. the instrumental tradition itself with its ideals and methods – there is a strong case for arguing that a musician's identity as a subject is shaped according to the apparatus of instrumental practice just as much as those docile bodies described by Foucault are shaped by disciplinary systems. In extension, one could argue that a musician, through countless hours of practise, shapes the brain, the nerve fibres and the body functions according to the standards received by tradition. Deconstructing the instrumental

practice, the radically idiomatic works discussed in the present study entail a deconstruction of this whole apparatus.

Based on an etymological reading of the title *Reißwerck*, the general (double, bifurcating) gesture of the radically idiomatic will be discussed in relation to the writings of Jacques Derrida. There is a strong affinity between the deconstruction described by Derrida and the compositional approach of Ferneyhough, Hübler and Barrett, and in referring to Derrida my aim is to expose what is at stake in the relation between composition and idiomatic writing in these composers' works. Dissolving the primary domain of pitch by way of instrumental practice, letting various idiomatic considerations govern form, or generating harmonic material on the basis of fingering/fingerboard matrixes are just some of the strategies employed in the three works to be analyzed. My claim is that taken together within the conceptual frames of the actual works with which they are inextricably linked, these strategies correspond to the double gesture which is central to Derrida's thinking (Critchley 1999; Nealon 1993; Hägglund 2008). The works do not *express* or *represent* a process of deconstruction; I would rather make the claim that the instrumental practice of the works, and by extension the works as such, come forth as *already* deconstructed. The way these works explicitly address notation and practice as a generalized form of writing is what exposes the affinity with Derrida; the general textuality of the notation, composition methods and musical practice converge with Derrida's notion of a general writing. However, given that deconstruction is a form of practice and therefore has a processual character, there is a certain process to be uncovered in how the works present themselves to the performer through their notation. The change of focus underpinned by Hübler's change of focus from *Ton* to *Tun*, i.e. from a sound to practice, even suggests understanding the act of composition as a form of practice. The radically idiomatic, as practiced in the works discussed herein, is a deconstructive practice; it follows a deconstructive logic of reconfiguration.

The reference to Derrida is certainly not unprecedented in musicology. Roughly, the appropriation of Derrida has followed two seemingly contradictory trajectories. On the one hand, writers like Rose Rosengard Subotnik (1996) and Martin Scherzinger (1995; see also Scherzinger 2009) have read Derrida as primarily offering an analytic method which comes across as little more than a novel form of structural analysis albeit with an aporetic twist (at best). This strand of the reception is mainly (Anglo-)

American and closely affiliated with the appropriation of deconstruction in American literary theory as a novel form of close reading. I would say that this 'use' of the term deconstruction has little to do with Derrida as such, as Derrida is careful to point out that deconstruction is not a method of reading: 'Deconstruction is not a method and cannot be transformed into one.' (Derrida 2008: 4. See also Critchley 1999: 20–31). Indeed, at least following Critchley, it could be argued that deconstruction is beyond the realm of subject agency – I can not simply say 'I deconstruct x': the subject is merely in a position to expose the deconstruction of 'x' as the autoimmunity of 'x', as the differing and deferring movement of *différance*. Adam Krims has provided a pointed critique of the misappropriation of Derrida in musicology. I agree with Krims in his critique of the above writers, though it might be that Krims himself ultimately views deconstruction as a method when he writes about how 'deconstruction works best ... when...' (Krims 1998: 318). The closest Derrida comes to a method is the insistence on a double reading; I return to this in Chapter 4. The second strand of the reception of Derrida follows a more philosophical path and results in musical analysis which exposes how certain works show strong affinities to Derrida's thinking. Here, I am thinking in particular of writers like Pietro Cavallotti (2002), Marcel Cobussen (2002) and Erling Guldbrandsen (1996), whose work brings out the close connection between composition and contemporary philosophy. Though not analytic in its approach, the work of Peter Szendy should also be mentioned in this context (i.e Szendy 2002). However, with the exception of Szendy, none of these writers discuss the central topic of instrumental practice as the site of music coming into being. My own work extends from this primarily European (Continental) lineage.

Foucault has also provided stimulus in musicological circles, though mostly with historical musicologists like Gary Tomlinson (i.e Tomlinson 1993) and Jairo Moreno (2004) who are indebted to the historical insights provided by Foucault's early work. I will follow a different reading of Foucault altogether; one suggested by Erlend Hovland's appropriation of the notion of discursive practices as an analytical tool for discussing musical practice (Hovland 2002).

Sceptical of the typical second-hand distillations of philosophy found in much musicology and in didactic literature in particular, I have sought to stay close to Derrida and Foucault's work as my primary sources. My reading of the two philosophers has been extensive, and usually the original

French editions have been consulted. Nevertheless, for the sake of readability, my quotes are mostly taken from the standard English translations of their work. I have also consulted numerous commentaries on their work. In relation to Derrida, Simon Critchley and Michael Hägglund are my main secondary sources, though I am not wholly convinced by Critchley's Levinasian reading of Derrida.¹ Important stimulus has also been provided by Jones Irwin's writing on corporeality in Derrida (Irwin 2010) and Simon Skempton on the question of alienation and deconstruction (2010). In relation to Foucault, important insight has been gained from the general commentaries on Foucault by Hubert Dreyfus and Paul Rainbow (Dreyfus and Rainbow 1983, Gilles Deleuze (1988), Béatrice Han (now Han Pile; Han 2002) and Paul Veyne (2010), as well as more topical discussions of the question of freedom by Réal Fillion (2012), the body as a site of politics and the relation to Kant by Laura Hengehold (2007), and Timothy Rayner's work on Foucault's relation to Heidegger (2007). In addition, a general background on recent (and in particular) French philosophy has in particular been provided by Gary Gutting (2011) and Tilotama Rajan (2002).

Pairing Derrida and Foucault, on the basis of their extended controversy that spanned almost 20 years, as well as Derrida's late critique of Foucault and Agamben and the notion of biopolitics (which is closely related to the notion of the apparatus) (Derrida 2009: 305–34), is initially not wholly unproblematic. Nonetheless it seems superfluous to re-enact this debate once more,² a debate kept alive today only by the most persistent of Foucauldian hard-liners like Colin Koopman (cf. Koopman 2013: 155–63). Suffice it to mention that beyond the early quarrel over the Cartesian cogito and the relationship between madness and philosophy, their work expose a number of converging points that suggest an agonistic rather than antagonistic relation. Foucault and Derrida has been brought together by a number of later philosophers including Judith Butler (e.g Butler 1993) and Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe (Laclau and Mouffe 1985), and a little-read text like 'Scribble' by Derrida suggests the close proximity with Foucault as do the work mentioned above by Rajan, Hengehold and Irwin. The position taken in the present study can be compared to that of Edward Said in his article 'The Problem of Textuality' (1978). That is, Foucault supports the main,

1 My position finds support in Hägglund (2008).

2 For a comprehensive discussion of the debate between Foucault and Derrida, see Boyne 1990.

overarching structure of the argument and provides some key concepts, while the structurality of deconstruction sheds light on the minute details of the analytic work. The one folds into the other.

The relationship between the composers analyzed in the present study and contemporary thinking should come as no surprise to anyone even vaguely familiar with their music. Ferneyhough has been particularly associated with Benjamin and Adorno as well as Gilles Deleuze, whose book on the painter Francis Bacon (Deleuze 2003) provided important stimulus around 1980, and the names of Foucault and Derrida are also mentioned (though only once each) in the *Collected Writings*. However, the present study does not set out to trace the *influence* of philosophy on the composers and works in question,³ but rather to delineate the analogue structure of the radically idiomatic impetus of their work and deconstruction. Nevertheless, the central role of Benjamin in relation to *Kurze Schatten II* and certain other works by Ferneyhough that explicitly refer to him necessitates a discussion of Benjamin and Ferneyhough in Chapter 6.

1.5 Analysis

The discussion of the works will take as its point of departure an initially traditional score based structural analysis. However, following the Foucauldian archaeological approach, to be elaborated in Chapter 2, the analysis will target various idiomatic elements – fingering patterns, positions, finger pressure and so on – rather than the typical parameters of analysis. Often it will also be necessary to translate one parameter into the domain of another (e.g. substituting fingerings for pitch) in order to clarify the relation between compositional and idiomatic structures. As I have not found any good models for analyzing these idiomatic parameters, the analyses are carried out in a rather experimental fashion and the actual analyses have often been carried out with the guitar in hand. As will become clear, the idiomatic structures of the works are often highly present for the performer even though they are not immediately apparent in the score.

3 In relation to Ferneyhough, this has been done in particular by Fitch (2004). Cavallotti (2002) and Courtot (2009) provide a less determinist approach to the question of the relationship between Ferneyhough and philosophy.

It should be noted that the analyses and general discussion are decidedly pre-performative, in the sense of being based on the scores of the works and not primarily on their actual performance. The main focus is on the structuring of the practice in the scores – or even the structuring of the works through the practice – as read by a performer. As the analyses posit themselves somewhere between the score and the performer, various approaches to listening as such will not be discussed in depth. However, sounding results will be discussed when these are dependent on the choices of the performer, as for instance in the second and sixth movements of *Kurze Schatten II* or when the result of a strict performance gives an aural result deviating from the immediate suggestions of the score. Even though this goes for most of *Reißwerck* and most of *Kurze Schatten II* as well, the point is that it is not the primary aim of this study to uncover the aural structures that result from a performance, but rather to delineate the play of signs that is carried out in specific practical idiomatic situations. It follows that there will be no in-depth discussion of performance practice of the works, the composers in general, or even of ‘complex’ music, however timely this might seem. However interesting such couplings would be, the study of bodily gestures is beyond the scope of this dissertation, as are the possible links with recent developments in the fields of neuroplasticity and biomechanics.

In the case of Ferneyhough’s works, the analyses will be informed by studies of the sketches available at the Paul Sacher Foundation in Basel. The sketch material has been very helpful in uncovering some of the generational procedures employed by the composer, not least regarding idiomatic matters. Another recent study of *Kurze Schatten II*, by Jean-Paul Chaigne, is based on the same sketch material. Impressive as this study is in clarifying Ferneyhough’s complex compositional methods, Chaigne typically stops short at the limits of available information from the sketches. Although the present study will make no claim to present an exhaustive analysis of the work (if such an analysis is at all possible), I will at least try to respond to some of the questions left pending by the sketches. And though Chaigne’s dissertation goes some way in discussing matters of performativity, his approach in relying on one single informant’s point of view is methodologically weak. The possible mutual dependence between analysis and performativity is not discussed, as the performer statements on which his argument relies all focus on the practicalities of learning one of the seven movements of the work.

1.6 Instrumental practice

I have mentioned that the analyses are pre-performative, and that issues relating to performance are not the main focus of the present study. This is the reason for using the rather didactic term *instrumental practice* rather than the more usual term *performance practice*. My form of analysis has much more in common with the typically prolonged and contemplative situation of the rehearsal studio than with the real time experiential listening situation. The ambiguous connotations of the chosen term are intentional – it highlights the practical and concrete aspects of the analyses as well as the didactic situation of learning the pieces. The meaning of the term instrumental is also subject to play: the term is used in the sense that all the works are written for musical instruments, but also in the sense that the practice itself takes on an instrumental role in the structure of the works.

1.7 A summary of the dissertation

Chapter 2 will define and discuss the notion of a radically idiomatic compositional practice, and seeks to provide a theoretical framework for the analyses which follow based on Foucault. The chapter also explores the notion of instrumental practice as a means of subjectivation with reference to Foucault's work after 1970 and the term 'apparatus'.

Chapter 3 presents the analysis of Barrett's *colloid*. The analysis traces the various practical parameters delineated in the score and shows how more traditional parameters like pitch or timbre always refer back to a concrete practical situation. The analysis will focus on the role of left and right hand fingerings in the dense polyphony of notated parameters. Various strategies resulting in an explicit decentring of traditional sound production and ideals will also be an important feature of this analysis. Even if this is the most recent of the pieces, I have placed the analysis of *colloid* first because of the clarity and precision with which the practice is embodied in the score. It thus serves as a test case both for the author and reader of the dissertation.

Chapter 4 presents the analysis of Hübler's *Reißwerck*. The chapter takes as its point of departure Hübler's description of his work as a *Komponieren des Tuns*, a composition of doing, which dismantles the hierarchy between work and performance. The analysis of *Reißwerck* will discuss the relationship

between the notation, its practical realization and the aural result, the structural use of finger pressure and various modes of attack, and the interrelatedness of the work of the two hands. An etymological reading of the title suggests an affinity to the work of Derrida, and the analysis of the work discusses the ambiguous and contingent relation between work structure and practice as a form of deconstruction.

In **Chapter 5** I discuss certain canonical works of the twentieth century from the point of view of the radically idiomatic. The main claim made in this chapter is that the deconstructive insight offered by the works suggests a re-reading of earlier works. The radically idiomatic casts retroactive shadows and suggests an understanding of twentieth century as a genealogy of the relationship between work and practice rather than as the linear history of an increasing integration of elements which also includes various corporeal and technological aspects. The chapter ends with a discussion of the notion of undecidability in relation to the work of Aldo Clementi.

Chapter 6, on *Kurze Schatten II*, aims at reflecting the broad scope of this particular work. Given the complex web of structural methods, principles and filters on which the seven movements of the work are based, in-depth analyses of all the movements is beyond the scope implied by the general questions raised in the dissertation as a whole. The chapter will present detailed discussions of the generative and structural principles involved in movements 1 and 4 in particular, in addition to highlighting some general questions raised by the individual movements as well as by the work as a whole. In these analyses it will become clear that the radically idiomatic perspective provides a resource to move beyond the analytic material already provided by the reception and that the deconstructive impetus which runs through the work extends well beyond the relationship between the idiomatic and musical structure into questions of representation and identity.

Although the methodological and interpretive framework outlined above will be developed in the immediate context of the analytic material in Chapters 3, 4 and 6, **Chapter 7** will aim at sharpening the focus of the critical thrust of the main arguments developed on the basis of the analyses, extending these beyond the discussion of single works. Chapter 7 will also address the question of instrumental practice and subjectivity in the light of the deconstruction of practice as a certain form of ethics.

The dissertation unfolds on three different levels. One level is the discussion of deconstruction and ethics following the work of Derrida. A second level traces the question of subjectivity and subjectivation along the lines of Foucault and the notion of the apparatus. However, the core of the dissertation is taken up by the analyses and the discussions of the works. Since the analyses primarily target the most minute details of practice, they might propose certain challenges to the reader. Though I have sought to make the analyses as lucid as possible, the reader should not be discouraged from consulting an instrument when reading the analytic sections of the work.

1.8 Guitar notation legend

Left hand notation

Left hand fingers are given in Arabic numerals.	
1	index finger
2	middle finger
3	ring finger
4	pinkie

Areas on the fingerboard are designated according to the location of the index finger. Fret positions are given in upper case Latin numerals, i.e.:	
I	1 is located at the first fret
IV	1 is located at the fourth fret
XII	1 is located at twelfth fret (at the octave)

Right hand notation

Right hand fingers are given in lower case Latin alphabet letters.	
p	thumb
i	index finger
m	middle finger
a	ring finger
c	pinkie

Strings

Strings are given in circled Arabic numerals, i.e:	
①	first string
②	second string
③	third string
etc.	
	NB: In the <i>Kurze Schatten II</i> score, strings are given in squared Arabic numerals

2 **The Radically Idiomatic Instrumental Practice: Discursive Practices, Subjectivation, and Challenges to Musicology**

As the title of the present chapter indicates, its function is threefold. First, I will investigate the concept of the radically idiomatic instrumental practice, taking the composers' own statements regarding idiomatic composition as a point of departure in order to arrive at an operative definition of the concept; second, focusing on the music and reception of Richard Barrett, I will discuss some central challenges posed by the radically idiomatic to musicology and suggest a methodological turn to Foucault in order to handle these challenges; and third, in order to grasp the relation between the performer subject and instrumental practice, I will outline Foucault's notion of subjectivation.

2.1 The radically idiomatic – towards a definition

2.1.1 Practical messages

The term *radically idiomatic* first appears in the texts and interviews of Richard Barrett as a descriptive term relating to his own working methods. In his 1995 paper ‘Standpoint and Sightlines (provisional) 1995’, Barrett describes his attempt to let the ‘generative ideas, the philosophy, of composition ... take on a physical, *concrete* reality’, something that results in what he calls a “radically idiomatic” approach to instrumental composition’ (Barrett 1996a: 26). This approach is further described as ‘an attempt to engage as intimately as possible with the musical resources at the conjunction between performer and instrument’, in order to ‘dissolve the boundaries between instrumentalism and compositional materials’ (Ibid. 27). In a later paper, Barrett relates how the experience of improvised music has led the development of a “radically idiomatic” conception of instrumentalism’, in which ‘the instrument/player combination itself, in all perspectives from ergonomic to historical, becomes the “material” from which the music is shaped’ (Barrett 2002). Interestingly, Barrett also refers to his own experience as a performer of electronic music, stating that the lack of ‘unity between gesture and sound’ in electronic music made him want to investigate this relationship in instrumental performance in order to bring out the distinguishing aspects of this special intimacy, of which electronics can only be a simulacrum (Barrett and Deforce 2001). Again commenting on the notion of the radically idiomatic, in the booklet accompanying the CD *Transmission*, he states that in his works ‘the “materials” from which a composition is made is inseparable from a *re*-conception of the instrument(s) for which it is written’, further commenting that in the compositional process ‘the instrument and its playing techniques (and their history) are first taken apart, and then reassembled in the shape of the poetic/structural form of the piece’ (2006: 4). And in 2010, Barrett appears as the central figure in a round-table discussion on the topic of ‘radical instrumentalism’ (Rutherford-Johnson 2010).

A related position is exposed in Klaus K. Hübler’s works from the 1980s, which seem to have made an impression on Barrett at Darmstadt in 1984 (Ibid.). Around this time Hübler developed a highly idiosyncratic approach

to idiomatic composition, based on a polyphonic notion of instrumental sound production. Breaking down the instrumental technique into its physical components, as parameters that are treated separately (polyphonically) as material in the works, Hübler sought an extreme degree of instrumental individuality: 'My idea of instrument specific composition led me to a marked individualisation in the treatment of single instruments' (Hübler 1989a: 39).⁴ Referring to Walter Benjamin, he talks of a deep involvement with an instrument 'until it so to say reveals its spirit and suggests possibilities itself that belong to it only' (Hübler 1987: 7).⁵ Hübler also moved away from the traditional conception of form, considering the elaboration of musical form as a distribution of the idiomatic means in the passage of time, and in this way relating the layout of a work explicitly to the specific instrumental forces employed (Hübler 1989a: 40). Thus, a work becomes so instrument-specific in both its form and material 'that it responds only to this instrument and no other' (Hübler 1987: 7).⁶

Both Barrett and Hübler studied with Brian Ferneyhough, Barrett only very briefly but Hübler for a two-year period in Freiburg, Germany. Their concern with instrumental practice is certainly shared by their teacher; it is clearly exposed in his works from the 1970s, and subcutaneously enacted in the works since 1980. Ferneyhough is very explicit about this interest and his methods in his many interviews and articles, a fact that, as mentioned in Chapter 1, is largely overlooked by the majority of analytic writing on individual works. In an interview from 1991, Ferneyhough states, in terms showing great affinities to those of Hübler quoted above, that he is 'very concerned that the things [he asks] an instrumentalist to do be so instrument-specific that they conspire to create a sort of "X-ray" of the instrument's inner essence ... ensuring that one could not imagine any other instrument playing the same material in the same way' (*CW*: 375). One notes the proximity of the expression 'the instrument's inner essence' and Hübler's aim at the *spirit* of the instrument being revealed to him, as well as the shared aims of an instrument-specific practice. I will return to the

4 'Meine Idee eines instrumentenspezifischen Komponierens führte mich zu einer ausgeprägten Individualisierung in der Behandlung des einzelnen Instruments'. All translations from the German are my own.

5 'bis er sozusagen seinen Geist offenbart und selbst Möglichkeiten eröffnet, die ganz individuell nur ihm allein zuhören'.

6 'daß es genau dieses Instrument und kein anders anspricht'.

questions of influence, Benjaminian concepts and Hegelian metaphysics in later chapters.

The quotations gathered above reveal a common interest among the three composers in creating context-specific situations, pushing the means at hand to their limits in order to reveal what these limits might be in the given context. Adopting Barrett's terminology of the radically idiomatic, in the present study the term instrumental practice is preferred to instrumentalism, as the latter seems to imply a composer's aesthetic at the expense of the possibly broader implications of the former. In Chapter 1 the radically idiomatic was defined as *an approach to composition that incorporates various idiomatic resources as musical material on a structural level in a composition*, often with the aim of critiquing those very resources. The affinities between this definition and the comments above should be clear. In one sense, which I hope will become clear throughout this dissertation, the definition says it all, but in another sense it says only very little – still, I need to explain the concept more concretely, not least since the radically idiomatic is indeed a very concrete matter, which needs to be approached at the risk of getting one's hands dirty.

2.1.2 The neglect of the radically idiomatic

A general problem of the reception of music after World War II is the lack of distance between the composer subject and the secondary literature. Often, critics act as little more than an extension of the composer's voice, taking sides in the heated polemics concerning contemporary music. Around 1950, the young generation's explicit break with tradition necessitated a debate about the means and ends of art music, a debate partly propelled by the composers themselves. The standards for the reception were set by the flourish of theoretical writing, often in a quasi-scientific tone that conveys a sense of objectivity and authority, something that resonated well with the turn towards positivist formalism among the critics. The obligation to speak about music that emerged with the courses at Darmstadt and journals like *Die Reihe* saw the creation of certain myths that have been perpetuated in the reception as objective facts. One still finds that the reception of (in particular young) composers is largely founded on the composer's own opinion and subjective priorities. Thus the reception easily falls prey to what Wimsatt and Beardsley criticized as an 'intentional fallacy' (Wimsatt

and Beardsley 1946). Given this background, it is interesting to note that the idiosyncratic function of practice in the works of Barrett, Ferneyhough and Hübler has received relatively little attention despite statements such as those quoted above.

Turning to the reception of Barrett, the neglect of the radically idiomatic forms an interesting point of departure for a discussion of this literature. The neglect of the radically idiomatic is instituted already in the first major consideration of his work, Richard Toop's seminal article 'Four Facets of the New Complexity' (1988). Although the context of a discussion of four composers sets certain premises for the presentation of Barrett, this article seems to have marked out the course of the reception of Barrett's music and aesthetic, pointing out the themes and terms of this reception. Important topics of this reception are style and sound, technique and notation, work-cycles, the relation to other arts (literature in particular), the importance of electronic and improvised performance, as well as Barrett's personal worldview, his explicitly Marxist political stance and a certain notion of music as fiction. However, the article does little more than extend the thoughts of the composer. This is, of course, what Toop set out to do with the four composers presented; nevertheless it sets the tone for the reception that follows. In addition to 'Four Facets' and a later text by Toop (1998), articles by Christopher Fox (1995) and Arnold Whittall (2005), as well as the recent studies by Catherine Laws (2013) and Aaron Brooks (2014) have provided important and interesting contributions to the appreciation of Barrett's music. With the exception of the rather meagre analytic remarks in 'Four Facets' and the more in-depth discussion of Brooks's study, these texts are however not based on analysis, but instead discuss general features of one or more works, whose meaning is always made with explicit reference to the composer's own statements concerning his aims when writing a given work rather than to independent analytic inquiry. In relation to the radically idiomatic, the most important aspect of Toop's article is found in the discussion of Barrett's first solo piece for cello, *Ne songe plus à fuir*. Barrett is quoted as stating that the piece has a 'cellistic basis' (Toop 1988: 34), and explains how the pitch material was generated on the basis of divisions of the strings of the cello into different registers or vectors. However, rather than taking Barrett at his word – which is what he does in the rest of the article – Toop here ignores the opportunity to explore the relationship between instrument and musical material suggested by the composer.

Toop's interest in the 'cellistic basis' of the vectorial pitch organization in *Ne songe plus* certainly leans toward the vectors themselves rather than their dependency on the anatomy of the cello, and on analogous structural/material relationships in the other works discussed (*Anatomy* and *Temptation*), despite his own claim that '[t]he material of the piece is ... the cello itself' (Ibid.).⁷ This displacement of the idiomatic becomes a model for the reception. Even if Barrett himself repeatedly states his aims regarding idiomatic writing in terms as those quoted above, one finds little interest in this topic aside from the theme of transcendent virtuosity or the relationship to Barrett's own activity as a performer of improvised music. Why is this? Is it because the framework of the reception is embedded in a tradition which prefers to leave such marginal matters to performers, glossing over these statements in order to see the instruments employed as machines that translate dots into notes? Or is the possibility that instruments and performer bodies are engaged in the structure of the works such an anomaly that it is somehow beyond musicology – uncharted territory on the theoretical map of musical understanding? The absence of any problematization of the radically idiomatic in the reception of Barrett is all the more striking as this same reception is clearly based on the notion of a sovereign composer, and reduces the works to mere explications of composer statements rather than engaging in analysis and hermeneutics.

This is the case with Catherine Laws's chapter on *Ne songe plus* from her book on the relationship between Beckett and contemporary music (Laws 2013). Despite her thorough argument and interest in performative embodiment, Laws presents no analysis of the supposedly alienated performer of the work as engaged in a heroic failure of musical communication. It seems that Barrett himself is more acutely aware of the question of intentionality than his interlocutors when he claims that a composer needs certain fictions in order to carry the compositional work through, and that there is a level of fictional meaning residing in the constitutive composer subject, but which is not necessarily similar to the experience of the work of the listener or performer (Toop 1988: 31; see also Fox 1995). Even if Laws presents a fine discussion of the work and Barrett's private fictions, she leaves little space for exploring the actual material organization of the instrumental practice and uncovering what the 'cellistic basis' of the work actually is. Her text exposes

7 However, such claims seem to stem directly from the composer's mouth.

an acute sense of the expressiveness of timbral and textural details, but her take on embodiment suffers from a very loose methodological foundation.

Aaron Brooks, however, sets out to tackle the notion of the radically idiomatic through a discussion of Barrett's large work for electric guitar and electronics, *Transmission* (2001). With Barrett as his main informant, Brooks compares the notion of the radically idiomatic with guitarist Derek Bailey's idea of improvising in a *radical idiom*, that is, a form of improvisation without stylistic reference (Brooks 2014: 2–4). The problem I have with this comparison is twofold: on the one hand, Brooks does not distinguish clearly between the two, thus vicariously substituting Barrett's structural reconfiguration of electric guitar practice for Bailey's 'free' exploration of the instrument's resources; on the other hand, he treats the two terms and approaches as facets of a unifying style. The latter fact leads him into spectrogram analysis of surface features of the music and away from illuminating practical details of instrumental performance. Also, the complete lack of a problematization of intentionality leaves no critical space between Brooks and his object. So, although the text is to some extent informative regarding the aural surface of the music, this is at the expense of an adequately developed critical theory of musical idioms and the historical concept of idiomatic writing. Thus the question of the instrumental basis of the radically idiomatic is left pending.

Before turning to *colloid* in the next chapter, I would like to explore further the question of the 'cellistic basis' of *Ne songe plus* left untouched by Toop, and even by Laws, in order to clear the ground and chart out a new territory for research.⁸ As *Ne songe plus* is one of the few works whose generative methods are described in some detail by the composer (and I am not venturing far beyond the range of the ambiguous *intention* of the composer – the methodological position criticized above) it seems reasonable to go into this piece in some detail, as a preliminary example in the form of a literal *hors d'œuvre* is needed to provide a background for the methodological and theoretical discussion following in this chapter. So, to address the question of the 'cellistic basis' of the piece, I will discuss some of its features in order

8 Criticizing Toop on the basis of post-factum statements by the composer might seem somewhat unfair. However, the negligence exposed by such a knowledgeable critic as Toop, who had at the time of 'Four Facets' had already written extensively on Fernyough, is telling. And even more so is the fact that the radically idiomatic is not mentioned in any other commentaries.

to give a concrete example of the radically idiomatic approach. I then explore some of challenges the piece poses to musicology and, finally, suggest a new framework in which the radically idiomatic can be situated.

So what, then, constitutes a radically idiomatic instrumental practice? Or rather: How is a radically idiomatic instrumental practice constituted? Or perhaps it would be better to turn the premises and ask: How does the radically idiomatic instrumental practice constitute the work?

2.1.3 The radically idiomatic – an *hors d'œuvre* in the form of a didactic example

Following the model of the reception, *Ne songe plus* could be summarized in the following way. The title refers to a painting by Chilean surrealist Roberto Matta, and it is one of 11 works of the *After Matta* cycle; its wild and heterogeneous sound world is enhanced by amplification and shows clear affinities to free improvisation; its formal layout is based on certain gestural or textural characteristics; and, as has been referred to above, it is based on strict calculations of pitch vectors. The piece is composed of eight sections, clearly marked in the score with a double bar-line and a verbal description or commentary on the character of the section, and with a clearly audible change of texture and mood from section to section. The sound world of the piece is rough and violently expressionistic, with sharp dynamic contrasts and continuous shifts of the bow position, rapid glissandi and extensive microtonal writing, brutal percussive attacks with the bow and the fingers of both hands, as well as fragile harmonic writing and dense polyphony in very high positions. The development of each section is based on an eroding iterative principle that is formally very simple. Each bar contains one or two gestures or types of material, which is repeated in the consecutive bar. However, in the second of these bars the opening material is somewhat shortened to give way to new material at the end of the bar. Thus, 'old' material at the beginning of the bar is pushed out of the bar by the 'new' material at the end. So each bar harks back towards the beginning of the former bar but ends up in a slightly different place, giving a sense of the music trying to say the same thing again and again without ever succeeding, and only to find itself moving on rather against its own will. According to a note in the score, this somewhat Beckettian iterative development should not be glossed over ('never lose identity of bar units' (Barrett 1986: 2)) – it is even emphasized in several

sections of the work by each bar being separated by a comma. The reference to Beckett is explicit in the score itself, as quotes from the author's *Molloy* and *As the story was told* are found at the head and end of the score respectively. A fragmented unity within each section is achieved not only by the iterative development, but also by each section having a tonal focus provided by the use of open strings as drones. This latter feature further serves to give a sense of large-scale continuity despite the generally fragmented surface and textural variation of each section. Using the Beckett reference as a key to deciphering the piece as a whole, the music can be seen as an adaption of typically Beckettian thematic relating to modernist pessimism or even nihilism, melancholia, and aesthetic failure (the bleakness of which is enhanced by the amplification requested in the score) and, if one is so inclined, a very little bit of hope for humanity despite everything.

If the performer's point of view were included in the narrative, key topics would be the extreme technical challenges encountered in virtually every bar of the piece – irrational rhythms and a hitherto unencountered degree of specification of bowing are found throughout, intonational challenges like playing two-part polyphonic glissandi in very high positions (e.g. bar 82 ff), and novel effects like separating the rhythm and direction of the bow from string changes and left hand actions (bars 18–25 and 82–111), on the basis of which the title could be interpreted as the impossibility of the performer to escape the grip of the composer. For the performer, the communicative failure suggested above would likely be seen as a failure to come even close to anything resembling a satisfactory representation of the score in performance.⁹

Intentionally modelled on the narrative established in the reception, this account points out several important features of Barrett's music, many of which will be elaborated in the next chapter. However, what is missing is the acknowledgement of the composer's stated engagement with instrumental practice. In an interview with Belgian cellist Arne Deforce, Barrett talks in depth on the background for *Ne Songe plus*, describing how the idea of writing a piece for solo cello forced him to rethink his approach to composition (Barrett and Deforce 2001). His solution was to reduce the practical means of cello performance to an absolute minimum – a wooden box with strings on it, a body with ten fingers and a bow composed of wood and hair

9 Even Toop comments that the 'poor' horn player who has to perform the devilish horn solo of *Anatomy* 'faces a failure that can only be abject' (Toop 1988: 33).

from a horse's tail – in order to compose a piece starting from a zero point, unfettered by received notions of musical material and the instrumental tradition. Barrett relates his need to rethink his approach to composition to a notion of critique, the two of which are always in his case 'enacted within the composition process rather than being preliminary to it' (Ibid.). Commenting on his interest in possibilities rather than outcomes, he hesitantly describes his music as 'experimental', settling rather for the adjective 'realistic' (Ibid.). But what were the concrete possibilities of *Ne songe plus*?

In addition to the physical framework already mentioned, an important aspect is the retuning of the cello. The instrument is tuned B–F-sharp–D–A in order to give the piece a distinct resonance, and the sound of the open strings are very present throughout the piece. Although retuning is an important feature in all of Barrett's pieces for solo cello, and for Laws forms the locus of instrumental embodiment (Laws 2013), I will leave the discussion of alteration of resonance (and instrument(al) identity) to the analysis of Ferneyhough's *Kurze Schatten II* in Chapter 6, where scordatura plays a decisive role. The piece has eight sections each with its own distinct character and texture based on a particular kind of instrumental activity. The material for each section is worked out in terms of pairings of strings, and, as was pointed out by Toop (and somewhat typically for Barrett), pitch material is based on dividing each string in eight different overlapping registral bands (vectors), producing various interval trajectories on the string. The bands are worked out so that the result is (necessarily) linear pitch material when playing normally and non-linear harmonics. Barrett has used similar kinds of mapping of the fingerboard in several other pieces for strings, but where *Ne songe plus* is based on intervallic structures, a later cello piece like *von hinter dem Schmerz* is based on physical distances on the string (Barrett and Deforce 2001).

Important aspects in the organization of the instrumental practice seem to be the degree of left hand movement along the string, with glissandi being the basic mode of operation in several sections and the absence of glissando functioning as a zero degree of lateral movement. Similarly, the bow movement is organized in terms of movement across or along the strings, in addition to the structural weight carried by the organization of which and how many strings to play – this being central to the open string resonance that characterize each section of the work. I will now discuss section 1 and 4 in some detail.

In the first section of the piece (bars 1–33), something very interesting happens at the end of bar 18 (Example 2.1).

Example 2.1: *Ne songe plus, à fuir*, bar 18

The formal pattern outlined above is evident throughout this section, and the different types of material in bar 18 have been introduced one by one in the previous bars. The opening gesture of the bar is a remnant of a short appoggiatura glissando from the end of bar 1. The second and third attacks of the gesture are performed with left hand finger percussion and left hand pizzicato respectively, during the heavy down-stroke indicated above the staves. The harmonic material with a light upstroke was introduced in bar 11, and the two-part harmonic glissando in bar 12. The following ‘arpeggio’, with the bow pivoting on the second string, was introduced in bar 16, and the last and rapidly flourishing gesture of the bar is heard here for the first time. And then: above the staves, the bowing rhythm is separated from the rest of the material. Until this bar, each bar has had a long and heavy down-stroke at the beginning and, from the introduction of harmonics in bar 11, a light up-stroke with crescendo towards the end of the bar as an upbeat to the next heavy downbeat, in what seems like a natural ebb and flow. However, in bar 18, the bowing stands out as a separate element of the notational fabric, expressing a heavy and even rhythm stacked on top of the wild left hand flourish that ends the bar. The bowing rhythm is not only unhinged from the left hand’s actions, it is also separated from the angle of the bow. In the penultimate gesture, the ‘arpeggio’ before the last flourish, the bow

is pivoting on the third string, alternately touching the fourth and second strings. The last flourish seems to be a continuation of this arpeggio pattern: If the arpeggio were prolonged (as it is in the following bar), the next note would be on the second string, where the first note of the flourish is indeed to be found. The string pattern of the flourish is a traditional linear arpeggio pattern across all the strings, which would typically be played using alternate bowing as in Example 2.2.

The image shows a musical score for the Cello part of Alfredo Piatti's Caprice no. 7, op. 25, bars 1-2. The score is written on a single staff in bass clef, 3/4 time. It begins with a dynamic marking of *mf* and the instruction *Ben marcato il basso.* The music consists of a series of arpeggiated chords, each marked with a '3' indicating a triplet. The notes are slurred together, and there are various bowing directions indicated by flags above the notes. A first ending bracket labeled '1.' spans the final two measures of the excerpt.

Example 2.2: Alfredo Piatti, *Caprice no. 7, op. 25*, bars 1–2

The back and forth bowing rhythm could in fact be seen as a continuation of the pivoting pattern as well, and one could very well envisage the pivot being played with alternate bowing. Thus we have an instance where two aspects of bowing practice actually take leave of each other, as if suddenly unhinged in a polyphonic bifurcated extension of the pivoting arpeggio. The separated bowing rhythm is continued until bar 24, always connected to the pivoting arpeggio (which is phased out after bar 19) and the flourishing gesture.

In bar 23, as the end flourish of bar 18 has become the opening material of the bar another kind of arpeggio is introduced (see Example 2.3). In this bar, the rhythm of the bow and the string pattern catch up at the upstroke at the end of the flourish, and this upstroke arpeggio is continued while the left hand slides a four-note chord towards the downbeat of bar 24.

These different arpeggiation options (pivoting, unhinged, alternating) expose the compound 'nature' of the practice, revealing it as a construct of different elements with very different functions. It is as if the practice is questioning itself from within: What is an arpeggio? What is the relation between the direction of the bow and the string pattern? This is an example of how one element of the practice – the direction of the bow – can take on a material quality separate from other elements with which it is normally

The image shows a musical score for a single bar (bar 23) from the piece 'Ne songe plus, à fuir'. The score is written for two staves, likely representing different string parts. The notation is highly complex and idiosyncratic, featuring numerous accidentals, dynamic markings, and specific performance instructions. Key elements include:

- A circled number '23' at the beginning of the first staff.
- A bracketed section at the top with a '6:5' interval marking and a 'V' symbol.
- Intervallic markings such as '4:3' and '7:6'.
- A dynamic marking 'sfffzpp' at the bottom left.
- A performance instruction '(all strings)' with a dashed arrow pointing to the right.
- Various fingering and bowing notations, including 'IV etc.', '15:14', and '7:8'.
- A 'V' symbol above the second staff.
- A circled 'IV' symbol below the second staff.

Example 2.3: *Ne songe plus, à fuir*, bar 23

closely connected, but which would fall below the radar of a standard structural analysis based on pitch. The example also exposes a typical feature of the radically idiomatic instrumental practice, namely the dissociation of the individual elements of the practice as separate parameters.

The fourth section of the piece (bars 82–111) is based on a two-part texture in which a tightly woven polyphony on adjacent strings is the most prominent feature. Although the section is sharply divided into two parts at bar 100, the single bar is the main formal unit throughout the section. According to Barrett, this section of the piece is where the scanning of the interval trajectories becomes most obvious (Barrett and Deforce 2001). Although it is not immediately apparent how the actual trajectories are employed, what are obvious are the sharp changes in register between every bar and occasionally within the bars (e.g. bar 83) that hint at shifts from one trajectory-band to another. There seems to be no immediate correspondence between pitch register and the pair of strings used in this section, suggesting that these elements have been worked out individually. The pitch register on the strings of a given pair in a given bar is quite narrow and often overlapping (see Examples 2.4 and 2.5), resulting in a close-knit web of sound. Deforce notes that the left hand actions are meticulously choreographed; indeed the impression left by the notation is certainly daunting (Barrett and Deforce 2001). Taking a closer look, one will notice that the two parts often circle around the same pitches, seemingly engaging in a game of imitation

The image shows a musical score for two staves. The upper staff is marked with *sfz* at the beginning and *mp* at the end. It features a long glissando marked with a checkmark (✓) and a bracket above it, with a ratio of 6:5 indicated. The lower staff is marked with *mp* at the beginning and *ff* at the end. It features a long glissando marked with a checkmark (✓) and a bracket above it, with a ratio of 7:9 indicated. There are also other ratios like 11:9 and 8:9 marked. The score includes various notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

Example 2.4: *Ne songe plus, à fuir*, bar 91

and mirroring. For instance, in bar 91 (see Example 2.4), which is performed using the first and second strings, the G-quarter-flat in the upper part is repeated as the end of the first glissando in the lower part just as the upper part moves on to G-natural. Then the G-quarter-flat is repeated in the upper

part just as the lower part is sliding past it. G-quarter-sharp is also present in both parts in a similar manner: as the end of the second glissando in the lower part, immediately repeated in the upper part and again in the lower part starting a low descending glissando, and then in the upper part as the last note of the first half of the bar.

Something interesting happens during the long glissando in the lower part from G-quarter-sharp to C-natural. Simultaneously with the glissando, the upper part has the pitches E-flat, D-natural, D-quarter-sharp and C-natural, that is, it roughly doubles in stepwise motion the linear trajectory of the lower part. The lower register is already anticipated with the C-sharp in the upper part at the middle of the bar. The upper part even anticipates the end of the long glissando movement as if the two parts were out of synch – the lower part B-quarter-sharp at the end of the bar is just heard as the beginning of a short upwards glissando in the upper part. A similar game is played out in bar 85. The first pitch of the upper part, a G-quarter-flat, is immediately repeated in the lower part. In the upper part, it initiates a glissando movement that ends on an E-natural by way of a short stepwise quartertone motion. The lower part also moves towards E-natural. From this unison E, both parts glide upwards, the upper part back towards G-quarter-flat, and the lower part towards A-natural – which is doubled in the upper part just as the lower part moves to G-quarter-flat again and slides downwards. Every bar of this section presents a similar kind of weaving together of the two

The image shows a musical score for two staves, labeled I and II. The score is for bar 85 of the piece 'Ne songe plus, à fuir'. The upper staff (I) begins with a dynamic marking of *sfz* and contains a glissando marked with a bracket and the ratio 3:2. The lower staff (II) begins with a dynamic marking of *mp* and contains a glissando marked with a bracket and the ratio 5:4. Above the staves, there are two large brackets, each labeled with a 'V' and a 'V', indicating vibrato. Further annotations include ratios 5:6 and 5:6 above the upper staff, and a ratio 3:2 below the lower staff. The piece concludes with a dynamic marking of *ff*.

Example 2.5: *Ne songe plus, à fuir*, bar 85

lines. The bars given in the Examples also exemplify the different glissando movements of this section. For instance, the glissandi have very different velocity. In bar 85 (Example 2.5), the first glissando in the upper part covers three quarter steps in what is roughly twice the duration of the simultaneous glissando of the lower part, which covers three half steps, thus making the latter in effect four times as quick as that of the upper part. However, in this instance one also needs to take into consideration the physical distance of the string: in the higher position of the lower string, a glissando travels shorter on the string than in the lower position of the higher string. Thus, a play of identities is set up between the notation of pitch and the physicality of execution; a parallel motion on the two strings creates a changing interval, whereas a stable glissando interval would demand different movements across the strings. In *Ne songe plus* the practice has the upper hand.

This logic seems to be effected in the double glissando from the unison E, where the motion on the lower string is (again) twice that of the higher (five half steps and five quarter steps respectively) string at roughly the same speed. The hand has to extend a little, but perhaps not as much as one imagines from just reading the score. Both bars also exemplify glissandi in contrary motion, the most prominent one occurring in bar 91 (Example 2.4) with the upwards glissando from C-sharp in the upper part against the long descending glissando in the lower part. In these glissandi the hand has to extend or contract, whereas in parallel glissandi as in the opening of bar 85, the fingers move in the same direction but at different speeds. One

might assume that the detailed notation and ferocious difficulties of these bars would give the section an aggressive forward thrust. But this is not the case. The bars are abruptly cut off and separated by a comma that seems to hinder the establishment of any sense of concatenation and formal direction. The shifts in register from bar to bar seem completely random and support a kind of formal stasis. Additionally, all bars have a strictly uniform dynamic: the upper part of each bar has a decrescendo from *sffz* to *mp* whilst the lower part has a crescendo from *mp* to *ff* something that inhibits any possible development. Except for the changes in register and very slight variations in textural density, there is actually very little distinction between the bars, and whereas in the opening section of the work there is a sense of direction with the formal structure of repetition and erosion discussed above, in the fourth section all sense of direction seems lost. One element alone seems to keep the music from coming to a complete halt: the bow stroke. Throughout the section, the bowing rhythm is again dissociated from the rest of the activity. In this section, however, the bowing is reduced to a slow back and forth movement of the simplest kind – ‘grinding and laborious’ according to the instruction in the score (Barrett 1986: 6) – but the variances in bowing rhythm give only a very vague sense of pulsation amid the swirling and vertiginous glissandi, more like a remnant of the possibility of movement than movement itself as in section one. Taken together with the dynamics, the bowing also eliminates any possibility of local accentuation or phrasing, thus heightening the distinctly indistinct character of each bar of this section.

It is difficult to see how one could discuss the *Satzlehre* of this section of *Ne songe plus* without taking into account the cello practice involved and the way the aural surface is produced – and how this latter is inextricably bound to the play of forces between the various elements of the practice. One could even say that, in this piece, the practice steps forward and claims sovereignty in determining the sounding surface. The lack of a general development between the phrases makes the form arbitrary: what is irreducible is the general performance activity – the practice, the choreography of the left hand and the grinding movement of the bow. Details of pitch seem irrelevant except to ensure that the two parts are circling around the same pitch area; pitch itself has only a limited structural function in this section. The function of the left hand rhythms seems to be to organize the density of the contraction and extension of the left hand rather than to generate any

sense of formal direction. And rather than being the typical vehicle for a subtly nuanced expressivity, the bow is unhinged from its usual articulative function, ironing out the expressive possibilities of the delicately chiselled left hand activity.

This short discussion of *Ne songe plus* indicates that the piece raises a series of questions that cannot be answered by an analytic approach developed to deal mainly with structures of pitch, harmonies or motives. By what means is the expressive musical surface articulated? What elements bring about the musical character? How do these elements affect each other, and by what order are they arranged? Is there a hierarchy between them? And what is the relation between these elements of the practice and those parameters typically addressed in musical analysis? In order to handle the radically idiomatic practice it is necessary to extend the reach of analysis to include the instrumental practice as such without necessarily writing a normative performance practice.

It should be stressed that the term radically idiomatic must be understood as something very different from a radical idiom. A radical idiom would correspond to a novel fashioning of the style of the music or practice according to a historical situation in order to give a sense of propelling the development. The radically idiomatic however, seeks the roots (Latin: *radix*) of idiomatic writing, that is, it searches for the most basic relations between a body and an instrument, and for the basis of how sound is or could be produced on a given instrument. The two concepts can of course overlap, but mistaking the latter for the former would be a grave simplification of the problematic at hand (cf. the critique of Brooks above). Thus the contours of some of the reasons why the radically idiomatic is not part of the discourse surrounding Barrett's music begin to unravel. To my knowledge, with the possible exception of Hans-Peter Jahn's analysis of Lachenmann's 1969 cello solo *Pression* (Jahn 1988), analyses such as that sketched above – of the structure of the instrumental practice itself as a constituent aspect of the work, or indeed as constituted in the work – are not to be found in the musical tradition. Jahn's analysis in fact does little more than showing the disposition of the technical elements throughout the piece (I return to this in Chapter 5). Such writing is found only in texts by certain composers following the examples of Barrett, Ferneyhough and Hübler, writing on their own

music or music with which they have a special affinity.¹⁰ But to my knowledge, it is not even mentioned as a possibility in the standard literature on analysis.¹¹ The term ‘radically idiomatic’ is virtually non-existent in musicological discourse. It thus seems safe to claim that there are no existing and standardized analytical tools for handling instrumental practice as a means of structuring a composition, and new tools need to be sought.

One characteristic feature of the radically idiomatic is the breakdown of some of the basic assumptions on which musical analysis is traditionally conducted. These assumptions are based on a dialectics of certain binary oppositions like notation/realization, material/form, work/instrumentation or score/performance, oppositions which as I will show become very difficult to sustain within the radically idiomatic works. Therefore it is necessary not to discriminate at the outset between what seem to be the two primary contestants for methodological support: phenomenological description and structuralist analysis. However, notation as such can never reveal the whole truth of its own enactment, nor can performance ever fully exhaust the possibilities inherent in notation. Nonetheless, the point of view of the performer seems to open up for another kind of approach, containing as it might within itself the potential to bridge the gap between these two positions. I do not have in mind the performer with strong opinions regarding performance ideals or practice methods, nor the artistic researcher of late who strives to explicate artistic or collaborative processes. Rather, the radically idiomatic works seem to suggest envisaging the performer as an archaeologist who digs deep into the interdependence and contingency of the smallest details of his own practice and the work structure, thus situating the performer in a privileged epistemological position in relation to both how the work is dependent on the concrete, physical practice in order to become a sounding structure as well as how the practice is dependent on the enactment of the work as its basis. As the radically idiomatic approach is not one single parameter to be separated from others but rather a set of strategies that cut across and interfere with the whole spectrum of parametric

10 See for instance Cassidy (2013), an example of the former, and Hoban on Hübler for an example of the latter (Hoban 2000 and 2005).

11 It is not found, for example, in Cook (2013) or the articles on analysis in dictionaries like the *New Grove* (Bent and Pople 2007) or *Musik in der Geschichte und Gegenwart*. It is absent, too, from anthologies like *Rethinking Music* (Cook and Everist 1999) and *The Cambridge guide to Twentieth Century Music* (Cook and Pople 2004)), as well as the literature on performance studies or artistic research.

possibilities including and highlighting the ideals and physical properties of practice, it permeates the whole texture of the *écriture* of the works. And more importantly, as the radically idiomatic exposes the dependency of musical expression upon instrumental practice, how – at least in the works discussed herein, and it may even be possible to generalize this qualification – and to what extent there is a distinct relationship between the practice and the expression of the specific work. The work done in the studio by the performer-archaeologist brings together both a certain analytic structuralism and a (proto-)performative phenomenology, in that practicing is a preparation for the emergence of structure in the performance of the work. Bearing responsibility for the structure and expressivity of a work in an actual performance, the performer potentially has access both to formalist structure of the work and to the score as an invitation to enact the emergence of musical structure.

There is work done in this field already. For instance, Elisabeth LeGuin (2002) provides an explicitly subjective approach to writing about music from the performer's point of view, describing the experience of performance as an embodied sensation. Although the decidedly subjective perspective is certainly an important contribution to the field of musicology and the phenomenology of performance, it fails to recognize the powers of tradition in moulding this subjective experience. Also, in order to elaborate on the radically idiomatic works discussed in the present study, where the corporeality of performance is structured as part of the compositional process – and where the embodiment of the work is an explicit part of the notation and work structure – a more traditionally analytic approach is needed than that offered by a carnal musicology. David Yearsley's brilliant study of Bach's organ idiom (Yearsley 2013) offers a perspective that lies closer to the present study. In his discussion of the relationship between Bach's parallel development as a composer and organ virtuoso with a highly developed pedal technique, Yearsley illuminates the mutual enrichment of performance and compositional practices by combining practical, analytic and contextualizing methodologies.¹²

¹² Special mention should be made of Paul Craenen's recently published dissertation *Composing under the Skin* (2014) which deals with the relationship between composition and the performing body in twentieth century music. Although very close to my own concerns, Craenen's work unfortunately came into my hands too late to make its way into the present text.

In order to establish an analytic format that can raise the level and thrust of the argument concerning the radically idiomatic above strict structuralism or mere description – that is, a form of analysis that can be both broad and specific, multileveled as well as inclusive of different areas and forms of knowledge and semiosis, implicit or explicit, in the scores or indeed in the instrumental practice itself – I propose to follow the path suggested by Erlend Hovland’s work on Gustav Mahler (Hovland 2002), and turn to the analyses of discursive practices conducted by Michel Foucault. Foucault’s work seems to have great potential and applicability in relation to musical practices, not least when it comes to investigating how the discursive surface of a musical work is constituted by the practice involved in performance. The interpenetration of practices and discourse addressed in the work of Foucault has strangely found little resonance in musicology and performance studies. This is unfortunate, since his approach enables the permeability of different areas and kinds of knowledge and displaces the boundaries between the theoretical and the practical; it can therefore highlight instrumental practice as a separate strand of a works’ discursive context. In the following I will outline the basic premises of Foucault’s conception of discursive practices. Drawing primarily upon Foucault’s early work, I will elaborate certain principles that will guide the analyses in the following chapters.

2.2 Discourse and Practice

One of the main contributions of Foucault’s work of the 1950s and 1960s is the analysis of how different forms of knowledge have been constructed through certain methodological operations within the field of knowledge itself. I believe this insight can be transferred to the field of musical performance in order to explicate the structural function of the practice in relation to a musical work.

I will begin, somewhat naïvely perhaps, with a suggestion: instrumental practice is a discursive practice. This is at least the working hypothesis for the analyses that follow – that the instrumental practice in musical works has the function of providing the scaffold for the temporal unfolding of the works as sound, which I will call the discursive surface of the works. What does this mean, and what are the implications of this initial suggestion? I

will elaborate this suggestion, which is in one sense the core of this dissertation, with reference both to Foucault's writings and to his *writing*. The suggestion to understand instrumental practice as a discursive practice is based on the presupposition that music can be viewed as discourse in Foucault's specific use of this term, something that will be clarified in the following. Initially, I will use the term discourse rather loosely in order to designate the musical surface, both as notation and sound.

The idea of music as discourse demands an immediate qualification: I do not intend to engage in the debate around the topos of music and language. There is an established semiological branch of musicology that deals with the analysis of music as discourse; the main exponents of this tradition are Jean-Jacques Nattiez and Nicolas Ruwet.¹³ More recently, scholars like Kofi Agawu have coupled this tradition with hermeneutics.¹⁴ The focus of this form of discourse analysis is formal relationships and musical topics, exposing a view of musical coherence that draws heavily on theories of language and narrative and in many ways refers to the theory of rhetoric and tropes of the classical era.¹⁵ In focusing on the function of instrumental practice in establishing the musical surface, the present study does not follow this lineage of semiological musicology. In order to avoid confusion regarding aims and means I will not embrace the term 'discourse analysis' even if this is strongly associated with Foucault within a wide spectrum of disciplines. I will rather call my approach an *archaeological* analysis, adopting the terminology from Foucault's work up to 1970, in order to highlight the analysis of what renders the musical surface possible. As Foucault writes in *The Order of Things*, his explicit aim is to 'investigate ... knowledge at its archaeological level – that is, at the level of what made it possible' (Foucault 2002: 32). Likewise, my focus will be on the relationship between the practice and the aural surface, and not explicitly on the surface as such. The important thing is therefore what Foucault termed the enunciative function: how the elements of the practice operate in relation to each other in the production of the musical surface.

13 See for instance Ruwet's *Langage, musique, poésie* (1972); Nattiez's main books are *Fondements d'une sémiologie musicale* (1975) and *Musicologie générale et sémiologie* (1987).

14 Notably in *Music as Discourse: Adventures in Romantic Music* (2008).

15 See for instance Bonds (1991).

2.2.1 Archaeology and practice

Before developing a conception of instrumental practice as a discursive practice, I will first discuss some general traits of Foucault's early work with a particular focus on the notion of discourse. Though his work is dependent on the development of a highly idiosyncratic vocabulary, Foucault is careful to specify that he views his own set of terms and methods not as a break with or derivation from other kinds of methodology but rather as a descriptive possibility that articulates itself upon others (*AK*: 108). The notion of discourse plays a vital role in Foucault's early work, denoting a vast field of potential meaning where certain themes (discursive objects) and specific kinds of knowledge are allowed to emerge. The laws or systems that govern the emergence of these discursive objects are clarified through an intricate set of methodical operations betraying traces of phenomenology and structural linguistics designed to suppress and eliminate any kind of historical metaphysics in favour of the concrete surface of the empirical material. For Foucault, truth claims cannot be seen outside of the concrete discursive context in which they are formulated. Drawing attention to a modern concept of writing – *écriture* – in relation to André Breton in an interview from 1967, Foucault suggests the need to undertake very specific and explicit methodical considerations: '... this beautiful abolition of the division between knowledge and writing has become very important for contemporary expression. We live precisely in a time when writing and knowledge are profoundly entangled ...' (Foucault 1966: 583).¹⁶ That is, that there is not an idealized unity between writing (or language) and knowledge (truth), but rather that knowledge or truth cannot be seen as exterior to its context. The passage evokes the traditional problematic of form and content, and is an obvious allusion to Foucault's own textual practice: In Foucault's conception of writing, writing (as a practice) and knowledge (or truth) cannot be dissociated. It is a claim of this dissertation that the radically idiomatic works explicitly address an analogue relationship between the musical work and its performance – i.e. that we live in a time when practice and musical expression cannot be dissociated, when musical expression cannot be seen as exterior to the practice. Extending a basic premise of the theory of the sign developed in Saussurean linguistics, namely that relation between the

16 '... cette belle abolition du partage entre savoir et écriture a été très importante pour l'expression contemporaine. Nous sommes précisément en un temps où l'écrire et le savoir sont profondément enchevêtrés ...'. My translation.

form and meaning (signifier and signified) of a sign is arbitrary, Foucault argues here that knowledge can only be articulated within the concrete operations of the practice of writing itself and not with reference to any form of metaphysical support. I will follow this line of thought in the discussion of the radically idiomatic instrumental practice in the analyses that follow. In Chapter 5 I will retroactively trace this notion of practice as *écriture* at work in relation to certain developments twentieth century music.

Foucault's notion of discourse is elaborated most explicitly in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* from 1969. Together with *The Discourse on Language*, his inaugural speech at the Collège de France, it represents a threshold in Foucault's work: the summing up of his early books and announcement of the themes of genealogy, practice and discipline that were to be his main focus until the late seventies. At one point in the *Archaeology*, Foucault describes his method as starting from a description of *statements* (*énoncés*) (AK: 79). It is obviously difficult for Foucault to pinpoint precisely what he means with this term, but the short definition is that statements are 'things said'. These things said are initially treated as the signifiers of signs in a structuralist sense – in their singularity and materiality rather than as conveyors of meaning. It is clear that statements also imply things done (i.e. practices), both in the sense that an utterance is a performative act of speech, as well as in the sense that the result of a practice – penal or financial practices, for example, or even the construction of an object – can be viewed as a statement. As *things said*, 'discourse is made up of the totality of statements (*énoncés*) (whether spoken or written), in their dispersion of events and in the occurrence that is proper to them' (AK: 27). In distinction to studies of language which would include considerations of particular instances of it, the point in Foucault is to produce 'a finite body of rules that authorizes an infinite number of performances' (AK: 27) which Foucault wants to contrast with definite occurrences of discursive events. The collection of statements – that is, a sequence or series of signs – is called a discursive formation: 'the law of such a series is precisely what I have so far called a *discursive formation* ... this ... is [really] the principle of dispersion and redistribution ... of statements' (AK: 107). Thus Foucault can at one point define discourse as 'a group of statements that belong to a single system of formation' (AK: 107). The system, law or regularity of the discursive formation is therefore the scaffolding on which discourse can raise itself; specific knowledge emerges within a specific regularity or structure which however

does not exist prior to this specific knowledge. Instrumental practice is such a kind of specific knowledge, any particular musical practice being constituted by the specific relations that occur among its elements and their application.

Closely linked to the statement is what Foucault calls the *enunciative function*, an operation that establishes relations on multiple levels between different statements (AK: 115). These relations are not necessarily found at a grammatical, propositional or psychological level, but rather at the level of the sign itself – its iterability and arbitrariness. Interestingly, in their adaptation of Foucauldian discourse analysis, Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe have substituted enunciation for the term *articulation*: ‘we will call *articulation* any practice establishing a relation among elements such that their identity is modified as a result of the articulatory practice. The structured totality resulting from the articulatory practice, we will call discourse.’ (1985: 105) Articulation differentiates, demarcates, orders. It seems apt to reappropriate this musical term as it transports Foucault’s theory into familiar terrain – instrumental practice articulates music as sound in establishing relationships among its elements. In the present context of the radically idiomatic, instrumental practice is viewed not simply as subordinate and posterior in relation to the musical work, but as constitutive of it. Therefore, as I will not be dealing with a generalized (historical) performance practice but rather with works where the problem of the relation between practice and surface is addressed in the composition technique, the questions posed to the works will necessarily point towards the double articulation of the articulation of the work in the practice as well as in the compositional methods employed.

Related to the enunciative function and articulation is the notion of rarity. Imagine an archive and the various possible ways to organize the archived material – by subject, by author, by title, by format, by date etc. Material could also be organized according to their use or status in the archive. These different forms of organization serve to rarify the total contents of the archive by filtering out elements that do not belong to a particular principle of rarefaction.¹⁷ Similarly, the law of rarity is the principle that makes the discourse less dense, that circumscribes what is ‘said’, articulating the statements from the plethora of discourse. Thus, the analysis of statements and discursive formations ‘turns back towards that rarity itself; it takes that

¹⁷ The image of the archive is partly suggested by Réal Fillion. See Fillion 2012: 123–5.

rarity as its explicit object; it tries to determine its unique system' (AK: 120). Foucault's discourse analysis is centred on this: to determine the laws of rarity that makes one statement possible rather than another. The notion of rarity will play an important role in the analyses, where what elements of the practice are in play at a given moment will be described in terms of a rarefaction of the practice. In addressing the question of rarity, Foucault seeks to distance himself from the interpretative strategies of hermeneutics, without however taking 'account of the fact that there could have been interpretation' (AK: 120). What Foucault sets out to analyze is not a unity of meaning, an originary impetus, an 'essential nucleus of interiority' or the 'presence of a secret content' (AK: 120–21) which would unify a series of statements, but rather the principle or law that makes these statements possible. The conditions of meaning rather than the meaning itself. The principle of rarity is a principle of exclusion and as such the analysis of statements from the perspective of rarity rather than meaning should be seen as analysis of power strategies. As Foucault claims, from the perspective of rarity, discourse 'appears as an asset [that] from the *moment of its existence (and not only in its "practical application")*, poses the question of power' (AK: 120; italics added) and is always the object of political struggle. Indeed, it should be recognized the extent to which it is the notion of rarity that paves the way for the later analyses of power, abnormality, sexuality and processes of subjectivation. I will return to the questions of power and the subject below.

What is central, then, is the explication of the relations that are established by the concrete operations of a practice, or those strategies of writing that Foucault himself employs. This question will be carried over to the archaeological analysis of music: What are the instrumental conditions that allow a specific kind of music to emerge? Though understated in most of Foucault's work, the notion of discourse and discursive practices is related to Heidegger's thinking of technology as enframing an ordering which brings forth, reveals, un-conceals – enframing brings to presence (Heidegger 1977: 26).¹⁸ Likewise, discursive practices, through their enunciative function,

18 Although Foucault, in a late interview, stated that 'Heidegger has always been for me the essential philosopher... My entire philosophical development was determined by my reading of Heidegger' (Foucault 1984: 250), the question of Foucault's relation to Heidegger is a matter of some contention: among Foucault scholars there is a divide between those that see him as either Nietzschean (Koopman 2013), Kantian (Hengehold 2007) or Heideggerian (Rayner 2007). For a thorough investigation of Heidegger in Foucault, see Rayner 2007.

bring forth – articulate – discursive objects and events as forms of knowledge, as truths.¹⁹ The analysis of rarity should be seen as an analysis of enframing as the frame that articulates what is given or positive within discourse.

It should be pointed out that I have chosen to focus – initially, at least – on the formalist aspects of Foucault’s early work. I find the structure of his analytic framework highly suggestive of a certain kind of analysis of instrumental practice, which will be developed below. Although references to Foucault are not uncommon in recent musicology, they usually serve the appropriation of his opinions rather than his methods.²⁰

2.2.2 Archaeology and the work of art

So how does Foucault’s concept of discourse relate to a concrete work of music or art? Although Foucault himself wrote extensively on literature and art, he never developed a generalized analytic method for individual works.²¹ As mentioned in relation to the book on Roussel, his aim in writing on art and literature is to understand how discursive objects – such as the work, the *œuvre*, or the figure of the artist (one thinks in particular of ‘What is an Author’ (Foucault 2000a: 205–22) – come to be, and what regularities or rules condition the coming into being, or the enframing, of these discursive objects. At the same time, Foucault’s pieces on specific artworks, like the celebrated reading of Velasquez’s *Las meninas* that opens *The Order of Things* (Foucault 2002: 3–18) or ‘This is not a pipe’, on Magritte (Foucault 2000a: 187–203), tend to be hermeneutic in character, read to fit as examples or analogies of a given episteme. However, it should be noted that in his writing on the arts, Foucault exchanged the epistemic regularities of his archaeological studies for the *aesthetic* and formal (structural) regularities of the works in question. This is an example that I will follow in the present study.

Questioning the traditional understanding of the book as a unified and coherent structure in the *Archaeology*, he writes that ‘[a book] is a node within a network’ (AK: 23) and that ‘... it indicates, it constructs itself, only on the basis of a complex field of discourse’ (Ibid.). This view, which marked

19 On the question of statements as truth claims, see Fillion 2012: 125–41.

20 See for instance Moreno (2004) or Tomlinson (1993)

21 A comprehensive study of Foucault’s writing on art is found in Tanke (2009).

a clear break with the modern conception of the autonomous artwork as well as a whole range of related figures including the authorial artist and the sovereign subject of aesthetic experience, has since become commonplace in theoretical writing – though this is not, as suggested above, always the case with the reception of contemporary music. It seems that the singular work of art – or any other kind of text or document, for that matter – can find a position on several levels of discourse – as a statement, a formation or as a discursive object in aesthetic theory. The problem of the work in relation to discourse is perhaps a question of scale and limitations, and those large masses of historical documents that Foucault worked on are something very different from a single work of music, a novel or a painting, all of which demand particular methods. The problem of the singular work is a question of rarity. Extending the metaphor of archaeology, the present study could perhaps be compared to a detailed study of three coins from a vast excavation site. The single work is at once part of discourse as a discursive formation *and* the premise of discourse, without the part necessarily mirroring of the whole as in allegory.

It is interesting to note the coherence of Foucault's methods and his own way of writing. In explicitly establishing the rules of his own research, he is simultaneously establishing the discursivity of his own texts; he does not try to hide the fact that there is a kind of aesthetics governing his writing. This aesthetics is clearly related to the modern conception of writing suggested in relation to Breton in the quotation above. Given the arbitrariness of the signifier in relation to the signified, any kind of writing has to establish its own set of rules and methods – indeed this is in fact the protocol and operation of writing. In this sense, writing itself becomes a discursive practice, something exemplified in Foucault's own work: his own textual practice is what makes it possible for him to reach the conclusions that he does. This is a demand made of any sort of scientific writing, of course, but in the case of Foucault erecting of the theoretical scaffold of the text is an inevitable and explicit part of the methodology.²² In the same manner, the present text can be said to establish conditions that allow the radically idiomatic to emerge

22 My argument here is in opposition to the criticism made by John McCumber, who argues that Foucault does not directly assess a level of critique internal to his own project. Restricting himself to a reading of Foucault's books rather than the lectures and interviews, McCumber misses the decidedly processual and tentative character of Foucault's work, which only becomes clear when dissolving, as Foucault himself does, the status of the book and the *œuvre*. See McCumber 2000: 110–40.

from the margins of personal aesthetics or subjective embodiment and take centre stage as an object of musicological discourse. The discursive practice is both local and global – it both constitutes and is dependent on the context, but at the same time bears within it the possibility of a generalization. It follows that the notion of the work is permeated and its supposed unity destabilized by its inherent discursivity. Paraphrasing Foucault, one could say that the discursive practice is what makes the music at all possible as a sounding object, that the practice is what regulates the kind of expression that is at all possible. Indeed, if one limits music to include only man-made aural artefacts, it is not possible to conceive of a music that is not dependent on or emanates from a practice.

2.2.3 The argument: Instrumental practice is a discursive practice

I return now to my proposition – to view instrumental practice as a discursive practice. In the *Archaeology*, Foucault defines a discursive practice as ‘a body of anonymous, historical rules, always determined in the time and space that have defined for a given period, and for a given social, economic, geographical, or linguistic area, the condition of operation of the enunciative function’ (AK: 117). Above, the enunciative function was defined as an operation that establishes relations on multiple levels between the various elements of the discourse, and the conditions of this operation are to be found in the practice. What this means in the present context is that the instrumental practice – fingering patterns, modes of sound production, the physical limitations of the body and instrument and so on – are seen as conditioning the relationships that are necessary for sound production to take place at all, as well as the relationships that are possible to establish within a musical work; they thus have a vital function in the expressive possibilities of a work of music as sound. It should be pointed out that at this initial level I am not aiming for any kind of musical semantics and my initial interest is decidedly pre-performative, dealing with how the conditions of possibility for sound production are structured. Within the orbit of Foucauldian language I could call this the *practical a priori*. One could draw a parallel to the Saussurean distinction between *langue* and *parole*, between grammar and spoken language: if *parole* corresponds to musical play and performance, *langue* in relation to practice is the material conditions of the body and the

instrument. Throughout the text it will become clear that this distinction is impossible to sustain. However, the practice itself and the discursive relations it establishes do not form a part of the sounding music as such:

[the discursive relations] are, in a sense, at the limit of discourse: they determine the scaffold of relations that discourse must establish in order to speak ... These relations characterise not the language (*langue*) used by discourse, nor the circumstances in which it is deployed, but discourse itself as a practice. (AK: 46; translation slightly adapted.)

Correspondingly, I will address the practice on a level where the single elements do not produce or even entail any sound on their own; the practice itself is effectively mute, and sound is only produced when the elements enter into a discursive relationship of enunciation or articulation that transforms them. What I will look for in the analyses that follow – indeed, what explicitly emerges with the notion of the radically idiomatic – is the ways in which the various elements of the instrumental practice condition and articulate the musical surface. Following Foucault in addressing the practice I hope to shed new light on the question of the practice and the work. As Foucault writes of his aims of discourse analysis:

In liberating [the facts of discourse] from all groupings which are given out as natural, immediate, and universal unities, one gains the possibility of describing – but this time by a set of controlled decisions – other unities ... It could be legitimate to constitute, on the basis of relations correctly described, discursive ensembles which would no longer be arbitrary, but would however have remained invisible. (Ibid.: 29)

In *The Use of Pleasure*, this aim is simply formulated as effort to ‘free thought from what it silently thinks, and so enable it to think differently’ (Foucault 1992: 9). The discursive instrumental practice is this ensemble of discursive relations by which the work of music lets itself be heard, that by which the work of music comes into being as sound. The practice is not part of the music as sound, but the articulatory *condition* of the music as sounding expression. It forms the margins from which music emerges.

2.2.4 Questions of method

So how is the archaeological analysis conducted? What elements come into play? How are they related or relatable? Certainly, it *will* be necessary to follow structural patterns of fingerings (those endless rows of fingerings in *colloid* ...), but also the synchronization of the hands, the fine gradations of

finger pressure, or the relationship between the practice and formal patterns. It will not be a question of an exhaustive analysis of the works in all their detail – such an aim would not only be futile, it would be an impossible task given the structure of undecidability that permeate the works (this will be explored in detail in the analyses). Rather, the aim is to show the interdependence of the practice and the structure and expression of the works, letting the interdependence of the various levels active in the local discursive formations guide the description and level of detail. I will seek out regularities, ruptures and relations, some of which are exposed in the notation itself and some of which are literally out of view, lurking subcutaneously only to expose themselves in the concrete corporeal materialisation of practice. In the discussion of the works I will explicitly disregard composer intentions concerning the ‘spirit’ of the instrument, or its ‘essence’. I will focus instead on how these concepts are deconstructed within the framework of the practice as it is set in motion by the compositional strategies employed.

Even though I do not intend to posit *a priori* regularities within or between the different works, anticipating the outcome of the analyses in order to install a gap in the temporal displacement of the act of writing and the narrative of the present text, I will suggest that those regularities and laws that govern radically idiomatic works are relatable to that conception of *écriture* mentioned above, which will be expanded with reference to Jacques Derrida. That the aesthetics of Barrett, Ferneyhough and Hübler bear affinities with post-structuralist aesthetics and philosophy has already been suggested in Chapter 1. In relation to Ferneyhough, post-structuralist theorists are mentioned in both interviews and papers, and his work has been explored according to post-structuralist theory in several studies (see Chapter 1; I will return to this in Chapter 6). The methodological operations proposed by Foucault resemble, to some extent, aspects already mentioned in connection with the works of Barrett above. Actually, Foucault’s meta-discussions show clear affinities with the point of departure for the serially based composition practices of the fifties – the explicit formulation of a new musical grammar, developing new methods for every new work, and so on – an aesthetics with which Foucault must have had an intimate knowledge through his lover Jean Barraqué, as well as through his early familiarity with Pierre Boulez (Eribon 2011: 111–18). I will claim that the parametric framework on which the works in the present study are based, and in which the instrumental practice holds a key position, already facilitates operations close to many of

those limitations and dispersions enacted by Foucault in his own work. The heterogeneous sound world and multi-directional construction methods employed, as well as the emphasis on practice, resemble those 'controlled decisions' suggested by Foucault in the quotation above (AK: 29). It therefore makes a lot of sense to use Foucauldian methodology to shed light on a musical practice.

Following the Foucault of the *Archaeology* and *The Discourse on Language*, I will adopt some of his general limitations as a point of departure for my own study.

1. The principle of reversal

When considering the relationship between instrumental practice and a work of music, a common view is that technique exists to serve the music.²³ There is a certain instrumentalization of technique at work in this position (pun intended!): Technique is a slave to the mental and expressive faculties, and the efficacious and self-effacing technique of the virtuoso is the ideal. In this view, technique is something applied at will, in order to achieve a specific expressive effect that is always the direct communication of emotions. Reversing this view, I will describe these works from the point of view of the practice, analyzing how a specific material practice results in a specific kind of musical texture or expression. Yet, it may turn out that such a reversal is difficult to sustain, and rather exposes a mutual dependence; a double bind of sound and practice. One must not forget the Hegelian insight that the master is just as much tied to his slave as the slave is to his master.

It is important, at least initially, to resist the temptation of interpretive evaluation except in instances where this is unavoidable, in order to focus on the enunciative function of the practice in relation to the articulation of the musical surface. I do not intend to expose my opinions as performer of the works, but rather to employ my privileged position with regards to the practice, in order to inform the study of the enunciative, articulatory, function of the practice. This should not be seen as a renunciation of other forms of inquiry based on performativity or embodiment, or artistic research, but rather as a means to highlight the special function of the practice in these particular works.

²³ Among the endless repetitions of this position, examples from the didactic literature can be provided by Carlevaro (1984) and Giesecking and Leimer (1972).

2. Break with the concept of continuity

The principle of reversal implicates a discontinuity between the practice and the work. I will not accept the view of an organic relationship between the work and the practice, but rather view the practice as a cultural construct. And as such, instrumental practice is inherently discontinuous: it is composed of a set of rules of conduct that are handed down through the didactic tradition. It should be remembered that the didactic literature is full of descriptions of beautiful hand positions and posture, an aestheticized language whose function seems to be to disguise the fact that these treatises are full of rules and meticulously detailed exercises that eventually will lead to a state of organic technical bliss. Perhaps it is necessary for the individual practitioner to accept a kind of faith in an ideal of an organic practice; nonetheless this cannot be more than a private conviction.

In the present study I view the practice as composed of a set of independent elements or parameters. In adopting a parametric view of the practice, it is accepted that its elements have no necessary relationship, that they have no given hierarchical organization, and that the event of practice is always locally defined by a specific context. This leads to the next limitation.

3. Establishing a new series

In analyses of much twentieth-century music, it is customary to view the identification of a series of values as the guarantee of musical coherence. Regularity is sought among harmonies, motives, pitches, rhythms and other parameters. However, writing from the point of view of instrumental practice, I will treat the single pitch as an event, a constellation, or as a node in a network (cf. Foucault's notion of the book outlined above), rather than as a structural value. The event of the single pitch is for a guitarist premised by several practical considerations: If I am to play, say, an E above middle C, I have several possibilities at my disposal. I can choose to play it as an open string – the highest string – in which case the left hand is not in use. However, I can also play it on all the other strings: on the second string, fifth fret; third string, ninth fret; fourth string, fourteenth fret; fifth string, nineteenth fret; or even as a harmonic on the fifth or sixth strings, on the seventh or nineteenth frets, or fifth or an imagined twenty-fourth fret respectively. All of these particular fret positions on the fingerboard may be regarded as part of a special left hand position, which is defined by where the left hand first finger (the index finger) is on the fingerboard and notated with roman

numerals. So if I am to play the E on the second string, fifth fret, I can press the string with any of the four fingers, from four different positions – I will disregard the possibility of longer stretches at the moment. Disregarding also the possibility of using harmonics, this gives $4 \times 4 + 1 = 17$ possibilities for this single note.²⁴ I will also note that, excepting the option of always employing an open string from whatever position, this particular pitch is not possible to finger in the first (I), tenth (X) or thirteenth (XIII) positions. Additionally, the string has to be struck in some way in order to vibrate. A string can of course be struck by any of the fingers of the right hand,²⁵ or even slurred by the left hand alone (called legato playing), which greatly expands the matrix of possibilities. As the Hübler and Barrett pieces exemplify, one can also fret pitches with a right hand finger, and especially in the Hübler, the right hand often plucks the string between the fretting finger and the nut. The use of any of these many options is of course conditioned by – and conditions, as a form of rarefaction – the specific musical context in which it occurs. I would like to stress that each area on a given string has its own specific timbre and character, and these are normally utilized for expressive purposes. These are the kinds of series and patterns I will search for then, left and right hand fingers, positions, strings and so on, which are the basic premises for sound production on the instrument. Pitch will nevertheless be an important element in the analysis of the works, but it will never be seen outside of its practical conditions or implications. The focus of, or balance between, the various elements will vary from piece to piece, and even within the pieces themselves. Recognizing and articulating the play of forces at work within the practice itself is the task of the performer-archaeologist.

4. Dispensing with the work concept and the notion of the *œuvre*

In the *Archaeology*, Foucault makes a strong claim for the need to dispense with the concepts of the unified work, the author-genius and the *œuvre* or life-work. He was not alone in making this claim, which has its roots in the structuralist critique of the sign outlined above. For instance, many of the writers of the *Tel Quel* group, with which Foucault was associated, expressed a similar view, notably Roland Barthes in seminal texts like *The Death of the*

24 Four possible positions on four possible strings, plus one open string possibility.

25 Traditionally, only four right hand fingers (excluding the little finger) are used in classical guitar technique. However, in *colloid*, Richard Barrett uses the little finger on par with the other right hand fingers.

Author (Barthes 1977a) and *From Work to Text* (Barthes 1977b). This view claims that an author does not have authority over the meaning of his own text once it has been released from his hands, and that a piece of art, literature or music should be treated as a permeable and heterogeneous text rather than as a monolithic unity. This view of authorial intent has become a mainstay of aesthetic disciplines and theory, including much musicology. However, as the case of the Barrett reception exemplifies, the discourse surrounding contemporary music is still very much concerned with the figure of the composer and with the composer's intentions. But what about the music itself? Do the works themselves represent a break with the work concept, or are they rather opaque, self-enclosed units? To anticipate a bit, I will argue that the works are neither – or both: the unleashing of the practice within the format of the autonomous work is what triggers a special kind of expressivity. It must be remembered that Foucault's dispensation of the *œuvre* is a conscious textual strategy, one of his controlled decisions, that is, an important element in the scaffold – *le faisceau* – on which he erects his arguments. Similarly, the pieces of music discussed herein seem to confer to the work-format only in order to traverse the margins of this format. Thus the term *work* is maintained in this text. Not only in relation to the work-concept though, but also as a verb: to work, the practice as a form of work, the work of music as a result of work – the work as work.

5. The principle of specificity

The analyses must be work specific. The practical, compositional and notational strategies employed in the pieces are very different, and the discussion of each piece will have to accommodate these differences from the point of view of the radically idiomatic. An important methodological decision is to pursue Foucault's notion of positivity. This does not amount to a revitalization of positivism, but is needed to ascertain a secure empirical grounding of the analyses. It means staying on the surfaces of the scores, reading them literally, in order to understand how the practice is built from the smallest details by way of induction, rather than developing interpretive, hermeneutical or historical assumptions. The analytic point of view is decidedly pre-performative in the sense that I am not interested in formulating a performance practice for this repertoire. Many other performers have pursued this latter task, providing interesting and valuable information on

specific works and challenges.²⁶ However, my interest in the present study lies elsewhere.

Sticking to what is given is also necessary in order to explore the various ways in which the practice is always in play with the other parameters in the different pieces – when one element changes, the balance of the whole configuration is transformed. The notion of positivity is also active on a more general level, and at the outset I will enact a clear discontinuity in a Foucauldian sense, not subsuming the works under totalities like style, complexity, or a school of composition.

2.3 Instrumental practice as an apparatus: subjectivation and the microphysics of power

As already mentioned, the *Archaeology* marks a threshold in Foucault's work. It sums up the methodological strategy of his writing up to that point, and is suggestive of the direction he was to pursue with his research at the Collège de France and the books of the 1970s and 1980s. In Foucault's work from the seventies it becomes clear that discursive practices are inextricably linked to forms of subjectivation. This means that the subject's relation to the self is developed in concrete engagement with practices. I will explore this argument theoretically below with reference to Foucault's notion of an apparatus, which has recently been taken up by Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben. Practices are also bound to relations of knowledge and power, and the engagement with any kind of practice is at the same time the establishment of a relation to the power invested in that practice. It should be noted that for Foucault power is not by necessity something negative, or something that necessarily alienates or suppresses the subject. Power is rather viewed in its positivity, as a means by which an individual becomes a subject by means of specific limitations.

²⁶ E.g. Andersson (1988), Artaud (1987), Cox (2002), Morris (1996), Orning (2015), Redgate (2007a), Schick (1994), Webb (2007) and others; see also Chislett (1991), Redgate (2007b) on related composers.

2.3.1 The apparatus

The term *apparatus* (*dispositif*) assumes a central function in Foucault's work in the seventies, as the question concerning the subject becomes more explicit in his work. The notion of the apparatus provides the hinge between power/knowledge and individuals in the series of lectures on normalization, governmentality and biopolitics delivered at the Collège de France, and has a central strategic function in *Discipline and Punish* and the first volume of *The History of Sexuality*. Typically, the term is not explained in explicit terms, but rather is put to use in the studies. In an interview from 1977, Foucault describes the machinery of the apparatus as 'a thoroughly heterogeneous ensemble consisting of discourses, institutions, architectural forms, regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, philosophical, moral and philanthropic propositions', explicating that the 'apparatus itself is the system of relations that can be established between these elements' (Foucault 1980: 194). The apparatus is further qualified as having a 'dominant strategic function' (Ibid.: 195), that is, it partakes in a network of power/knowledge relations in a process of subjectivation of an individual. In a late interview, the process of subjectivation is defined as 'the process by which one obtains the constitution of a subject, or more precisely a subjectivity, which is evidently not the only given possibility of a consciousness of the self' (Foucault 1984: 1525).²⁷ The apparatus is a central element in this process. What does this mean? It means, simply, that an apparatus is that by which an individual becomes a (self-conscious) subject.

Foucault's notion of the apparatus posits an alternative view of the subject from that which is called the Enlightenment subject: the notion of the individual possessed of a free and autonomous individuality that is unique, that develops as part our spontaneous encounter with the world, and that can ground knowledge of the world in a strict demarcation of the inner self and external phenomena represented to consciousness (Mansfield 2000: 13–24).

But what is a 'subject'? Or more precisely: what is the subject of philosophy? That this question has no single answer is something of a truism; in fact, it could be argued that the whole history of philosophy is a response to this question. René Descartes is often claimed to be the instigator of modern

27 'J'appellerai subjectivation le processus par lequel on obtient la constitution d'un sujet, plus exactement d'une subjectivité, qui n'est évidemment que l'une des possibilités données d'organisation d'une conscience de soi'. My translation.

philosophy. The Cartesian *Ego* or 'I' has two main important attributes according to Mansfield: first, the self as the ground of all knowledge and experience, and second, the self as defined by the rational faculties it can use to order the world. With Rousseau's focus on the individual experience of self and Kant's so-called Copernican Revolution, these two strands of thought are radicalized: For Kant, subjectivity can only have content through awareness of the world. Though heavily challenged, the Enlightenment conception of the subject is still the pervasive 'commonsense' conception (Ibid.: 11). This conception of the free and autonomous subject is mirrored in the institutions of the liberal nation state, one of whose main objects is to secure the basic freedoms and rights of its citizens. The late twentieth century saw a vast proliferation of theories of the subject, many of which target the pervading notion of the subject that emanates from the Enlightenment and more specifically from Kant.

Giorgio Agamben highlights Foucault's concept of subjectivation in his essay 'What is an Apparatus' (Agamben 2009b). Agamben relates the French *dispositif*, of which *apparatus* is the English translation, to the term *positivité* (positivity), a term central in the analysis of discourse of the early Foucault, as discussed above. Agamben traces the notion of positivity in Foucault to the Hegel of *Die Positivität der christliche Religion* by way of Jean Hippolyte, and by way of an appropriation based in etymology concludes that the apparatus is 'a set of practices, bodies of knowledge, measures, and institutions that aim to manage, govern, control and orient – in a way that purports to be useful – the behaviours, gestures, and thoughts of human beings' (2009b: 12). Interestingly, Agamben also relates the apparatus in Foucault to the Heideggerian *Ge-stell*, the notion of enframing discussed above, without however raising the issue of Foucault's expressed indebtedness to Heidegger.

What I propose is to understand instrumental practice as an apparatus, perhaps even the most forceful apparatus of a classical musician. By this I mean that the acquisition of skills required to become a professional classical musician demands an enormous investment on behalf of the individual, that the time spent learning an instrument not only results in the potential development of instrumental mastery, but is also a time spent literally grafting onto the body the cultural ideals embedded in the practice; it is a 'writing of the body'. This idea is not only supported in Foucault (and, as I will come back to, in Derrida) but also suggested in recent research on

musicianship and music education, as well as music sociology and psychology, where social constructions of subjectivities have come to dominate. For instance, with their influential ideas of 'situated learning' and 'communities of practice', Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger emphasize that, as the subject of education, one does not only learn a subject but also learns to be a subject (Lave and Wenger 1991). Stan Godlovitch assumes a similar position when describing 'groups unified under an instrument, a body of technique, and a standard repertoire' as 'performance communities', relating these to the traditional Guild's focus on craftsmanship, typically transmitted in a one-to-one learning situation not unlike the one employed in instrumental teaching in most conservatories (Godlovitch 1998: 61). Helena Gaunt and Monika Nerland's studies (Gaunt 2006; Nerland 2004) of individual instrumental and vocal tuition certainly document the dedicated thoroughness with which instrumental teachers and students alike care for the details of their craft; however, they also show a clear lack of interest in using this knowledge to think otherwise.²⁸ Godlovitch also suggests as much when he discusses the resistance to change inherited in institutions and traditions of craft (Godlovitch 1998: 15). The multifarious and comprehensive collection of essays gathered under the title *Music and Emotion* are all pervaded by a similar point of view (Juslin and Sloboda 2001). The general tendency of this literature is a focus on the positive values of musicianship and the role of music in the life of the individual, on expressivity, or on the possibilities of enhancing the effects of training,²⁹ highlighting the individual experience of the participants in the music making.

In my view, Foucault's notion of the apparatus enables a critical stance lacking in this literature, it enables a critique of the inherent values themselves, as they are transmitted through the practice.

2.3.2 Disciplinary power

The notion of the apparatus was developed in the early 1970s in connection with the notions of governmentality and disciplinary power. In a lecture

28 Analogously and somewhat surprisingly, perhaps, in her ethnographic study of IRCAM, Georgina Born notes a similarly uncritical stance with regards to the employment of new technology, 'which is often depicted in idealised, unproblematic and normative ways' (Born 1995: 15).

29 This is the particular focus of the anthology *Musical Excellence* (Williamson 2004).

from 1975, Foucault states that '[t]he general technique of the government of men comprises a typical apparatus', and asks "To what end is this apparatus directed? It is, I think, something that we can call "normalisation"" (A: 49). Referring to Canguilhem, Foucault continues:

the development in the eighteenth century of a general process of social, political, and technical normalisation that takes effect in the domain of education, with the school; in medicine, with hospital organisation; and also in the domain of industrial production. The army could no doubt be added to this list ... The norm ... is always linked to a positive technique of intervention and transformation, to a sort of normative project. (Ibid.: 49–50)

With this connection between power, normalization and subjectivation, Foucault explicitly aims at distancing himself from the traditional conception of a unified power instituted by the sovereign or the nation state. He continues:

It seems to me that it is both a methodological and a historical error to consider power as an essentially negative mechanism of repression whose principal function is to protect, preserve, or reproduce the relations of production. It also seems to me wrong to consider power as something situated at a superstructural level relative to the play of forces. (Ibid.: 50)

This is not to deny that power can be repressive, coercive or even violent; it is rather a change of focus towards how individuals become subjects, power being viewed productively or positively as forces which condition the subject rather than necessarily suppress it. Foucault relates the transformation of power relations that underpin the notion of disciplinary power to the emergent national states of the eighteenth century and the strategic reconception of the individual and the population.

What the eighteenth century established through the 'discipline of normalisation' or the system of 'discipline-normalisation' seems to me to be a power that is not in fact repressive but productive, repression figuring only as a lateral or secondary effect with regard to its central, creative, and productive mechanisms. (Ibid.: 52)

In his subsequent work, Foucault would use the term discipline, rather than normalization, to describe his notion of power. The notions of discipline and normalization are closely connected with Foucault's studies of what he calls the sciences of man – medicine and psychiatry, but also language, economy or sexuality. According to Foucault, a specific observational attitude developed in the eighteenth century, aimed at governing the population and the individual according to the various, and often-unsynchronized needs of the emergent nation state. Techniques of observation, examination and

confession were implemented in order to generate knowledge about the individual – knowledge used to make individuals fit with a certain conception of normality. Foucault's prime examples from the mid-seventies are taken from the army, the penal system and the field of sexuality; however, he also shows how disciplinary and normalizing methods employed in the army were adopted in the reformation of the educational system. These methods were developed to gather information about the individual so that a proper set of exercises could be tailored to the needs of this particular individual in order to conform to the norm. One finds the same individualizing normativity institutionalized in the apparatus of instrumental practice: the observational gaze of the master practitioner, an individualized regimen of exercises, the annual (or bi-annual) examinations with set repertoire from an early age, the regular auditions unto the next level of peer recognition (which for some begins around the age of seven and continues until a position is secured in an orchestra), even extending unto maintaining a regimen of general exercise, dietary considerations, mental exercises and so on;³⁰ all these strategies situate the musician as an object of observation, an object of knowledge, over which a certain normalizing and disciplinary power always already gains hold. What is particularly interesting with the apparatus of instrumental practice is that the observational gaze needs to be adopted and internalized by the practitioner himself – the individual needs to become his own master so to say, in order to further his development after the period of tutelage.³¹

A lecture from the 1976 course clarifies the relationship between power and the individual:

[The individual is not to be thought of] as a sort of elementary nucleus, a primitive atom, a multiple and inert material on which power comes to fasten are against which it happens to strike, and in so doing subdues or crushes individuals. In fact, it is already one of the prime effects of power that certain bodies, certain gestures, certain discourses, certain desires, come to be identified and constituted as individuals. The individual, that is, is not the *vis-à-vis* of power; it is, I believe, one of its prime effects. The individual is an effect of power, and at the same time, or precisely to the extent to which it is that effect, it is the element of its articulation. The individual

30 The anthology *Musical Excellence* provides several examples; see Williamon 2004.

31 In the guitar tradition, the classic reference would be from Segovia: 'I was to be both my teacher and my pupil' (Segovia 1977: 7) This is also a central topic with teachers like Carlevaro (1984) and Gilardino (1993).

which power has constituted is at the same time its vehicle. (Foucault 2003b: 29)

Now, this disciplinary power is not only a power over bodies but also of the souls and inner life of individuals. It is one of the major claims of the lectures on the abnormal of 1974–75 that the disciplinary apparatuses of the penal system, the hospital, the army and the educational system adopt the techniques of governing the souls of the members of the Christian pastorate (A: 203). One of the primary means of pastoral government is the confession, which resurfaces as the examination of the disciplinary apparatuses – the penal interrogation, the examinations of the penal systems, the transformation of the notion of the flesh into an object of medicine (Ibid.: 22).

It is the critical awareness of this sense of disciplinary power I felt lacking in the literature mentioned above, especially so with Gaunt and Nerland. It is not difficult to recognize the affinities – if not the inheritance – between the pastoral government and the individual tuition employed in most music conservatories. The regular visits to the master practitioner, which include a confession and examination of the progress made since last session, as well as a set of prescriptions – exercises to be practiced, thoughts to be adopted – echo the pastoral government of conduct.

What is new with the advent of disciplinary power in the eighteenth century is not necessarily the techniques or methods employed. It is rather the recognition of the potential to transform an individual through the application of individualizing and specified knowledge and exercise, the recognition of what Foucault calls the ‘docile body’: ‘A body is docile that may be subjected, used, transformed, and improved’ (DP: 136 (135–69)). The ensemble of knowledges and methods ‘which made possible the meticulous control of the operations of the body, which assured the constant supervision of its forces and imposed upon them a relation of docility-utility’, is what Foucault terms ‘disciplines’ (Ibid.: 137). In describing the notion of docility that led to the transformation of the penal system, Foucault is mainly referring to the army and the techniques used to transform a male population into soldiers, the ‘ordered maximisation of collective and individual forces’ (HS1: 24–5). From the detailed descriptions of military discipline, it seems he could just as well have discussed instrumental tuition, the conservatory and performance practice: suffice it to mention the individualizing analytic space (DP: 143) and endless solitary hours of the studio, the exhaustive use of energy, and not least ‘[t]he body-object articulation’ which ‘defines each of

the relations that the body must have with the object [i.e the weapon/instrument] that it manipulates' (Ibid.: 152–3) in meticulous detail well known from instrumental treatises.³² One might very well object that instrumental practice has probably always been conducted with a meticulous attention to detail, and this objection is certainly valid; however, there is a marked didactic difference between the immediate practicality of publication of the exemplary Roger edition of 1710 of the Corelli violin sonatas *with* written out embellishments or Johann Sebastian Bach's *Klavierübungen* and tendency towards the exhaustive and scientific in say Mauro Giuliani's 120 different right hand arpeggio patterns on two chords, or the Czerny piano exercises. Thus power becomes capillary, it reaches 'its most regional forms and institutions' (Foucault 2003b: 27) in the minds and outer limbs of bodies, in the 'grain of individual themselves' (A: 47); discipline becomes 'the political anatomy of detail' (DP: 139); it is 'a micro-physics of power' (Ibid.). What is important in this new disciplinary power is not the sovereign exercise of power, but rather the transformation of conduct. 'What defines a relationship of power', Foucault writes, 'is that it is a mode of action which does not act directly and immediately on others. Instead, it acts upon their actions: an action upon an action, on existing actions or on those which may arise in the present or the future' (SP: 340).

Reading Foucault, one can very well get the impression that the individual is crushed by an oppressive machinery of power. But it must be remembered that power, in Foucault, has a directly productive role wherever it comes into play (A: 94), and therefore is an inevitable part of any process of subjectivation. In explicit opposition to the traditional model, in which power derives from a single source – the sovereign, the state, the master, the teacher, the priest – Foucault seeks to escape this duality 'extending from the top down and reacting on more and more limited groups to the very depths of the social body' (HS1: 93–4). Thus, rather than viewing power as a linear system, power 'is the moving substrate of force relations which ... constantly engender states of power, but the latter are always local and unstable' (Ibid.: 93). This instability in the network of power relations facilitates resistance to power: 'Where there is power, there is resistance', Foucault writes (HS1: 95). The notion of individual agency and self-fashioning was to be Foucault's main interest in his last years, disrupting his plan for a six-volume genealogy of sexuality. Without going into this last so-called ethical phase of Foucault's

32 See for instance Carlevaro (1984), Hummel (1989), Iznaola (1997) or Rolland (1986).

work, I suggest that instrumental practice seen as an apparatus also opens up many sites of resistance to the power/knowledge relations inherent in that particular apparatus, a resistance explicitly addressed by the radically idiomatic works. Following John Ransom's account of Foucauldian genealogy, one could say that in raising the question of practice, the works 'transform what was, in Heidegger's terms "ready-to-hand" and thus unexamined into something that is "proper-to-hand" and a proper subject for critical reflection' (Ransom 1997: 81). Nonetheless I will argue that the works discussed herein do not obey a simple law of overturning or overcoming of disciplinary power, but that the deconstructive tendency which permeates them suggests a displacement of the dialectic movement of negation which a facile notion of resistance implies. A resistance to resistance. The focus of the present study will be on the construction of a practice within certain musical works, and the question of interpretive freedom or performer self-fashioning will not be of primary importance. Rather, I will locate in the works discussed the conditions of raising the question of resistance from the inside of practice itself. I will come back to this throughout the thesis.

2.3.3 Concluding remarks

In this chapter I have established a notion of instrumental practice which is seen, on one hand, as generative and articulatory in terms of the musical work as sound, and, on the other hand, as a means of subjectivation caught up in a network of power/knowledge relations. The means for discussing the latter are implied in the methodological considerations directed towards the former elaborated above; the power/knowledge relations that permeate the practice can be assessed only when the network of discursive relations of the instrumental practice is opened up to critical scrutiny. It should be stressed that it is the radically idiomatic conception of instrumental practice that suggests the Foucauldian framework outlined in this chapter. However, as I hope will become clear, the way these works relate to the instrumental tradition is also suggestive of a more generalized view, which can apply to instrumental practice as such and not only to the specific and local discursive relations articulated within the works analyzed.

But before more general questions can be raised, the questions posed by those three works themselves must be aired. The analyses of the three works are laid out according to a didactic plan: first, Barrett's *colloid*

explicitly structures a wide range of practical parameters, thus raising them up to a discursive level; second, Hübler's *Reißwerck* supplies a powerful model of how the machinery of instrumental practice works within the radically idiomatic; and third, Ferneyhough's *Kurze Schatten II* suggests a broader horizon of applicability of the radically idiomatic by the multifarious generative and practical strategies that go into the work.

In English, the word *work* can be both a verb and a noun. This opens up for a Heideggerian ambiguity of questioning. Thus, as the discussion of *colloid* is primarily analytic, the main question I will answer in the next chapter is not 'what kind of work is *colloid*', but rather 'how does the practice *work*', implying both 'how does the machinery of the practice run' as well as 'how is sound, the aural surface, of *colloid* brought forth – enframed, presented – in the practice?'

3 **Richard Barrett's *colloid*: the Sedimentation of Practice**

***colloid* – a first glance**

Perhaps the first reaction to the score of Richard Barrett's ten-string guitar solo *colloid* is bewilderment at the seemingly inexhaustible wealth of notational detail. But as this initial bewilderment gradually wears off, the most striking feature of the notation to emerge is the use of multiple staves. Standard guitar notation uses one treble clef system, and sounding pitch is an octave below the notated pitch. In *colloid*, the extended bass range of the four extra strings justifies the use of both treble and bass clefs, piano style. This seems perfectly reasonable; the use of a single treble staff would call for extensive use of *ottava bassa* designations and extra ledger lines below the treble staff, and this would only make the notation approach illegibility. However, at the beginning of every line of the score, the pitch staves in *colloid* are specified as applying to the left hand only – that is, the notation suggests that it serves to inform the performer about left hand actions – or where to put the fingers – just as much as it represents pitch structures. The actions of the right hand are notated on up to four staves, two of which specify what string to use for a given action, as a kind of tablature that is also valid for left hand actions, a third staff specifies occasional pitch material performed using the right hand only, and a fourth staff is introduced at the bottom line of page 7 to indicate percussive actions on the guitar body.

Already, it is worth mentioning that with a few exceptions, which will be discussed below, both right and left hand fingerings are specified for *every* single sound notated in the score, as endless chains of fingering patterns. In this way, what is usually conveyed using a single sign – representing a specific sound – indicating to the performer the ideal sound result, the practical realization of which is usually left to the discretion of the performer, is broken down in a notational apparatus that continually highlights the practical mechanisms needed to produce the specific sound in question.

Why this seemingly obsessive notational focus on performance practicalities? Does it speak of a distrust of performers' abilities to come up with practical and musically valid solutions? Or does it rather suggest that the instrumental practice itself is of particular importance in the work, that it might be structured in some way that it is necessary to convey in the notation? If so, how does this fit with other, traditional structures of the music? What function does the notation serve if the traditional hierarchy of means and ends of making music is seemingly turned on its head? And is this *turning* – if that is indeed what it is – itself an indication of some other, more profound change suggested by the work?

These are some of the questions that will serve as my guide through the score. In Chapter 2, I dwelt at length on Barrett's comments that the choice of pitch material for the early cello piece *Ne songe plus à fuir* has a 'cellistic' rather than functional harmonic basis. The hypothesis for the present chapter is that an analogous claim can be made for *colloid*: that the work has a guitaristic basis. Of course, this does not mean that the domain of pitch is unimportant. Quite the contrary: such an approach raises the question of how pitch is to be understood in a non-functional way. The aim of the archaeological analysis is therefore to understand how the practical parameters are structured and how they relate, through a necessary contingency, to other parameters – even if such a distinction itself might prove to be difficult to maintain.

My discussion of *colloid* will be conducted as a highly detailed description of certain features of the work, according to the principles outlined in the previous chapter. The work will be seen primarily through the notation and the practical application of that notation on the guitar. But before turning to the actual analysis, it seems appropriate to elaborate the immediate context of the work, the ensemble piece *negatives*, of which *colloid* forms the core of the second movement, *colloid-E*.

3.1 *negatives*

3.1.1 Sound, timbre and amplification

With its singular line up of strings, flute, trombone, mandolin, sitar, ten-string guitar (most of whom double on various instruments including percussion) and percussion (the anklung being one of the primary sound sources), *negatives* is characterized by an extreme timbral richness and instrumental inventiveness. The heterogeneous sound world of the work is one of its special qualities, and will be a main feature in the discussion of *colloid* below.

Indeed, the bleak, heterogeneous and fragile sound world of *negatives* is one of the typical characteristics of Barrett's music as a whole, as has been mentioned by several commentators (see Fox 1995: 148–9; Toop 1988: 33). Many Barrett scores even ask of the performers to emphasize this quality in the delivery. In the performance instructions to the string quartet *I open and close* (1988), the sound ideal of the piece is described as 'fractured, heterogeneous, harsh and grainy', and the performers are instructed to emphasize rather than minimize the timbral characteristics of the different strings (Barrett 1988). A similar note is also found in *Anatomy*, and in *colloid* the performer is informed that the 'overall sound should be by no means "classical" but highly heterogeneous' (Barrett 1991). However, Toop also draws attention to another quality of Barrett's early works, namely the 'savage, ironic glitter' of *Temptation* (Toop 1988: 36). This characterization is also applicable to *negatives*, whose inclusion of bright sounding plucked strings and Asian percussion instruments is reminiscent both of the diversified continuo groups of the early baroque orchestra and the delicate exoticism of Boulez's *Le Marteau sans maître*.

In addition to the instrumentation of *negatives*, the wide array of playing techniques present in all instrumental parts throughout the work give the sound of the music a decidedly unstable timbral quality. In *negatives*, as in Barrett's music in general, instrumental sound production is continually in flux with no fixed centre. 'Extended' playing techniques can no longer be viewed as an extension of a central organizing sound ideal, but must rather be seen as the basis of a rich timbral continuum. This is a feature in which Barrett

is certainly following the example of Ferneyhough, which will be discussed in-depth below.

In many works, Barrett specifies that all instruments should be amplified in order to expose the timbral heterogeneity of the instrumental forces. Using the microphone in order to expose the minute details in the production and development of a sound is not unprecedented and can at least be traced back to Stockhausen's *Mikrophonie I*, although there is nothing in the Stockhausen score that suggest the kind of explicitly critical anatomy typical of Barrett. Ferneyhough's *Time and Motion Study II* of the mid seventies is more of an immediate predecessor, as is Hübler's "*Feuerzauber*" *auch Augenmusik*, where the score prescribes exact positioning of different kinds of microphones in relation to the instrumental bodies 'in order to obtain an acoustical equilibrium between the traditionally produced tones and the various noises produced by the keys, pedals and finger attacks' (Hübler 1981: 'Notes'). Barrett has used amplification in this sense in several works, including early works like *Ne songe plus*, *Temptation* (1987) and *I open and close*, as well as in many of the works following *negatives*. In *I open and close*, amplification, although optional, is described as 'an essential aspect of the sound-world', and 'all sounds should be as if analysed or anatomised' (Barrett 1988). Additionally, amplification is used both to make possible an exaggerated dynamic differentiation, and to simulate an acoustic space 'as if the quartet occupies the entire volume of the auditorium'. Christopher Fox concludes that the use of amplification in Barrett is part of a strategy to explicitly subvert the traditional ideal of homogenization of an ensemble, an ideal which Barrett, according to Fox, sees as an artifice, by 'emphasising the intractability of [Barrett's] chosen medium' (Fox 1995: 149).

Even if amplification is not specified for a performance of *negatives*, the above comments are valid for this work as well. In the booklet accompanying the CD recording by ELISION, Barrett comments that the work was composed specifically for 'a CD recording which would use studio resources intensely in the interests of optimal physicality and clarity of sound', and that 'its changing perspectives necessitates some intricate mixing procedures, *even in live performance*' (Barrett 1993; emphasis added). In the recording of *negatives*, the evening out of the natural balance of the ensemble in favour of an even dynamic level of the instruments gives a very *unnatural* balance and mediated quality of expression in that a soft instrument like the guitar can have the same amplitude as a trombone or a group of

strings. Like the amplification of Ferneyhough's *Time and Motion Study II* and Hübler's *Feuerzauber*, the recording and amplification of *negatives* is also used to highlight the instruments' sound production itself and to bring out sounds that have traditionally been considered as unwanted noise, like the friction of the bow hairs against a string or flute key clicks, thus further exposing the heterogeneity of the ensemble.

3.1.2 Form and compositional technique

Another characteristic feature of *negatives* is the form, both the large scale formal planning and the layout of the individual movements. The piece consists of five movements, all of which can be performed separately. In a complete performance of the work, the movements overlap slightly, but movements 4, *basalt-E*, and 5, *delta*, are separated by a 15 second pause. Like the second movement *colloid-E*, the fourth movement is based on a solo piece for trombone, *basalt*. The *negatives* cycle thus comprises eight pieces of music: *negatives* in a complete performance; the five ensemble movements; and the two solo pieces *colloid* and *basalt*. Combining separately performable ensemble (or electroacoustic) works and solos in this manner has been the basis of all of Barrett's large scale, full concert works since *negatives – Opening of the Mouth* (1998), *Dark Matter* (2002), *CONSTRUCTION* (2011) and *world-line* (2014), all of which have been written for ELISION.³³

Like most of Barrett's music, the large-scale formal layout of *negatives* is based on clearly defined textures employing specific instrument groupings involved in particular kinds of instrumental activity. Thus, only the first and last movements make use of the full ensemble, and the three middle movements employ different, reduced, instrumentations. As will become clear in the discussion of *colloid*, the structure of the individual movements are also based on different kinds of textural/material tendencies, with specific types of instrumental activity taking the role of a varied instrumentation. Fox draws attention to this approach in relation to *I open and close* and *Temptation*, commenting that '[as] a rule, Barrett's characterisation of areas within his music tends to be by "methodologies of instrumentation" rather than harmonic differentiation' (Fox 1995: 152). However, the possibility that this tendency is rooted in the actual practice (rather than instrumentation)

33 For *Dark Matter*, ELISION joined forces with the Norwegian *Cikada* ensemble.

and can even transform the collective practice of an ensemble, as is the case with the orchestral work *Vanity* (1995), seems to escape Fox and other commentators despite Barrett's explicit comments in this direction. Nonetheless there is a strong sense of corporealization in Barrett's instrumental writing which draws attention to the performative. The music is not rhetorical but corporeal, its *Aussagecharakter* operates at the level of bodily activity, the performative act suggesting a kind of anthropomorphism. Not that Barrett is close to instrumental theatre like Kagel, but still there is a very strong sense of staging of a performative self-consciousness in many of the works. For instance, in *Tract*, the first and second parts of the piece are separated by a pause of at least 60 seconds, in which the performer is instructed to stop the extremely brutal playing '... with no sense of completion. Remain motionless, without relaxing, throughout the silence, hands remaining at the keyboard, eyes at the score.' (Barrett 1996b: 24) After the pause, the musical material is an exact repetition of the opening of the piece as if to set out on another attempt. Similarly, *Earth* opens with a pause of at least 15 seconds. These pauses – and one can find analogous moments in many works – highlight the activity of the performers, drawing attention to the iterative – indeed ritual – processes that are enacted.

In basing the formal layout of a work on different kinds of texture or generalized forms of activity, Barrett shows a clear affinity with the music of Xenakis. Following Xenakis, Barrett also bases his compositional technique on computer-assisted calculations in working out the minute details of a score (Toop 1988: 32). Responding to a question about compositional pre-planning, Barrett has commented that in his working process '[t]he large-scale decisions are taken first and then it's like a process of distilling or gradually focusing-in on the final product' in 'an inward process of gradual specification of the material' (Quoted in Toop 1988: 32). The analysis of *colloid* will take this methodology as its point of departure, the discussion of each section of the work moving from a generalized description to a close reading of notational details.

Indeed, as I will come back to in Chapter 5, Xenakis has also explored structuring idiomatic parameters in certain works, most notably in *St. 4* and the cello solo *Nomos α*.

3.1.3 *colloid*

colloid was commissioned by the Swedish guitar player Magnus Andersson, and premiered in 1991 by ELISION guitarist Daryl Buckley (Barrett 1991). Experienced as an amateur and improvising guitarist, Barrett had already written for the electric guitar in *Another Heavenly Day*, his first collaboration with ELISION and Buckley, in 1987. He has since used the ten-string guitar in other works, notably in large sections of *Opening of the Mouth* (1996). Barrett has also written extensively for the electric guitar and other guitar instruments,³⁴ not least because of his association with ELISION. Completed in 1991 and running for roughly 35 minutes, *negatives* was Barrett's most ambitious work at the time.

3.1.4 The literary context

The relation to other arts, and to literature in particular, is central to an understanding of Barrett's work. This is clear already from the many explicit references to other artists in his titles: *Temptation* (Flaubert), *Another Heavenly Day* (Beckett) and other works, as well as the *After Matta* cycle which refers to the Chilean surrealist Roberto Matta³⁵ and not least the cycle *Fictions*. As the aim of the present study is not hermeneutical, I will not go into this aspect of Barrett's aesthetic. Nevertheless, it seems necessary to mention that quotes from Beckett and Celan are found scattered in the score to *negatives*. In *colloid* a quotation from Swedish author Pär Lagerkvist's poem *Aftonland* (*Evening Land*) provides poetic imagery for the performer. I will not follow the lead suggested by the Lagerkvist quotation, but rather focus on the structural model suggested by the title.

3.1.5 The ten-string guitar

Guitars with more than six strings are not a recent invention. In the first half of the nineteenth century, guitarists like Napoleon Coste, Johann Kaspar

34 Notable is the electric guitar solo *Transmission* from the *Dark Matter* cycle. Recently, Barrett and Buckley have taken interest in the lap steel guitar, employed in works from the *world-line* cycle.

35 Interestingly, Ferneyhough's orchestral work *La Terre est un homme* (1976–79) also refers to Matta.

Mertz and Giulio Regondi used instruments with between one and four extra floating bass strings. Indeed, some of the finest pieces from this period were written with extra bass strings in mind, the extended bass register fitting well with the seriousness and bravura of this repertoire. Somewhat earlier, Ferdinand Carulli had used a guitar called the *decachorde*, a ten-string guitar with a special diatonic tuning, for which he wrote a fine treatise (Carulli 1981) and for which Fernando Sor also wrote a set of pieces. In Russia, a seven-string guitar with a special tuning was quite popular in the same period. After the death of Mertz, in 1852, these guitars fell out of favour as the guitar faded out of the general professional music life. Still, late in the century one finds players like Jimenez Manon performing on an instrument with 13 strings, a feat in itself that is no less impressive when considering the fact that Manon was blind. However, the complex and virtuoso music of Manon was oddly neglected for almost a century, and guitarists like Francisco Tarrega, Miguel Llobet, Augustin Barrios or Andrés Segovia never used more than six strings. Outside the realm of classical music, one finds in Austrian folk music the *schrammel-Gitarre*, an instrument with extra bass strings, as well as the lute-guitar made famous by Swedish folk singer Evert Taube. Jazz guitarist George Van Eps built his own seven-string electric guitar in the thirties in order to extend the harmonic possibilities of the instrument, and multi-string electric guitars and basses have seen a steady rise in popularity since rock guitarist Steve Vai designed his famous seven string *Universe*-model for guitar maker Ibanez, which was launched in 1990. The ten-string guitar re-entered the classical domain in the early 1960s when luthier Jose Ramirez III built a ten-string instrument for Spanish guitar player Narciso Yepes. Yepes used a tuning of low C for the seventh string, the eight to tenth strings tuned to a B-flat, A-flat and G-flat above. Although the initial idea had been to have extra resonating support in flat keys, Yepes soon found himself using the extra strings when arranging or transcribing pieces. And not one to shy away from the musical development of his day, Yepes commissioned several important works for his new instrument, notably by Bruno Maderna (*y despues* (1971)) and Maurice Ohana (*Si le jour paraît* (1963–64) and *Cadran Lunaire* (1981–82)).³⁶ After Yepes, several guitarists have taken interest multi-string guitars, and in particular in electric guitar design one finds now a myriad of different instruments.

³⁶ Ohana also reworked the guitar solo *Tiento* (1955) and the concerto *Trois Graphiques* (1957) for the ten-string guitar.

The expanded possibilities of the extra strings are one of *colloid*'s most striking features. According to Andersson, Barrett apparently misunderstood the re-entrant Yepes tuning,³⁷ the piece employing instead a similar tuning but with strings eight to ten tuned in whole steps below the seventh string. A happy accident one might say, as the particular expressivity of the piece is based on the many harmonics, the low rumble and the violent and brutal sounds made possible by the low tension of those strings. The extra bass strings also effectuate a sympathetic resonance that is coloured by the material of the other strings. In fact, the ten-string guitar seems to start resonating immediately when one picks it up, and the resonance is ever present in performance like a sort of dark halo that is difficult to fixate.

Another important feature of the work is the extensive use of the right hand little finger. The little finger is on equal footing with the other fingers in Barrett's conception of right hand technique. This is not unprecedented, however; for instance, Dionisio Aguado intended one of the studies from the *Escuela de Guitarra* of 1826 to be performed using the little finger. And according to Turibio Santos, when Villa-Lobos first introduced his guitar works to Segovia, he apparently intended them to be performed using all five fingers of the right hand (Postlewate 2001: 8). And indeed the *Douze Etudes* of 1928 also include figures and passages suggesting the use of the little finger, which however Segovia (of course) never did. More recently, Riccardo Iznaola emphasizes the possible gain made by training the little finger like the others (Iznaola 1997: 126), and American guitarist Charles Postlewate has developed a method specifically designed for the inclusion of the little finger in the right hand technique (Postlewate 2001). Interestingly, Magnus Andersson performed *colloid* using a traditional technique employing four fingers.³⁸

3.1.6 Reading the title: *colloid*

What is a colloid? According to the *Merriam-Webster* dictionary, a colloid is a

... substance consisting of particles that, although too tiny to be seen with the unaided eye (typically 1 nanometre to 10 micrometres), are substantially larger than atoms and ordinary molecules and that are dispersed in a continuous phase. Both the dispersed phase and the continuous phase may be

³⁷ Magnus Andersson in conversation with the author.

³⁸ Conversation with the author.

solid, liquid, or gas; examples include suspensions, aerosols, smokes, emulsions, gels, sols, pastes, and foams. Colloids are often classified as reversible or irreversible, depending on whether their components can be separated. Dyes, detergents, polymers, proteins, and many other important substances exhibit colloidal behaviour. (Merriam-Webster online)

The image of the colloid can aid a conceptualization of the relationship between the instrumental practice and the sound of the music. The discontinuity between the musical surface and the material practice outlined in the previous chapter finds a fine analogue in this definition of a colloid, the practice being the colloid proper and the sound being the continuous phase wherein the practice is dispersed. I would like to stress the parallel relationship between the colloid and the continuous phase in which it is dispersed and that between the colloidal musical practice and its dispersion in the musical surface. Crucially, the dispersed phase can crystallize or sediment to form larger units and a more distinct presence within the continuous phase. In my reading of *colloid*, this is what happens throughout the work: the practice comes increasingly to the fore. With the help of a well-adjusted analytic microscope lens – archaeological analysis – I hope to bring the practical colloid of *colloid* to the surface of the analysis.

3.2 The analysis

In the discussion of *Ne songe plus* in the previous chapter, I stressed the function of the bar as structural unit, closely connected to the iterative development of the material. This is a characteristic trait of many works by Barrett from the 1980s. There is a similar function of the bar and iterative development in works like *Earth* and *Temptation*, among others. In the piano piece *Tract*, in part written begun around the same time as these pieces but not completed until 1996, a similar groping iteration is found on a much larger scale. In one sense, this is the case in *colloid* as well, but whereas the bar unit in the cello piece is tightly connected to the iterating development of the material, in *colloid* the bars serve a very different function. And whereas in *Ne songe plus*, the bar lengths are organized around a mean of $5/8$, the bar lengths of *colloid* vary greatly, from $1/16$ to $149/8$ in a steady tempo of quaver=104.

I suggest dividing the work into 11 sections, according to the general character, texture and instrumental activity that dominates these different sections.

The sections are mostly composed of single bars of vastly different length. In certain cases, consecutive bars will be seen as forming a whole section, and some of the main sections will be divided into subsections. In these cases it is the development of the material that is the decisive factor governing the divisions. At a higher level, the piece is composed of two parts, dividing between sections 7 and 8. The first part presents sections of very contrasting material while the second – roughly twice the length of the first – forms one single musical process. An overview of the form is given in Figure 3.1. Indicated in the third column is a very generalized description of the material of the section.

Section number	Bar(s)	Activity
1	1	52/8; opening; muffled sounds
2	2	4/8; double bend glissando
3	3	58/8; harmonics/arpeggios; dynamic exchange
4	4	16/8; arpeggios
5	5	6/8; tumultuous; decrescendo
6	6	53/8; three subsections with different harmony; very heterogeneous sound
7	7–38	gradually more complex; two 'short bars' – 12/8 and 6/8
8	39–47	alternating arpeggios and 'short bars'
9	48	125/8; arpeggios, six subsections defined by different sound quality
10	49	149/8; very complex in all parameters, however, they move in parallel
11	50–64	continuation of previous section; every second bar is a pause; the duration of the pauses increase as bars with instrumental activity gradually become shorter

Figure 3.1: *colloid*, formal plan

My analysis of the two parts will roughly follow a similar pattern: First, I will present a description of the musical processes of the part, and then I will go into the various elements relating to both practice and sound on which these processes are contingent. Some parameters will receive special attention: left hand positions, right hand finger patterns, register and timbre. Additional important elements are left hand fingering shapes and what I will call string configurations. The latter term describes which strings are used in a certain passage. I will also discuss pitch structures, but, as I hope

♩=104

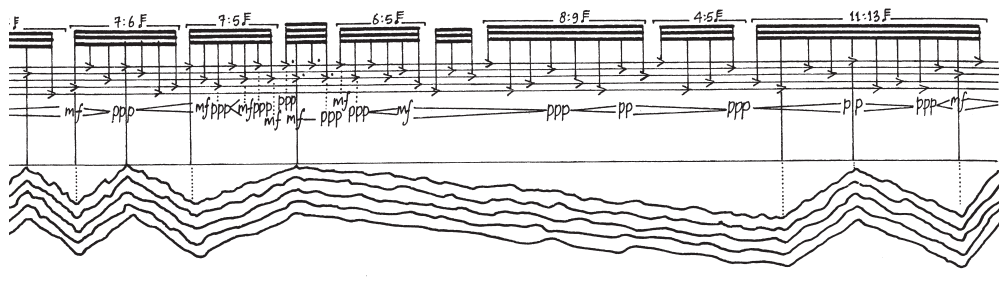
*sub. part, quasi legatissimo
glistening & brittle; pitches indistinct*

* left-hand fingering shape as shown; but with very tight "harmonic" finger- (and thumb-) pressure. The whole hand, retaining this fingering configuration, moves in a "glissando" within the space indicated: a range between the XIIth fret position and "as high as possible; next to the right hand. At the time the fingers and thumb also make smaller, random glissando-movements independently of one another, disturbing the parallel motion. The left-hand finger-spacings remain constant; therefore the intervals between strings widen as the position slides upwards.

Example 3.1: *colloid*, first line

to show, pitch choice is always conditioned by the limitations imposed by the practical elements – pitch is always conceived as a node in the network of practical relations, the aural result of the enunciative function of the discursivity of the practice outlined in the previous chapter. Indeed, one of the main arguments of this chapter is that neither practical nor abstract parameters can be seen independently of each other. Although I present samples of local details, for the sake of the general theoretical argument I will try to resist dwelling at length on the possibly bewildering amount of local instrumental inventiveness presented by this work.

Following the two-part division of the piece, the first part – roughly the first third of the work – presents quite short sections with contrasting textures and character based on arpeggios. The last of these has a clear rise in density and dynamic intensity towards a short climatic passage that is twice interrupted before section 8. In part II, from section 8, a steady build-up that lasts until section 11 is set in motion. Again, the music is based on arpeggios. These are increasingly interrupted by different types of sound, which will eventually come to dominate the music completely. A climax is reached at the beginning of section 11, after which the music gradually dissolves. The second part of the work suggests the colloidal behaviour of sedimentation described above. I will return to this below.



Across the two parts, other intertwined trajectories unfold on the levels of left hand positions and string configurations. These trajectories are most clearly expressed in the notation in the form of a steadily falling register across the whole instrument from the very top end of the highest strings to the open low F-sharp of the tenth string. However, it seems the parameters directed towards the practicalities of this descent are clearly structured, and this will be discussed in detail below. At this point, it suffices to say that the string configurations show a clear descent from higher to lower strings, and that the left hand positions follow a wave-like pattern that runs through the whole piece. This is also the case with the right hand finger patterns, which are structured analogously with the reiterative formal pattern described in *Ne songe plus* in the previous chapter.

3.3 Part one: general description

The opening section, a single bar lasting 52 quavers, is based on an un pitched, muffled texture. The section has a clearly introductory character, and within the context of *negatives*, the sound of the guitar emerges from the sound of the violin and anklung that ends opening movement of *negatives*,

delta. delta finishes around the middle of the second line of the guitar piece. The right hand performs irregular arpeggio patterns on the top five strings, and the left hand retains a fixed chord shape that is slid up and down the length of the strings between as high as possible on the strings and the twelfth fret. The player is instructed to use a very light ‘harmonic’ pressure on the string, the result of which is a very muffled sound quality with no clear pitch content unless a finger happens to hit on a harmonic node on a given string exactly when the same string is struck by a right hand finger (there are instances where harmonics are implied in the notation). The grip of the left hand fingers is fixed according to a chord shape at the twelfth fret and the player is instructed not to change the relative distance between the fingers as the hand is moved along the strings. This means that the pitch intervals between the different strings will change quite dramatically as the hand moves along the strings

The dynamic gradation is very specific, and the dynamics provide a level of articulation that suggests small phrases with rapid crescendi or diminuendi, and periods with a more static dynamic profile. Rhythms provide slight alterations of the basic demisemiquaver subdivision of the tempo, and give the section a sense of ebb and flow. Changes in timbre, register, density and dynamics, as well as the right hand/string pattern do not align, and therefore create a quasi-polyphonic web in which the different elements subtly pull in different directions, drawing attention to the disparity of the texture and the heterogeneous practice already at the very outset of the work.

As the left hand settles at position XII, the introduction is abruptly cut off with section 2, which only consists of two Bartók pizzicati (see Example 3.2). The first pitch is the twelfth-fret C on ⑦, the position of which is already

Example 3.2: *colloid*, section 2

prepared as the targeting end point of section 1. The string is immediately bent up a semitone to C-sharp. The second pitch is an E-flat on ④ being pre-bent up to E natural simultaneously with the C. The bend of both strings is released upon the attack of ④. It is interesting to note that when pitch proper first appears in the piece, it is in the decidedly unstable form of a double bend glissando.

Example 3.3: *colloid*, section 3, opening

A slow forward momentum picks up with section 3, where natural harmonics and arpeggios (marked with a slur in the score) alternate in a steady pattern, always followed by resonance (see Example 3.3).³⁹

The passages in harmonics, which mostly present linear or even scalar movement, are played *sul ponticello*, whereas the more gestural arpeggios are played *sul tasto* and roughly doubling the pace of the harmonics. The two types of material exchange dynamics in the course of the section. Initially, the harmonics are very soft and the arpeggios are rather loud, with crescendi peaking at *f* or *mf*. However, by the last third of the section (second line of page 2 in the score), the dynamics have settled at *f* for the harmonics and *pp* for the arpeggios. At the beginning of the section, the arpeggios seem to emerge from the harmonics, as becomes clear when considering their dynamic shape. Towards the end of the section, because of the reversed dynamic levels, the arpeggios seem rather to give colour to the dense carpet of harmonics, distantly reminiscent of certain textures found in spectral compositions. This section is based on an ebb and flow of sound and resonance, but there is a sense of urgency built up in the second half by the harmonics following the arpeggios at a decreasing temporal interval, the resonance of the arpeggios being cut off because the left hand has to move in order to finger the harmonics.

39 Note that the arpeggios often include one or more harmonics, seemingly in order to have as many pitches ringing on as possible. Two of the harmonic passages also include one normal attack, the very first note of the first passage, and the open third string in the passage given in a 7:8 rhythm on the first line of page 2. However, it would be possible to play this latter note as the third partial on C_2 .

The play of resonances between the different materials in this section is noteworthy. Indeed, the blurring of the identity of the different materials is the main characteristic of the section. According to the preface, all sounds should ring for as long as possible (Barrett 1991), which results in the harmonics carrying over into the arpeggios. This is due to the fact that most of the harmonic material is performed on the bass strings, producing strong and sustained notes, whereas the arpeggios are performed mostly on the six higher strings, which have a shorter resonance. However, if a string is needed for an arpeggio, the harmonic on this string will be cut short. This form of filtering of the resonance of the harmonics is conditioned by the strict elaboration of the string patterns of the arpeggios, which will be discussed below.

Section 3 marks the introduction of pitch in the piece, and the question of pitch structure should be posed at this point. As I will show below, in the discussion of the structure of the practice, pitch choice is clearly conditioned by the practical parameters, which impose strict limitations on the domain of pitch. Nevertheless, the arpeggios do expose a certain type of regularity: gestural similarity, common pitches at fixed register and certain specific intervals present in (nearly) all the arpeggios, most notably the augmented fourth. The presence of the augmented fourth is not so surprising, of course, given that the left hand fingerings are governed by a norm the ideal shape of which actually contains two such intervals (to be elaborated below). For instance, the third and ninth arpeggios both contain three consecutive augmented fourths. In many of the arpeggios the augmented fourth is clearly exposed in the top register, and this interval in this register stands out over the denser middle register harmony. The bass note of the chords is also important in establishing continuity among the chords. For instance, the low C from section 2 is the bottom note of the first three arpeggios (see Example 3.3), pitches A and B in the middle register are common to arpeggios two, three and four, E-flat is common in two to six, arpeggios five and six are identical, and so on. In fact, even when pitches at a fixed register move up or down a semitone they establish similar relations between the arpeggios. The right hand playing position (*sul tasto*) facilitates these connections, as it forces a delicate heterogeneity to the arpeggios, in which the fretted pitches and open strings are timbrally distinguished because the strings are plucked at different positions in terms of their vibrating lengths. The heterogeneity conditioned by the relationship between right and left hand positions is a

feature that I will only note here, but it will become very important later in the piece. Again, I would like to point out a distant resemblance to certain spectral compositions like Gerard Grisey's 1978 *Partiels*, where a low note triggers an after-image of spectral harmony in the ensemble. However, in *colloid*, the spectrum is not based on overtones but on the possibilities conditioned by the norm governing the fingerings.

This is also the case with the pitches of the harmonic material. The harmonics seem to be worked out according to the possibilities given in different registers to form a layer of varying density, from low chains of whole tones to dense microtonal clusters in higher registers. There are certain common tone-relationships between the harmonics and the arpeggios that allow them to merge seamlessly.

In section 3 one can observe how pitch register expands towards the bass as the left hand moves towards the lower positions. This in fact represents one of the main structural arches of the work. Section 2 closes and section 3 opens with a (notated) C4. In section 3, this is played as a harmonic, an unusual sound in that it is not available on a normal six-string guitar. The sound of the low E is introduced softly in the end of the fourth arpeggio and repeated in the ninth arpeggio. However, B is present in arpeggios 9, 10 and 11 and carries over into the next section (see Example 3.4). The B is more prominent than the low E and the low harmonics because of its position as the first pitch of the arpeggios (like the C), and the repetition in successive arpeggios. The B thus marks the current state of the descent from the very top of the register at the beginning of section 1.

Example 3.4: *colloid*, section 3, arpeggios

Example 3.5: *colloid*, section 4

Sections 4 and 5 introduce a more active texture than section 3, and anticipate what is to come in the later sections of the work. Section 4 is a rather short and somewhat anonymous section. It is based on continuous arpeggiations of subtly changing left hand fingering patterns. In fact, the section presents parallel transformations for the right and left hands as well as in rhythm, transformations that do not align. In this section, rhythms are counted in demisemiquavers, and the irrational nesting invokes subtle shifts of perceived tempo fluctuation.

Simultaneously, certain notes are marked with a subtle accentuation (*'pochissimo in rilievo'*), which however follows no clear pattern with regards to either pitch, rhythm or right hand finger pattern. The accentuation thus serves no structural functionality, but underscores the general instability of the texture. The descent across the register continues through section 4. A low A-sharp is introduced with two beats and is very prominent in the first half of the section. Towards the end of the section, the open A-string is heard repeatedly, marking the next step of the descent.

Presented in full in Example 3.6, section 5 is typical of what I described above as a short section: It presents a single gesture and is clearly delineated in relation to the surrounding music.

Introducing a roughness that will be very important in later sections, the short section 5 marks a break with both the poetic harmonies of section 3 and the delicate rapid arpeggios of section 4. The tumultuous texture has a clear dynamic and timbral profile, the right hand moving from the sound

hole towards the bridge while performing a diminuendo from *forte* to *pianissimo*. The section mixes harmonics and ordinary notes, and as the left hand is still stuck around the middle of the fingerboard (at position XI), all harmonics are natural harmonics at the octave. This results in a very full sounding texture dominated by the whole tone steps of the lower strings. Low-range pitch register is expanded from G-sharp in section 4 down to a low F-sharp a major second above what is the lowest note of a normally tuned six-string guitar. The function of this section is parallel to section 2: it marks a clear textural break with the previous section, paving the way for the next section.

Section 6 comprises four short subsections, each based on similar figurations. The music is soft, circling around a few fixed pitches varied with rhythmic inflections and pitch bending. The lower register is expanded even further, initially down to the low E of $\textcircled{6}$, and in the second half of the section the open low C ($\textcircled{7}$) is heard for the first time. The choice of low pitches in the different figurations of the section is conditioned by the possibilities offered by a combination of practical parameters. Both hands have fixed positions for the different subsections. Excepting the two first quavers, which I see as transitory, in the first subsection of section 6 the right hand is fixed with one finger for each of strings 1–5 as in section 1, and a right hand pattern is repeated in each phrase of the subsection. The left hand continues its diagonal, 'natural' shape in position XII, but each finger covers two frets each so that the chords are varied within the phrases. Because of these strictures, the material bears a certain resemblance to section 3. However, again one finds that the pitches change while the finger/string patterns remain the same.

As the left hand descends to position XI, the second subsection transforms the right hand pattern of the last three notes of the first (last three notes of Example 3.7), transposed and rotated from *a i m* on $\textcircled{2} \textcircled{4} \textcircled{3}$ to *m e p* on $\textcircled{4} \textcircled{1} \textcircled{6}$ (see Example 3.8).

Example 3.6: *colloid*, section 5

Example 3.7: *colloid*, section 6, end of first subsection

This pattern is continued and gradually expanded with each phrase of the third subsection. Again all fingers are active, *p i m a e* being fixed on ⑦, ⑤, ④, ② and ① respectively. In this section the pitch register is expanded to include the low C of the open seventh string, which marks the overstepping of the traditional guitar range. The left hand continues its descent to X initially, and then further down to VIII for the last phrase. Thus, again the pitch

material changes, even if the fingering patterns for both hands remain the same (see example 3.9).

For the last subsection the right hand initially covers the same strings as in the

Example 3.8: *colloid*, section 6, second subsection

Example 3.9: *colloid*, section 3, third subsection

third subsection but *i* is active on ⑤ and ⑥. In the last phrase the fingers cover strings ⑥–②, *i* being active on ⑤ and ④. This is actually paralleled in the left hand where, in the same phrase, finger 1 skips from ③ to ⑥ (see example 3.10).

Throughout this section, the general register descends according to the left hand position. However, as the diagonal relation to the strings and neck is maintained, many of the intervals are maintained as well as the hand moves down the neck. Against the descending register of the fretted notes the open strings, which are heard throughout the section, provide a fixed harmonic backdrop. The bending of certain notes even highlights the relationship between open and fretted notes, as most of the bends stretch towards the sound of an open string that is heard later in the phrase (see Example 3.11).

What is interesting to note is the general interval between the open strings, and the change of position, so that in a sense there are two separate pitch levels: one that remains constant and another that is transformed. In this section the term ‘stopping the strings’ takes on a very

Example 3.10: *colloid*, section 6, last phrase

Example 3.11: *colloid*, section 6, string bends in first and fourth subsections

particular meaning, in that one clearly has a sense of the right hand working to activate the strings while the left hand provides a sort of mechanical and somewhat arbitrary partitioning of the strings at a given position – in many phrases, strings are heard both stopped and open – and that the musical aural surface is the result of the local interaction these manual processes.

In all of section 6, the player is asked to extend the reach of the fingers fully so that *e* plucks the string *molto sul ponticello* (in my reading, literally at the bridge) and the thumb plucks as *molto sul tasto* as possible, with the other fingers spread somewhere in between these two extremes (*m* comes close to a normal position). One can see this in the note heads for each note, where '>' marks the position close to the bridge and '<' means *sul tasto*. A note in the score suggests that the timbral diversity can be furthered by moving the hand in either direction according to which finger is playing (Barrett 1991).

This extended right hand position results in the individual right hand fingers having a distinct timbral association, something that clearly betrays the heterogeneity that underpins Barrett's conception of idiomatic writing. The immediate result is a timbral distinction of each finger. However, one must bear in mind that it is not only the point of attack that is important in the timbral definition of a note but the point of attack in relation to the length of the vibrating string. This means that a string plucked *sul tasto* and fretted at the octave will actually be plucked around the octave node of the sounding pitch – something that results in a very particular timbre. Also, an open string plucked at a normal *sul ponticello* position – as *a* is doing in this section – has a distinctly different timbre than the same string fretted around the middle of the string but plucked in the same position. This latter note would be closer to a normal tone than *ponticello*. Both of these are exemplified in Example 3.11.

Because the right hand extension is fixed throughout section 6, the timbral associations of each string or plucking finger changes as the left hand

descends and the relative length of the strings of the fretted notes is gradually increased. But it is not only the plucking point that is important for the sound, but also the angle and shape of the nail. The subject of fingernails is a very personal one for guitarists, as it is so closely bound up with sound quality and thus performer identity. Spreading the fingers in the manner required in this section alters the normal relationship between the finger, nail and string. This goes for all five fingers. Whether one subscribes to the angled wrist in the tradition after Tarrega or the more recent straight wrist practice of, for example, Alex Garrobé, maintaining a similar angle on the string for all fingers in this section is virtually impossible. In fact, working towards such an ideal could certainly be seen as problematized by the particular restrictions imposed on the mechanical apparatus in this section, in that the spread hand position forces the player to venture into a heterogeneous conception of timbre that is not part of the traditional instrumental practice. Because of its explicit interference with one of the primary means of performer subjectivation – instrumental sound – the spread hand position of this section should be seen as emblematic of the way the radically idiomatic instrumental practice is able to problematize and engage with the practice viewed not only as a mechanism for producing sound but as a Foucauldian apparatus.

At the end of section 6, the right hand settles upon a repeated tremolo-type pattern, which potentially provides a sense of homely relief within the seemingly random right hand patterns hitherto encountered. This pattern is maintained into section 7, although it dissolves quickly. The more traditional timbral disposition of section 7 might also suggest a temporary sense of relief for the performer. In this section a normal tone is employed throughout, even marked '*sonore possibile (!)*'. This indication of a full-sounding tone with its implication of a right hand position in complete opposition to that of the previous section, with all fingers aligned, pushing the strings against the guitar body thus explicitly highlighting the element of timbre and the function of the right hand position for the performer.

Unlike the previous sections, section 7 is divided in bars of irregular length. During the first two thirds of the section, the music develops from a relatively simple texture towards a violent and chaotic complexity. The music is notated as two-part polyphony, something that facilitates an increasingly irregular dynamic intensity (see Example 3.12).

Example 3.12: *colloid*, section 7, bars 19–22

A strange 12/8 bar breaks of the intense texture, and two unsynchronized dyads play out a fall in intensity before the activity is simply brought to a halt. Violence breaks out once more with full force before the activity again is neutralized, not as a mere stop this time but as stasis: Open low B-flat and C strings are repeated in a steady triplet rhythm marked '*lifeless*', the right hand damping the strings to produce a muffled sound as well as a timbral transition from normal to *sul tasto*, simultaneously moving towards the left hand where it will find itself in the next section. This movement along the string along with the damping facilitates the emergence of irregularly descending harmonics as the hand moves away from the bridge.

At this point, at the end of the first part of the work, it is necessary to take a step back and discuss the structuring of the practice that has been alluded to throughout this narrative. Although the different elements of the practice are difficult to separate, certain levels expose distinct patterns and will be discussed individually. This will clarify how the structured practice produce what Foucault calls rarefaction of discourse: implicit limitations affect the possible discursive relations, or, in practical terms, strictures imposed on the individual practical parameters condition the game of sound – they limit the expressive possibilities at a given instance. I will provide some examples that will clarify how the aural surface is strictly conditioned by the practice – how the individual sound should be seen as a node within the network of relations in the discursive practice.

3.3.1 Left hand positions

Since left hand positions are not explicitly notated in the score but only implied by the position of the left hand first finger, this parameter is undoubtedly somewhat obscure for the non-guitarist. Nevertheless, this element of the practice is clearly structured throughout *colloid*, and it marks a limitation of an area of the fingerboard from which pitches can be chosen. In short, the trajectory of the left hand follows a wave-like pattern that allows the left hand to venture from position XII (at the middle of the string) further and further down the neck. Initially, the left hand moves in single steps, but it soon finds itself making progressively longer jumps along the neck as the lower ends of the fingerboard come into use. This process of fragmentation reaches its peak in section 9, after which higher positions are gradually sieved out of use and the fragmentation diminishes. It is important to note that no string is fretted above fret XVI (that is, above position XIII), a kind of restriction rarely found in contemporary guitar writing, and certainly not in *Kurze Schatten II* as will be evident in Chapter 6.

In section 1 the left hand moves between a position as close to right hand as possible and position XII. Although the notation of the distances the left hand travels in this section is only relative, I suggest dividing the register of the stave into eight positions, based on the distance from the outer finger-lines to the upper or lower line of the stave. Marking the outer limits of each glissando gives the following pattern, which ends at position XII (see Figure 3.2).

Section 2 and 3 continue from position XII, the left hand moving between positions XIII and X. In section 6, position VII is introduced, and in section 7, the left hand reaches positions VI and IV. Until section 7, position XIII has always been the upper limit, but in this section position XIII is reached for the last time; the section ends at position XI where section 8 commences. Positions for sections 2–7 are given in Figure 3.3.

One can clearly observe the linear

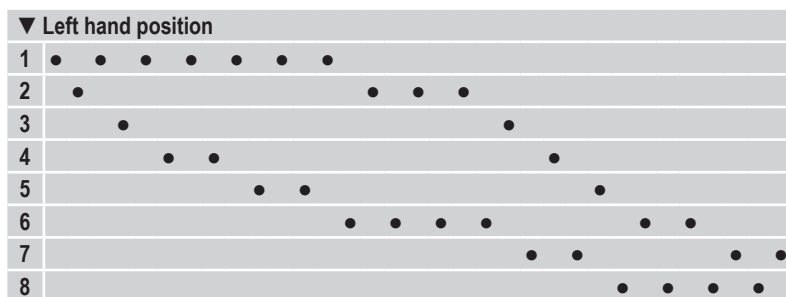


Figure 3.2: *colloid*, section 1, left hand "positions"

pattern from sections 2–6 being disrupted in sections 6 and 7. I do not know of any other work in the repertory that exposes such a clear pattern of left hand positions, and there is a striking difference between the left hand positions of *colloid* and the hectic zigzagging left hand movement found in most guitar music written after World War II. The Ferneyhough analysis in Chapter 6 will provide a good example of this, and in works like Cristobal Halffter's *Codex I* (1961), Elliott Carter's *Changes* (1981), Luciano Berio's *Sequenza XI* (1989), or the guitar works of Chris Dench, there is no tendency to form patterns of left hand positions as those observed in *colloid*. It should be noted that the duration for which each position is held varies greatly, from just a few notes within a phrase to several phrases. Also, the position changes do not align exactly with the change of texture between the sections – indeed, many of the practical parameters provide a continuity across the changes of texture.⁴⁰

3.3.2 Right hand and string patterns

In comparison to the left hand finger positions, right hand finger or string patterns are given throughout the piece with meticulous care; unusually for the guitar literature, every note of the piece is assigned to a specific

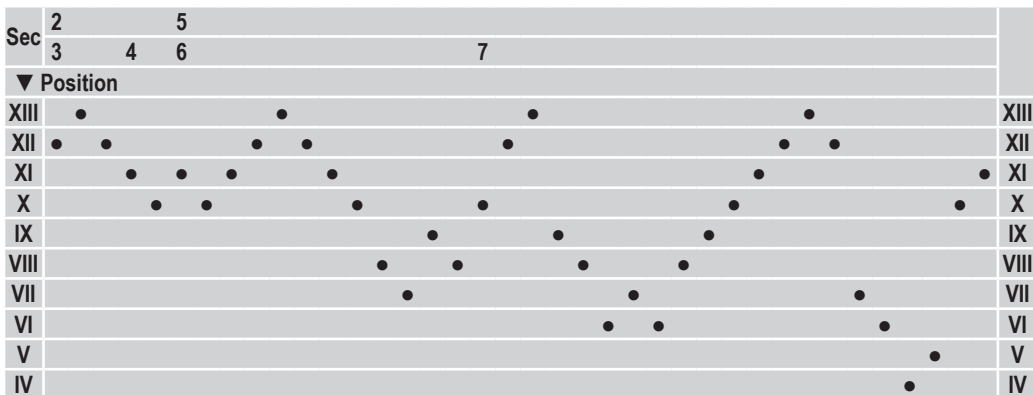


Figure 3.3: *colloid*, sections 2–7, left hand positions. Sections are numbered above the graph.

40 This pattern can explain certain unorthodox fingerings in the piece. For instance, in the shortest arpeggio phrase of section 3 only two notes are played – an open C^{\flat} and an A-flat at XIII on C^{\flat} . The A-flat is fingered with 4 which would perhaps not be the immediate choice of a performer – however, this fingering is the result of the left hand position pattern.

string with unprecedented detail. From the very first note until the end of the piece, these patterns are chained together, resembling the technique of *Fortspinnung* of the Baroque era. The principle is very simple and closely connected with the iterative development observed in *Ne songe plus à fuir*: a pattern picks up the end of the former pattern and adds more attacks to extend the pattern. In sections 1–3, the patterns are given without right hand fingerings. In section 1, each finger is assigned a specific string so that here there is an identity between string and finger patterns. This identity is displaced from section 3, where phrases often cover more than five strings. This process of bifurcation necessitates a separate discussion of what I call string configurations.

In the example from section 1 given above (see Example 3.1), one can see these patterns on the upper stave. String numbers and right hand fingers for the lines of the stave are given to the far left of every line. The full chain of patterns for section 1 is given in Figure 3.4.

I have excluded repeated patterns from the Figure and aligned the patterns so that one can see how one pattern continues from the former. Note how the number of elements in the patterns follows processes of diminution and extension. There is one ‘transposition’ in the middle of the patterns, where the pattern ①–③ is transposed to ②–④ in the next pattern. It is important

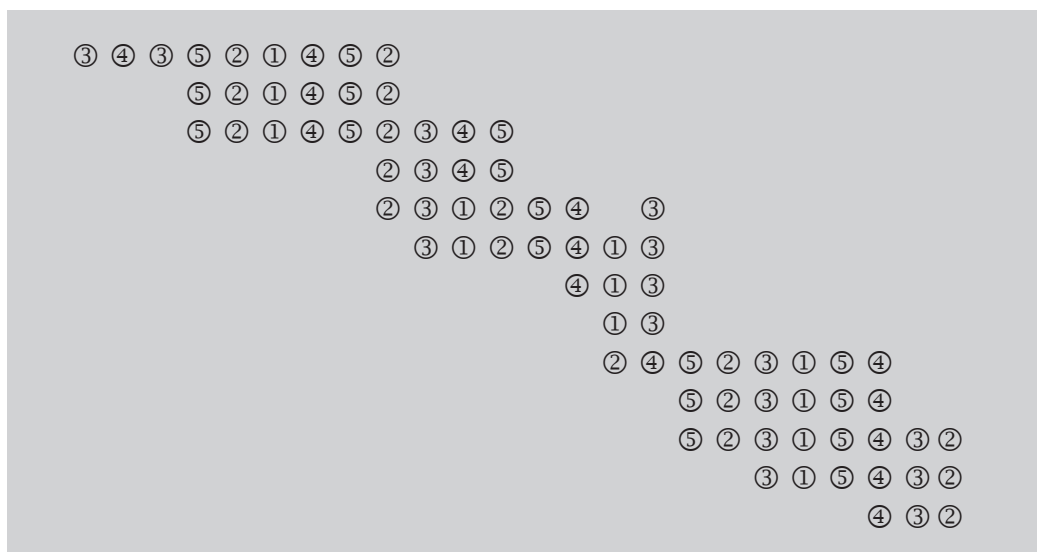


Figure 3.4: *colloid*, section 1, string patterns

to note that the patterns are not aligned neither with changes of position, rhythm density nor with the dynamic articulation.

For section 2 and 3 the string pattern ending section 1 – ⑤–③ – is transposed and augmented to ⑦–④, extending the strings used to include ⑥ and ⑦.

This marks the descending trajectory that runs through the whole work. The patterns, which are given in Example 3.13, follow the structure laid out in section 1. The patterns are summarized in Figure 3.5, which also specifies the process of extension and diminution as well as string configurations.

With section 4, right hand finger patterns are separated from the string patterns. From this section, right hand fingers are specified for every normal note in the rest of the work (and indeed for most other notes as well until section 11). The patterns from section 6, shown in Figure 3.6, align neatly with the clear phrase structure, something that will also be the case in sections 8–10.

Example 3.13: *colloid*, section 3, string patterns

Chord	String order	Process	String configuration
1	⑦ ④	expansion	④ ⑦
2	⑦ ④ ⑤ ②		② ④ ⑤ ⑦
3	⑦ ④ ⑤ ② ④ ① ② ⑤ ③	reduction	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑦
4	② ④ ① ② ⑥ ⑤		① ② ④ ⑤ ⑥
5	(⑤ ①) ② ④ ③		(①) ② ③ ④ (⑤)
6	② ④ ③		② ③ ④
7	④ ③	expansion	③ ④
8	④ ③ ⑥ ① ②		① ② ③ ④ ⑥
9	⑤ ④ ⑦ ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ③	reduction	①–⑦
10	⑦ ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ②		①–⑦
11	⑤ ⑦ ②		② ⑤ ⑦

Figure 3.5: *colloid*, section 3, string patterns. (String configurations will be discussed below.)

The structural proximity to the string patterns of sections 1 and 3 should need no comment. This kind of structure is also observable in sections 8–10, where the patterns will be increasingly interrupted by other material. Section 7 also follow the same chained structure, but the tumultuous character of this particular section affects the right hand patterns resulting in slight distortions, the disentanglement of which is beyond the scope of this analysis. Section 7 is also much longer than section 6, which was chosen as an example because of its didactic clarity. Again, the novelty of the procedure should be noted. I do not know any other work that shows a similar structuring of right hand finger or string patterns.

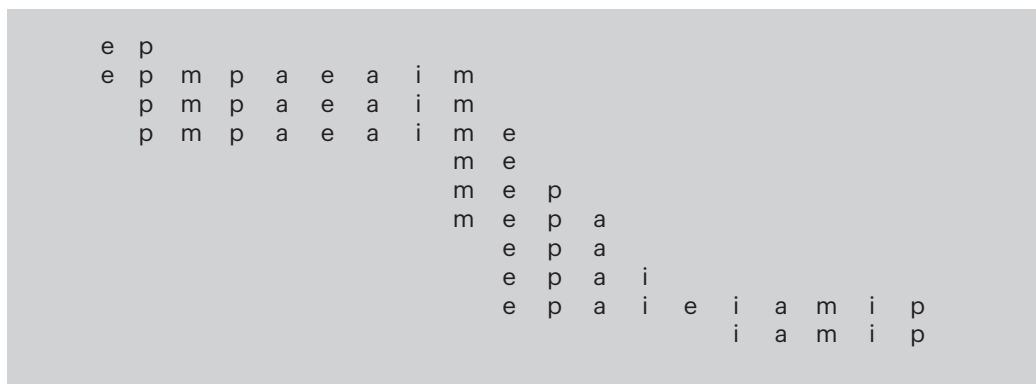


Figure 3.6: *colloid*, section 6, right hand patterns (repeats omitted)

3.3.3 String configurations

By the term string configuration, I mean the strings actively in use in a specific passage. In a sense, string configurations form the connection between the right and left hands – the fingers of both hands are brought together in their relation to the strings. String configurations vary from one right hand pattern to the next. It seems that the outer strings available for a given section are strictly demarcated, and within these limits the concrete configurations are worked out in a manner not unrelated to the left hand positions: following the outlines of the discrete configurations whose outer limits also create wave-like patterns. Interestingly, these waves are not always synchronized. String configurations can include more than five strings, so that, in certain passages or phrases, certain right hand fingers are active on more than one string. I will therefore discuss this level in more detail with the later sections, in which the practical parameters are aligned by the phrase structure. For now, it suffices to discuss briefly two of the examples of string patterns already given above.

In section 1, the general configuration would be what could be called a closed configuration because it includes all strings between ① and ⑤. Closed configurations are given in this manner in the text: ①–⑤. Figure 3.5 shows how the configurations vary from pattern to pattern. The first pattern has configuration ①–⑤, the second has configuration ① ② ④ ⑤, the third pattern is again the full closed configuration, the fourth has the closed configuration ②–⑤ and so on. The string configurations of section 3 are given in Figure 3.6, which also specifies the process undergone by the configuration/phrase length.

With no sketches available for the analysis and with the methodological restriction of not using the composer as an informant, I can only speculate on the order with which the parameters were worked out. However, certain elements of the practice need to be in place before others, and this provides a hint at the order in which the parameters were grafted onto each other. My suggestion is that string configurations were worked out before right hand/string patterns. I base this conjecture on the fact that many of the configurations include more strings than available fingers, and often strings are repeated within a pattern. The right hand/string patterns seem to have the function of a sieve through which the string configurations must pass. With

the examples given from later sections below, the relationship between right hand finger patterns and string configurations will become more clear.

3.3.4 Left hand handgrips

A fourth element, which has a decisively delimiting effect on pitch choice, is the rather strict application of certain norms regarding the anatomy of the hand and the physical relationship to the instrument. In the introduction to the score, it is mentioned that 'phrase marks delineate periods within which each sound should be held for as long as possible' (Barrett 1991: 1). This suggests that the arpeggios are based on chord shapes. But there is no clear pitch material in *colloid*, neither have I found any evidence that left hand fingerings are structured in analogous fashion to either left hand positions or right hand/string patterns. Thus I hesitate to call the left hand fingerings 'chords' (even if they are to be held for as long as possible within a phrase) as this term implies, if not a clearly perceivable function then at least some sort of structurality. I rather opt for the term *handgrip*, with which I want to highlight the corporeal activity of gripping the strings and fingerboard. This term was used by David Boyden in his history of violin playing, when discussing the notation of violin music pieces from the seventeenth century that employ scordatura, in particular that of Heinrich Ignaz Franz von Biber (Boyden 1990: 250). Although fingerings are not given in these scores, the pitch notation addresses the performer as if the instrument were tuned normally. This produces a discrepancy between notated and resulting pitch where the notation is bereft of its function as representation of the music to be heard. The term handgrip marks this practical and tonally speaking non-functional focus, and thus seems apt to describe the use of the left hand in *colloid*. The term is also appropriate for the discussion of *Kurze Schatten II*, where the use of scordatura highlights the tension between the purely musical and the practical.

Initially, the handgrips of the first part of *colloid* are related to an ideal handgrip given in Figure 3.7: a linear handgrip with each finger in separate frets on different strings.⁴¹ This fingering shape is very familiar for guitarists from

41 Abel Carlevaro calls this a 'mixed presentation' of the left hand on the fingerboard, between a transversal and longitudinal hand/fingerboard position (Carlevaro 1984: 65-7).



Figure 3.7: Ideal handgrip (six strings only)

the didactic literature where they are widely used for chromatically transposable exercises. I will present the handgrips in the standard notation of chord shapes: Vertical lines represent frets, and horizontal lines represent strings; fingerboard positions are given above in roman numerals. Open strings are given with 'o'. The ideal handgrip fits very well with the instrument in this position: In fact, this handgrip is the shape that will come by itself if one lifts the hand to the instrument in this position (see photo in Figure 3.7). In *colloid*, this handgrip itself is not applied strictly, but modified according to the string patterns – as well as to pitch choice. There is nevertheless a clear resemblance between the various left hand fingering patterns employed and the ideal type. Examples of handgrips from section 3 are shown in Figure 3.8.

Handgrip 3 and 9 are compound handgrips where one handgrip succeeds another in the course of the arpeggio. The second of the two is given in red. Handgrips 1, 4 and 11 are the two that most closely resemble the ideal type. Handgrip 2 shows a contracted handgrip, with fingers 1 and 2 in the same fret. This is also the case with the red fingerings of handgrip 3, where fingers 2 and 3 are positioned in the same fret, as well as with the black fingerings of handgrip 9. One should note that the handgrips are never such as will be seen in the music of Ferneyhough in Chapter 6 – indeed, they are never 'uncomfortable' but lie well under the fingers. This is a subjective observation, of course, but one can at least observe one norm regarding the handgrips, which is derogated only three times in the work in very particular situations: Finger 3 never crosses to a higher string than finger 4. In the handgrips, finger 1 is the most versatile, whereas finger 4 is always on the highest string. This norm is completely in line with the tradition and the idiomatic ideals of guitar composers from Fernando Sor to Francisco Tarrega.

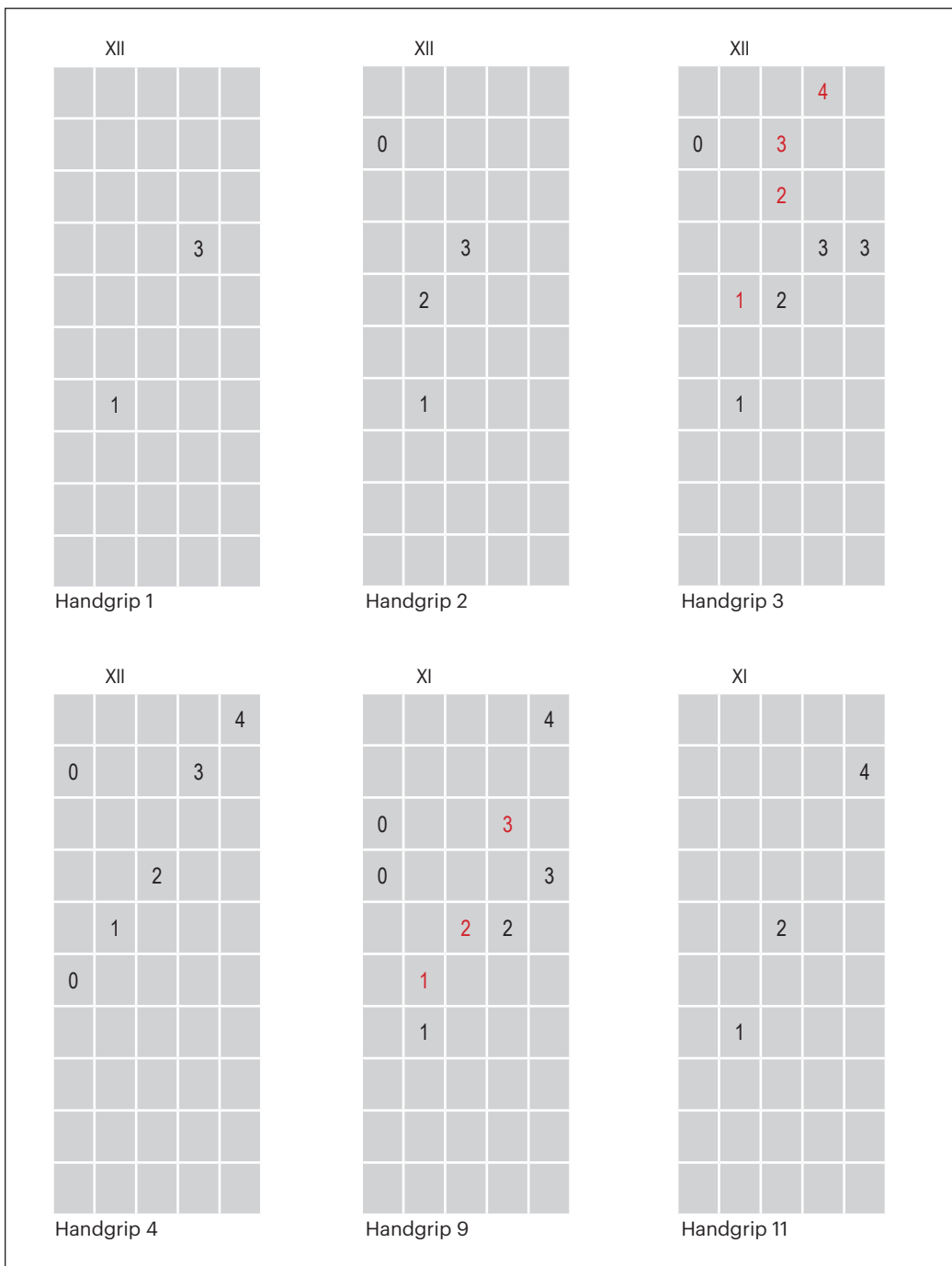


Figure 3.8: *colloid*, section 3, handgrips arpeggios 1, 2, 3, 4, 9, 11

In later sections, when the left hand ventures further down the neck, the handgrips are not so closely connected to the ideal type given in Figure 3.7, whose diagonal shape is not so relevant in lower positions where the hand does not have to reach above the body of the instrument. Actually, for the lowest positions an opposite diagonal is much more comfortable. Nevertheless, the norm of the little finger is strictly applied.

3.3.5 The discursive practice

The above discussion of the practical parameters and their limitation or rarefaction of the musical surface shows the efficacy of the archaeological analysis and the notion of instrumental practice as a discursive practice. Through the archaeology of the practice, the articulatory relation of the elements of the practice is illuminated and the contingency of practice and musical surface is explored. This relationship would not be exposed through a traditional analysis of form and texture and certainly not through auditive analysis. A simple description of performativity would also miss the crucial question of the enunciative function of the practice as the site of the articulation of the work.

3.4 Part two: general description

The overall trajectory of the second part of the work is more linear than that of part I: The general process in part II is one of interruptions and gradual disintegration. The four sections that make up part II grow progressively longer, with durations of 99, 125, 149, and 176 quavers respectively. One should note that in distinction to the first part of the work, in sections 8–10 all practical parameters are aligned with the irregular phrase lengths. The phrases thus take on a structural weight they did not carry in the first part of the work. Coming back to the description of a chemical colloid above, one could very well say that in this part the solution of sound and practice of the music is subject to various forms of internal pressure, which causes the practice to sediment and eventually dominate the musical expression. These pressures are however internal to the practice: scratching nails on low strings, a varied left hand pressure resulting in percussive, normal or harmonic sounds, note repetitions and so on.

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Example 3.14: *colloid*, section 8, bar 41

Although continuing the arpeggiated texture of former sections, the uniformity of section 8 marks a clear break with the dynamism of section 7 (see Example 3.14).

The basic texture of section 8 is characterized by very soft (*ppp*) murmuring arpeggios in a steady demisemiquaver rhythm. This section is also marked by a special timbre achieved by plucking the strings as close to the left hand as possible, resulting in a thin, somewhat nasal sound quality. These characteristics remain unchanged throughout the section. One can note that throughout the section the lower strings and register become increasingly prominent, a tendency continued in the next sections. The irregular duration of the phrases and the continuous change of left hand positions and string configuration produce a subtle discontinuity in the practice. The pitch content varies from phrase to phrase and, as in the previous section, it seems that the ideal is the highest possible chromatic differentiation in a given situation. Often, the pitch content consists of a chromatic fragment plus an interval, or it may consist of two smaller chromatic fragments. A frail continuity between the phrases, despite the relative anonymity of the pitch material, is nevertheless achieved by common pitches (often open strings) or by approximate pitches that can form small motives that stand out because of a common register or timbre (i.e. they are plucked by the same finger). This texture is interrupted four times, at irregular intervals, by typical short bars of very different character and varying duration. The interruptions are based on repeated octaves, harmonics, glissandi and left hand attacks respectively. These interruptions divide the basic arpeggio texture into five subsections of varying duration – 25, 18, 19, 55 and 15 semiquavers respectively. The interruptions are also of irregular duration between four and 19 semiquavers. The interruptions hark back to the short bars of the former section, but here they have a strikingly disconnected relationship with the surrounding texture, which is left completely unaffected by the disruptions. In Example 3.15 one can see how the interruptions are simply chiselled in to a phrase that continues after the inserted material. In the second and fourth interruptions, the phrase marks are even retained through the disruption.

Nevertheless, there is always a connection between the interruption and the surrounding material on the level of practice. With the first interruption, the interruption extends from the F-sharp immediately preceding, and in

Handwritten musical score for Richard Barrett's *colloid*, section 8, featuring disruptive bars. The score is divided into four systems:

- System 1 (Measures 17-18):** Includes markings such as *hallucinatory*, *p*, *a*, *m*, *i*, *etc.*, *f*, *natur.*, *p*, *ppp*, and *sul tasto normale*. Time signatures $4:10F$ and $9:7F$ are indicated.
- System 2 (Measures 4-8):** Labeled *enigmatic*. Includes markings like *sul tasto*, *natur.*, *sul tasto*, *ff*, *RH*, and *LH*. Notes are marked with *(no pause)*.
- System 3 (Measures 19-55):** Includes markings like *sul tasto*, *frantic*, *sul pancia*, and *sul tasto*. Time signatures $11:9F$ and $9:10F$ are indicated.
- System 4 (Measures 2-15):** Labeled *disorientated*. Includes markings like *bimmi*, *ppp*, *mp*, and *p*.

Example 3.15: *colloid*, section 8, disruptive bars

125
8

*dense, turbulent, precipitous
sul tasto normale*

Example 3.16: *colloid*, section 9, first subsection

the third interruption connects with its surroundings in terms of left hand positions.

By contrast, in section 9 interruptive material takes on a structural function, as the introduction of a new sound type marks the transition from one subsection to the next. Section 9 is based on the same arpeggio texture as section 8, but in section 9 timbre is used as a formal determinant. This section is composed of six subsections, and every other subsection is plucked either in the normal position (*sul tasto normale*) or towards the bridge. The transitions are signalled by right hand percussion on the fingerboard, left hand percussion, glissandi/string bends, harmonics, chords, and repeated notes respectively. With the exception of the harmonic that marks the fourth subsection, these new sounds are also spread throughout their respective subsections. This causes a subtle disruption of the arpeggio texture.

In marked contrast to section 8, section 9 introduces dynamic variation in the arpeggios, which lend the music a forward drive (the first subsection is given in Example 3.16).

The dynamics urge the music on and gradually increase the expressive tension. But even if the dynamics are aligned with phrases, they can hardly be said to support the phrase structure. The dynamics are always in transition, and high and low extremes can be found at any one end of a phrase. This is observable in Example 3.16. The dynamics thus add a level of articulation that is at odds with the subtle stress of the phrases, and they actually

Handwritten annotations for Example 3.17:

- * do not accentuate peak dynamics — Crescendi & diminuendi should be "wave-like."
- ** sustain as many notes as possible to the end of each marked phrase, also retaining LH fingering during RH finger-percussion.

de-structure the structurality of the phrases found in section 8. This is particularly striking when phrases are repeated with markedly different dynamics, as in the repeated phrases shown in Example 3.17.

From the second subsection, the rhythmic flow is disrupted through the introduction of irrational rhythmic deviations of the basic tempo. The irrational rhythms are not aligned with the phrases, and they work to increase the disruptive effect of the interruptive sounds and dynamics (see Example 3.18).

The fluctuations in tempo result in a fragmented wave-like pattern analogous to that of the dynamics and, as I will show below, to the increasingly fragmented wave-patterns of the left hand positions as well.

Time signatures indicated in Example 3.17:

- 9:10 F
- 4:6 F
- 18:16 F

Example 3.17: *colloid*, section 9, subsection 4, repeated phrases with different dynamics

Example 3.18: *colloid*, section 9, transition to fourth subsection

This section sees a continuation of the registral descent on the practical levels outlined above. The left hand ventures all the way down to position I, and the use of higher positions is gradually discontinued. Simultaneously, the use of ① as well as ② are gradually filtered out, and the high register that was so prominent in the first part is heard for the last time in the very first phrases of the section. String ⑩ is used for the first time but only once in subsection 3. It appears again once in subsection 4 and more frequently from subsection 5.

The last subsection of section 9 is marked by repeated notes. These effect a striking suspension of the forward motion of the texture, otherwise characteristic of section 9, opening up gaps in the textural flow from which the corporeal materiality of the practice will gradually emerge in section 10 and sediment in section 11. At this point the colloidal practice is starting to sediment, allowing sounds that are marginalized in the traditional practice to become increasingly prominent. Other and more obscure tendencies also work towards the same effect. The introduction of dynamic contrast has already been described above. However, I have not touched upon one side effect of the descending string configurations. As more activity is relegated to the lower strings after section 8, the noisy attack of these strings will inevitably become increasingly prominent, because of the nails scratching the lower and grainy wounded strings when plucking. The higher dynamic level of section 9 enhances this initially marginalized sound, and the scratching emerges fully exposed in section 10 as a material in its own right.⁴²

⁴² A similar process can be observed in Helmut Lachenmann's *Salut für Caudwell* (1977) which will be discussed in Chapter 5.

Another obscurely marginal but inevitable effect of the idiomatic writing is the irregular duration of the notes within a given phrase. I have already drawn attention to the comment in the preface that all notes in a phrase should be held for as long as possible. The comment comes with a qualification: 'Phrase marks delineate periods within which each sound should be held for as long as possible (i.e. until the finger and/or string in question might be required for a new sound)'. (Barrett 1991: 1) A comment at the head of section 9 reminds the reader/performer of the importance of this: 'sustain as many notes as possible to the end of each marked phrase, also retaining LH fingering during RH fingerpercussion [sic.]'. (Barrett 1991: 5) Why this repetition of such a seemingly trivial piece of information? Within a phrase, left hand fingers and/or strings are often required for more than one pitch, something that disrupts the unity of the phrase as well as the general flow of the music. This effect becomes prominent in section 9 because of the constantly changing dynamics, and causes an imbalance in what – if one only *reads* the score – might very well look like relatively even arpeggios.

Take a phrase like the one given in Example 3.19 from subsection 2. The left hand is in position X, and the string configuration is ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧. The first note, a low open ⑧ has a slow decay and a full sound; it could act as a sort of organ point for the phrase. This note can only ring on to the F-sharp however, which is on the same string. After the F-sharp, the E of the open ⑥ that immediately follows will be the lowest note of the rest of the phrase even if this is not on the lowest string. This results in a timbral imbalance:

On most instruments, the lower string will have a darker timbre than the open ⑥, a timbral difference enhanced by the left hand fingering in a very high position. The F-sharp is fingered by 1 and therefore cut short before the G on the ⑤, which also has to be fingered by 1. On ④, one finds three different notes in this phrase – D, E-flat and C-sharp – which stand out to form a little melodic figure as the highest notes of the phrase. Also, one find two notes on ⑤ – G and A – which, because the attack of the A by necessity will stop the sound of the G, form a pattern that tends towards the melodic rather than the harmonic. Thus one finds three vaguely defined melodic strands

Example 3.19: *colloid*, section 9, second subsection (page 5, middle of line 2)

within the arpeggio texture, and these kinds of microscopic figures disrupt the arpeggio texture continuously, creating a halting and irregular flow – some notes are short while others are sustained, some are soft, loud, hard, supple, with no regular pattern being established except on a very general level of heterogeneity. The figures do not form larger linear/melodic units across the boundaries of the phrase however, and therefore seem somewhat arbitrary and highly dependent on the local and centrifugal interplay of practical elements.

These effects are conditioned by the interplay of relations among the elements of the practice, and they highlight the importance of the practice as a condition of the sound of the music. This is what I mean by the sedimentation of the practice: The practice produces effects that draw attention to their own function as conditions of the music as sound. Thus instrumental practice is a discursive practice; it produces musical sound, form and content. The conditions of the discursive relations are emphasized by the archaeological analysis directed towards what made the aural surface of sound and form possible. With the archaeological description of the practice, the practice increasingly tends towards a specific, structurally delimited and rarefied form of behaviour and sheds any form of naturalness. As the practice sediments towards the end of the work, it becomes increasingly difficult

The image displays three musical excerpts, labeled a, b, and c, from a score for 'colloid, section 10'.
 Excerpt a) is titled 'half harmonic' and features a complex texture with multiple staves. The right hand (RH) has two staves, and the left hand (LH) has two staves. The music consists of arpeggiated figures with various dynamic markings (ppp, mf, p) and performance instructions like 'pont', 'nat', and '5:6 F'.
 Excerpt b) is titled 'interrupted phrases' and shows a more fragmented texture with dynamic markings like ppp, p, mf, and mp. It includes performance instructions like 'nat', 'pont', and '5:6 F'.
 Excerpt c) is titled 'scraping' and shows a texture with dynamic markings like mf, p, ppp, and mp. It includes performance instructions like 'nat', '5:6 F', and 'pont'.

Example 3.20: *colloid*, section 10. a) half harmonic, b) interrupted phrases, c) scraping

if not impossible to separate the 'music' from the practice as objects of analysis; they are exposed as neither absolutely separate nor simply separable.

In section 10, the phrase structure based on arpeggios is still maintained, but is continuously permeated by other material, which – so to say – emerges from the gaps of the practice itself in what I called a process of sedimentation. The repeated notes of the last subsection of section 9, as well as the occasional suspended rhythm, transitional sounds and other disruptive tendencies, all seem to open up cracks in the texture from which other materials can emerge. Example 3.20 gives three examples of how this works.

In Example 3.20a, an initial continuous phrase is disrupted by half harmonics, notated as half-filled diamond note-heads. One can see that the pitch structure (i.e. the compound of left hand positions, right hand pattern, string configuration) of the first phrase is maintained in the successive phrases, but that the half harmonics are chiselled into the texture with smaller rhythmic values at different moments in the three phrases. In the second phrase, one should note the zigzag-sign on the \textcircled{Z} of the right hand stave that indicates a scraped attack. In the last phrase of Example 3.20a the scraping appears as a sound on its own on \textcircled{A} . For these three phrases, the left hand is in position IV. In Example 3.20b, the right hand pattern continues and is extended, while the left hand moves to position VIII. This phrase has two instances of string scraping and two half harmonics. In the phrases in Example 3.20c, the left hand moves to position VI as the right hand pattern is transposed to a different string configuration. These phrases again include half harmonics, and in the last of the phrases another disruption is (re-)introduced: the repeated notes from the last subsection of section 9. This pattern of interruption is maintained throughout the section, and it gradually erodes any possibility of perceived phrase-structure.

The right hand patterns align according to the pattern shown for previous sections (see Figure 3.9).

Also, the string configuration found for the last six notes of Example 3.20b is transposed for the phrases in Example 3.20c. Interestingly, no pitches are shared in the same register between the phrases in Example 3.20a and b, although they share the same string configuration. However, the low A-flat and D of Example 3.20b are also found in the phrases of Example 3.20c creating a local, frail, sense of continuity between the phrases. Again there is no

3.20a	e a	i m	e	a			
	e a (p i)	i m	e	a			
	e a	i m	e (i a m i p)	a			
	e a	i m (p)	e	a			
3.20b	e a (p)	i m	e	a p (i)	m p (e)	m (a)	
3.20c			e (p)	a p	i p	m (a)	
			e	a (e)	p i p	m a (m i)	
					p i p	m	

Figure 3.9: Right hand finger patterns for Example 20a–c (fingerings for interruptive sounds shown in parentheses.)

stable pitch relationship between the phrases while the practical level nevertheless exposes a clear sense of continuity.

The differentiated dynamics also work to highlight the different materials, as is exemplified in Examples 3.20a–c. Initially, the basic arpeggio material is relatively louder than the interruptive material, but as massive chords come to dominate the texture in the latter half of the section, these usually have a very loud first attack with a diminuendo as the chord is repeated (repeated chords are shown in Example 3.22). This is the general tendency, and often the wave-like dynamics of the previous section effect a mediation between two dynamic levels. As one can see in Example 3.20a the result is a blurring of the boundary between two phrases. Between the first and second phrases, as well as between the second and third, one finds a diminuendo towards the half harmonics, creating a separate level of local articulation that does not align with the slight stress of the first note of each phrase proper. In this way, the dynamics further work to subvert the remnants of the phrase structure of previous sections and support the general heterogeneity of the section.

In comparison to the stable right hand positions found previously in the piece, in this section the right hand is always moving along the strings supporting the general heterogeneity of the texture. The position on the strings is given above the rhythmic values, and in Example 3.20a–c one can see the right hand moving rapidly between the normal position (*nat.*) and the bridge. The normal notes are plucked at the normal position (which, as I showed above, does not necessarily imply a stable timbre), while the interruptive material is plucked at the bridge. Later in the section, the right hand

field of activity is extended towards the fingerboard, thus expanding the timbral diversity even further. This position is also used for the interruptive material. However, the right hand position is occasionally accommodated to the interruptive material, as seen in Example 3.21.

In Example 3.21 the first ordinary note of a phrase is immediately followed by a long scraping of the bass string with all the right hand fingers. This is the last instance of scraping proper in this section, and the last instances of the different interruptive materials are always of a fairly extended duration. This particular scrape thus needs quite a bit of string length to be effective.⁴³

Therefore, the right hand has to start its movement at the fingerboard, and the initial note of the phrase is therefore marked *tasto*. The right hand moves towards the bridge and then back with the thumb scraping ⑩, before the hand rapidly returns to the normal position with *e* scraping string ④.

The other kinds of interruptive material are harmonics, grace notes, string bends, right hand activity on the fingerboard (including a glissando), left hand percussive attacks, as well as the chords that increasingly come to dominate the texture. With all these different kinds of instrumental behaviour, it is important to note that, in terms of pitch choice, they all accommodate to the left hand position assigned for the phrase in which they occur. This becomes particularly clear when analyzing the chords that extend from the pitches already heard in a given phrase by adding open strings to create dissonances.

In the first phrase of Example 3.22, from the middle of the second stave of page 7, the left hand performs a figure on its own after the initial open A string. Then before the chord, E-flat, C and D are fingered on ④, ⑤ and ⑦ respectively with fingers 1, 3 and 2. The hand is in position I. The following

Example 3.21: *colloid*, section 10, long nail scrape

⁴³ If not, the scraping will be very slow and rough, which seems not to be the sound quality aimed for in this piece.

Example 3.22: *colloid*, section 10, phrases with repeated chords

chord is composed of these pitches as well as the open strings ⑥ and ⑧, that is, the surrounding open strings are simply added to the already fingered pitches. The second phrase is found slightly later, at the change between the second and third staves of the same page. I discuss only the part of the phrase after the stave change. Disregarding the harmonics, one finds an F, D, C-sharp and E on strings ⑦, ⑧, ⑤ and ⑥ respectively. The left hand is in position IV. The following chord is composed of the pitches mentioned as well as open strings ④, ⑨ and ⑩, again by adding open strings to an existing handgrip. For the next chord, finger 2 releases ⑦ and finger 4 frets a G-sharp on ④. As before, the handgrips conform to a natural position of the hand, which, with the exception of the shorter fourth finger, in this area (low position and low strings) is the opposite of the position found around position XII earlier. What is important to note, is that it would be perfectly possible to find more dissonant chords than those chosen (for instance by substituting one of the D's in the first chord), but not without compromising the practical parameters. The harmonics at the beginning of the Example deserve special attention. One can see that the harmonic chord extends from ⑩ to ⑤, but that the already sounding arpeggio-tones should not be included. How is it possible to finger all these strings when two fingers are already used for the F and D? The harmonics are all fretted with a barré by the little finger at fret VII (as mentioned, the hand is in position IV, and the little finger is in VII as it should be in this position), but because they are fretted strings ⑦ and ⑨ are so close to the fingerboard that they are not affected by the little finger

as it lays the harmonic barré across the strings. This example suggests the involvement with the practice in the working out of even the smallest details of the work.

As the phrases of Example 3.22 show, at this point the arpeggio patterns that were still quite clear in the phrases shown in Example 3.20 are barely recognizable – the former content of the phrases has been atomized and other materials have taken over almost completely, relativizing the hierarchical status of the ‘normal’ notes to just one among many possible sounds. This is the end of a long textural transformation that has been under way since the transitions between the different subsections of section 9, with different techniques that were already suggested by the interruptions of section 8. It is as if the practice itself could no longer be contained within the disciplined strictness of the arpeggios of section 8; the performing body gradually throws off the fetters of traditional practice, abjuring the efficacy of this tradition in favour of a practice that exposes itself as a form of corporeal behaviour.

In the last section of the piece, the arpeggios of the previous sections are not to be found at all. The sound of the music seems to be a result of different kinds of bodily behaviour directed towards the instrument rather than towards a specific sound ideal. The practice revolves around the types of behaviour that emerged in the previous sections – glissandi, percussive bi-tone effects with both hands, string scraping, string bending and brutal chords, as well as rough Bartók pizzicati and violent striking on the strings and instrument body – resulting in a music unlike anything else. In general, the behaviours have an ambiguous character, and the sounds are generally distorted in some way or other. Most of the activity of the section is in the lower end of the register. The left hand does not venture above position IV, and normal notes are rarely found. Interestingly, the wave-like pattern of position changes is found again in this section (see Figure 3.10).

The formal process of the section is still rather strict. Section 11 is composed of eight subsections, each of 22 quavers. With the exception of the first subsection, which fills a full 22/8 bar with activity, all subsections have a one bar pause at the beginning to separate it from the former subsection. The duration of the pause gradually increases



Figure 3.10: *colloid*, section 11, left hand positions.

from one to 11 semiquavers, and the duration of bars with performative activity decrease accordingly. The last bar of the piece is thus half the duration of the initial 22/8 bar. It should be noted that the 1/16 bar at the head of the second subsection is actually the first pause of the piece – until this bar, places with no activity have always been filled by resonance, but at this point the performer is instructed to mute all strings for the duration of the pause. Every subsection harks back to the former active bar in some way, reiterating the former material but taking it in another direction. This is not unlike the developmental process discussed in Chapter 2, in relation to *Ne songe plus*, and which finds its analogue in the right hand fingering patterns of *colloid*. However, the actual materials of the subsections seem to explore the possibilities that occur in a specific local context within the frames of a generalized behaviour. I will give some examples. The rest of the section could be described in similar terms, but I chose these particular examples because of their relative simplicity.

The third subsection, the 41/16 bar on page 8 of the score, has three phrases, the first of which is given in Example 3.23.

The phrase opens with sustained notes, distantly reminiscent of the earlier arpeggios. Of the first notes, only the G on ⑥ and the C-sharp on ④ are allowed to ring on to the end of the chord, the low B on ③ as well as the open F-sharp being terminated as finger 1 moves from ③ to ⑥ for the low G in the last dyad. Before the right hand comes in (marked with x on the upper staff) the following notes are ringing (low to high): G, D, G, C-sharp. Note that the handgrip conforms to the ideal handgrip given in Figure 1, with one

Example 3.23: *colloid*, section 11, first phrase of third subsection

finger in each fret. The right hand performs a percussive crescendo towards a tamboura chord (the strings are hit with an open right hand), the right hand finger percussion being mirrored by strokes on the instrument body (notated on the single line in the middle of the system). Then open string ⑨ is struck, and finger 4 slides on this string up to the tenth fret (i.e. position VII). The third finger hammers ⑧, and ⑧ and ⑨ are plucked to the left of the fretting fingers. Fingers 2 and 1 hammer strings ⑦ and ⑥ respectively after which all strings are plucked the left of the fretting fingers. Note that the handgrip here is the opposite of that at the beginning of the phrase, a very rare occurrence of finger 4 crossing over finger 3. Interestingly, the notes that ring between the fretting fingers and the nut comprise a B-flat minor chord. The left hand slides one fret towards the nut, where the resulting interval relationships of the handgrip have no clear harmonic reference.⁴⁴ With the slide, the part of the string between the fingers and the bridge is also activated, the full result being a complex ghostly chord which seems to come from nowhere – and all strings are immediately released for the end of the phrase by simply lifting the finger, the sound of the open strings being the sound of a moment of passivity of the left hand rather than any intentional articulation. The instrumental behaviour, although sharply outlined in the notation, produces sounds and gestures that do not provide substance to fill any function of concatenation. The following phrases are also based on sustained notes, glissando gestures or rapid striking on the body, which sounds more as a feeble attempt at reproducing the material from Example 3.23 than a development. Of course, this can also be seen as a kind of development, but the succession of phrases does not comment or expand the

Example 3.24: *colloid*, section 11, seventh subsection

44 The notes B, D-sharp, G and C are all subject to microtonal inflection

Example 3.25: *colloid*, section 11, last bar (end)

Example 3.25: *colloid*, section 11, last bar (end)

material of the first phrase. Obviously, it is difficult to navigate between the figures of either Hegel and Beckett in this description; what happens in the last section of *colloid* is a gradual reduction of intensity and the music seems to have lost its sense of direction, clear pitch and even resonance increasingly being displaced at the expense of more dirty sounds.

The opening of the penultimate full bar (given in Example 3.24) harks back to the material at the beginning of the previous example,⁴⁵ but now the clear sustained notes have turned into a soft murmur.

The bar is composed of low notes and scraping sounds, all of which are performed at very soft dynamics. I will only point out the relationship between the scraping and the timbre: The right hand performs the scraping as a transition from one plucking area to the next. This relation becomes even more prominent in the last bar of the work (Example 3.25)

On the bottom right hand staff, pitches indicate where the scraping of the string occurs. The first scraping starts at B and E on strings ⑩ and ⑦, that is at frets III and IV respectively. The next scraping is on ⑩, the pitch F indicating fret XI, which will be the end point of the previous scrape. For the second scrape, the right hand moves back to the initial position as the third scrape commences at III as indicated by the A and G on ⑩ and ⑥ respectively. The point of attack for the normal A will be around XII – the scrape on ⑩ just

⁴⁵ A very similar three-note turn is heard in the previous bar.

before the A ends in this area, and the short scrape on C that follows begins at XII (as indicated by the A on the bottom right hand stave). The erect rectangle on the bottom stave indicates that the left hand should mute the strings. The next two scraped sounds, on ⑦ and ⑧, are performed over the sound-hole, and the following notes are played with a normal timbre. For the last actions, the right hand moves towards the bridge, before the last note of the work, the open lowest string is plucked at the nut. This bar clearly exemplifies what I mean by instrumental behaviour. The right hand pattern is choreographed as a back-and-forth movement along the strings, brought to a halt to pluck a normal note or two in the area where the hand finds itself at a given moment.

3.4.1 Left hand positions

The left hand positions in the second half of the work continues the wave-like pattern of the first part. The fragmentation of the wave-pattern discussed above reaches a peak with section 8 and 9, after which it becomes gradually more stable in section 11. This is connected, of course, to the higher positions gradually fading out of use as mentioned above. As Figure 3.11 shows, in section 10 the left hand moves between positions I and VIII, but in section 11 it does not venture above position IV.

The pattern is a clear continuation of the pattern for the first half, shown above, and testifies to the importance of this practical parameter. It should be noted that, with very few exceptions, position changes are always facilitated by the use of an open string that enables a smooth position change. Such a gentle consideration of performative challenges points towards a form of critique of the practice beyond a simple negation of tradition, as suggested in Chapter 2.

3.4.2 Right hand patterns

Right hand patterns in the second part of *colloid* conform to the chained patterns described for the first part. It is interesting to note that as other sounds or materials interrupt the arpeggios, the right hand patterns nevertheless continue undisturbed. Occasionally, when the other material makes special demands on the right hand, a pattern can substitute one finger for

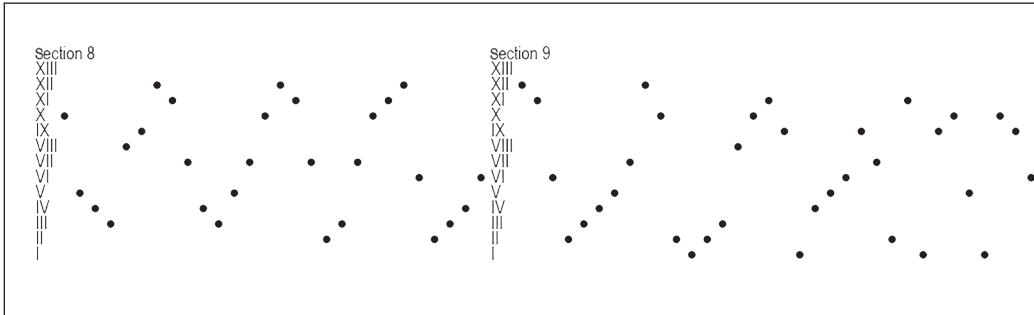


Figure 3.11: *colloid*, sections 8–11, left hand positions

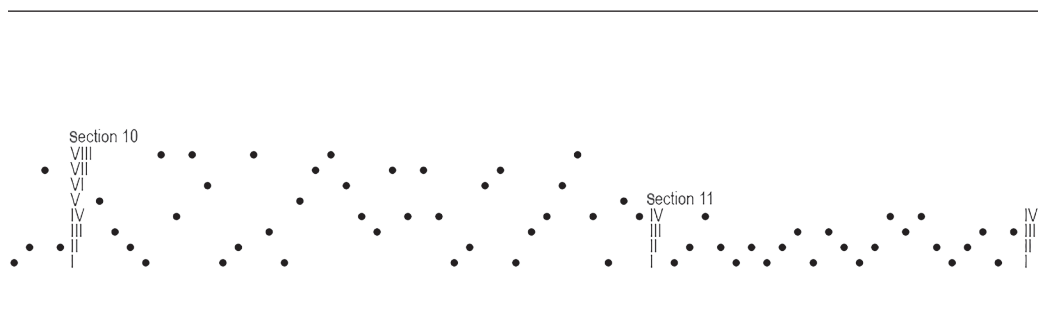
another, but mostly the new material is adapted to the strictures imposed by the patterns. In the last section of the work, right hand fingerings have vanished almost completely and seem not to be structured according to the previous model. There are indications that strings are patterned along the principles described for section 3, but the material is so diverse and multifarious that it is difficult to track any clear patterns.

3.4.3 String configurations

The string configurations retain their importance until section 11. As mentioned, the string configurations play a vital role in the long descent that runs through the whole piece, and I have already mentioned the most important points regarding this topic when they occur (first instances of lower strings and configurations, filtering out of higher strings).

3.4.4 Left hand handgrips

Above I discussed what I called handgrips. As the left hand ventures across the fingerboard the ‘natural’ handgrip for position XII is altered according to the changed relationship between the body and the instrument. Towards the middle of the fingerboard, fingers 1, 2 and 3 are more or less equally aligned with the strings and have interchangeable positions. At the lower end of the fingerboard, the left hand often holds handgrips that are the opposite of the ideal type for position XII: finger 1 on a relatively high string, and finger 3 on a relatively low string (not unlike the standard C-chord fingering in position I). However, the norm of finger 4 not crossing finger 3 is maintained



with only three exceptions in the whole piece, although it crosses fingers 1 and 2 with increasing frequency as the hand reaches lower positions. This systematic adherence to the 'natural' conditions of practice is quite extraordinary in contemporary guitar writing.

3.4.5 Timbre

An important aspect of instrumental practice that has not been addressed properly is timbre. Although I have pointed out the timbral characteristics of the individual sections of the work, and especially in relation of the spread right hand of section 6, the bifurcation of timbre and hand position still needs explication. In guitar playing, timbre is closely associated with the point of attack on the string. In *colloid* these two levels are clearly conceived as separate entities, the notation of timbre in the score designating the right hand position, which produces a specific result. Actually, the relationship changes from section to section with the timbral character, and the effect of this bifurcation is most clearly perceivable when the right hand is close to the left hand, as in section 8.

The timbre of a note is mainly the result of where on the vibrating part of the string is plucked in combination with the angle of the nail in relation to the string. In section 8, the right hand plucks as close to the left hand as possible, producing a rarely heard and somewhat nasal, thin timbre. However, the arpeggios include a number of open strings that will have a distinctly different timbre to the fingered notes as the open strings are plucked at a different distance from the end of the vibrating string. The open strings will always

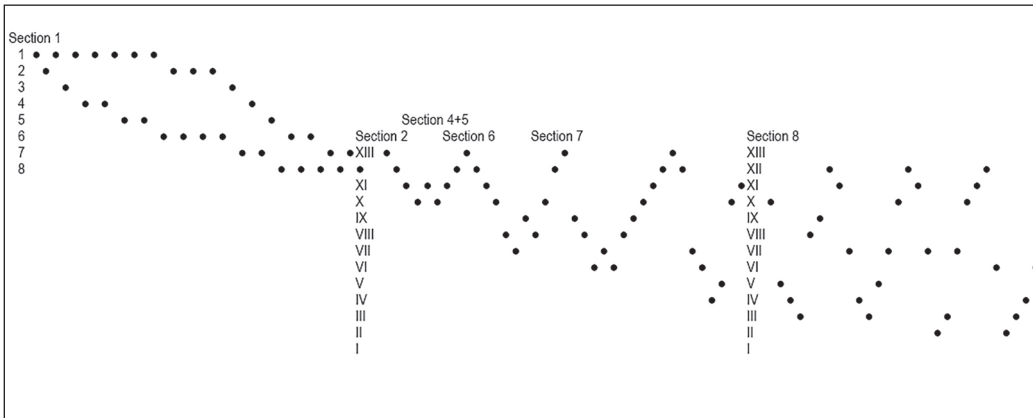
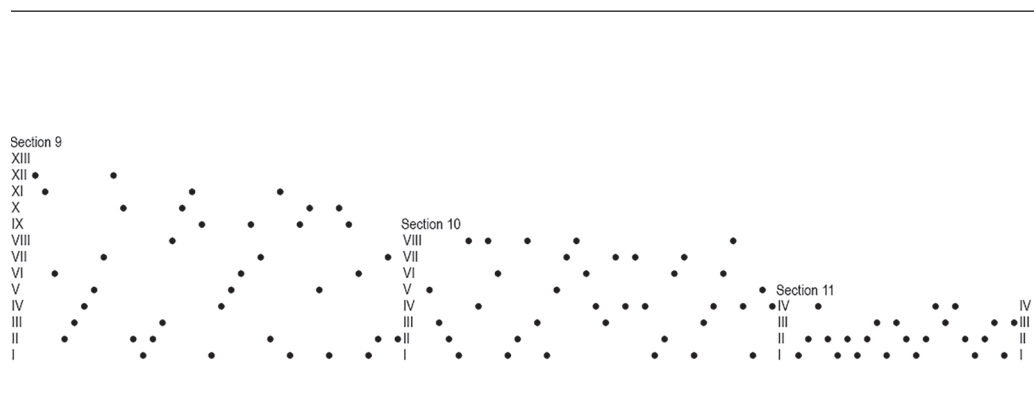


Figure 3.12: *colloid*, positions

have a fuller sound than the fretted notes, and the difference in timbre will increase as the left hand climbs towards position XII.

This immanent timbral heterogeneity is not only present in section 8. In section 9, where the subsections are characterized by either *sul tasto* or *ponticello* playing, the relationship changes from one subsection to the next. In the *sul tasto* sections, the open strings provide a stable timbre while the position changes of the left hand result in a subtle shift in timbre from phrase to phrase as the position of the right hand in relation to length of the vibrating strings changes. In the *ponticello* sections, the timbral difference between open and fretted strings is not so clearly exposed. Here, the relationship between the attack point and the relative length of the vibrating strings is more stable. However, as pointed out above, as the point of attack draws closer to the end of the string, the difference in timbre is exponential in relation to distances on the string. Thus, the different points of attack of the individual fingers also result in timbral heterogeneity. The heterogeneity of timbre permeates the work either explicitly, as in section 6, or implicitly, in other sections.

This shows clearly the extent to which the different practical parameters affect each other, or, in the language of the discursive practice: how the discursive relations found at the margins of discourse proper condition what can be said in discourse; it shows how the aural surface is conditioned by the relationships between the parameters.



3.4.6 Concluding remarks

This analysis has been directed towards showing how the sounding surface of *colloid* is conditioned by certain strictures and structures imposed on different elements of the instrumental practice. It should be clear from the analysis that the 'music' cannot have existed prior to the elaboration of its practical realization, but that the two are neither absolutely separate nor simply separable. One could therefore say that this is a materialist music, which exists only in its own practical realization, rather than being directed at a level exterior to itself.

I have shown how a large-scale trajectory across the length of the strings from the bridge to the nut runs through the whole piece. This trajectory is reflected on the level of register and pitch but the means to facilitate this descent is a strict disposition of left hand positions and string configurations. There is a measured introduction of lower strings and string configurations from the beginning of the piece towards the middle of section 9, and a parallel process gradually reducing the use of the top strings from section 9. The use of left hand positions reflects this trajectory most clearly. I have repeatedly marked the wave-like pattern formed by the left hand positions. Even the opening section follows this kind of pattern, clearly visible by the lines in the score that give the relative left hand position between the bridge and position XII. Collecting the positions from all sections of the piece in one Figure results in the striking pattern given in Figure 3.12.

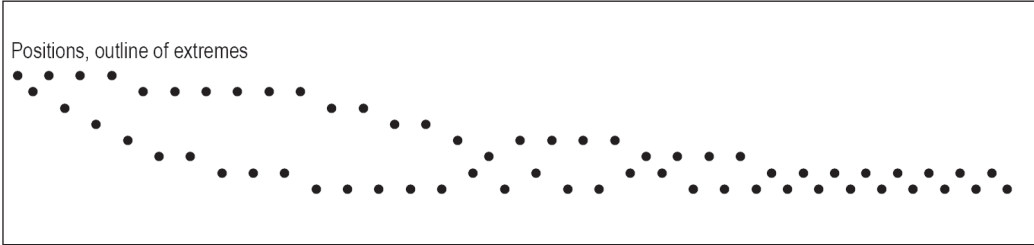


Figure 3.13: *colloid*, positions outline sections 2–11

One can clearly see the linear waves of the opening sections being gradually more fragmented towards sections 8 and 9, and that the wave tends towards an uninterrupted pattern again in section 11. Marking the outline of the extremes of the pattern from section 2 onwards even produces a pattern that bears a striking resemblance to the pattern of the opening section. The outline is given in Figure 3.13.

In Figure 12 one can also observe that the disposition of steps along the fingerboard vary from section to section. Reducing all steps larger than one ($[>1=1]$) results in Figure 3.14.

Figure 3.14 shows a clear rise towards the end, which is at odds with the general fall in position numbers throughout the piece. This means that the rising movement along the fingerboard is predominantly in single steps while the movement towards the nut is usually one of larger steps. I refer the reader back to previous discussion of lateral movement. Now, this pattern forms a structure parallel to the iterative processes found on other levels, from formal development in section 11 to the right hand finger patterns. The

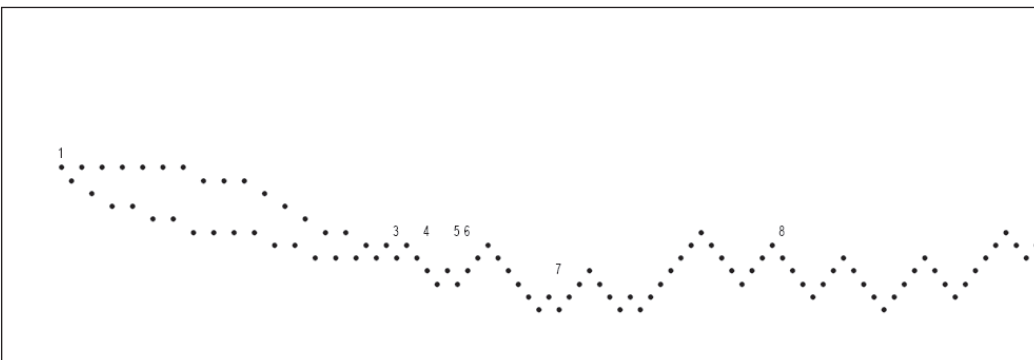
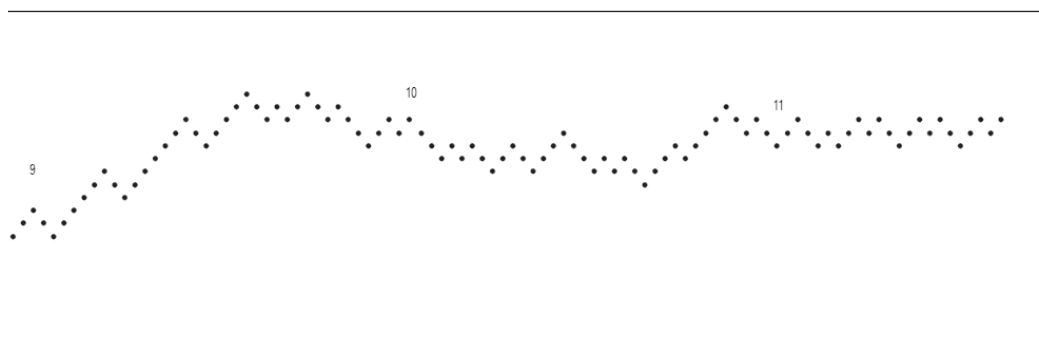


Figure 3.14: *colloid*, positions, reduction of steps

process of right hand fingerings also runs through the whole piece, until the arpeggios dissolve completely at the end of section 10.

Following the process suggested by the metaphor of the title of the work, I have described the gradual change of focus from a material based on pitch and arpeggios to a material that is based on different kinds of instrumental behaviour. I have suggested understanding this process as a colloidal behaviour that undergoes a process of sedimentation due to the forces to which it is subjected. In opposition to the external forces applied to a colloid in physics (centrifugality, temperature and so on), these forces are not external to the instrumental colloid but rather form separate elements, which turn out to be highly ambiguous when confronted by changes on another level – they articulate each other, in Laclau and Mouffe's (1985) sense. The dissociation of timbre and right hand position is the best example, but also those inevitable scratching sounds usually deemed alien produced by say playing arpeggios on the bass strings. These subdued elements and effects gain strength as the piece progresses and come to the fore with unleashed force in the last sections of the piece. Of course, in retrospect, it is all the more clear that the arpeggio material that dominates at least the first three fourths of the work and the traditional practice to which it refers are also one specific kind of instrumental behaviour – in Foucault's terms, a rarefaction of the possible discursive relations whose filters change through the course of the work.

When the single elements are governed strictly, new types of discursive relations stand out, and new expressive possibilities emerge.



3.5 The radically idiomatic: the apparatus and power

This analysis of *colloid* from the point of view of the instrumental practice has shown to what extent the practice is discursive, that is, to what extent the sound of the music is conditioned by the practice. The discursivity of the practice is laid bare by the radically idiomatic conception of instrumental practice as the elements of the practice are singled out and treated as materials that filter each other reciprocally. This first attempt at an archaeological analysis – an analysis of the practical conditions of instrumental music as sound – has revealed a certain efficacy in exploring the enunciative relations of the practice – the local relationships conditioned by the anatomy and function of the hands and the material disposition of the instrument. Indeed, the analysis has shown to what extent the practice and sound are profoundly entangled, to paraphrase Foucault. Coming back to the definition of the radically idiomatic – *an approach to composition that incorporates various idiomatic resources as musical material on a structural level in a composition, often with the aim of a critiquing those very resources* – I have hitherto focused on the first part of the definition. But what about the second part, that of the critique of the idiomatic resources?

Although the radically idiomatic instrumental practice is part of a generative strategy of composition, the multifarious and decentred practice that results brings about a problematization of the different elements of the practice. I have shown how the elements of the practice affect each other in *colloid*, for instance how the traditional identity of right hand position and timbre is broken, how dynamics subverts the phrase structure, and how pitch is conditioned by left hand positions, string configurations as well as the actual playing position. I would claim that with the radically idiomatic, the network of relationships among the practical resources is set in motion in way that bring about a problematization of the function of these very resources. As I have shown, these functions change continuously in a kaleidoscopic game of sound production. Relating to the concept of rarefaction discussed in the previous chapter, I would argue that whereas in the traditional practice the seemingly infinite combinatorial possibilities of the various elements of the practice are rarefied by very strict limitations directed towards a homogenizing and unifying transcendental ideal, in the radically idiomatic practice the rarefication of possibilities is decentred, heterogeneous and transitory, producing local effects. Thus, if homogeneous traditional practice seeks its legitimacy in the transcendental relation to a musical ideal external to the

practice itself – the musical work – with the radically idiomatic the music is the result of the concrete operations of rarefication of practical possibilities that ground the sound of the music in these concrete material operations. It is the ever-changing discursive relations brought about by these concrete operations that enable the problematization of the practice.

Now, it would not be correct to state that there is such a thing as *one* traditional practice – the practice is always changing, of course, and the ideals governing musical interpretation vary with history and geography, as well as individual agency. Nevertheless, these various traditional trajectories come together in a transcendental conception of interpretation. However, the problematic of the function or even teleology of the practice raised by radical idiomatics is present in any musical practice, and radical idiomatics brings about a decentering of practice that inevitably affects the conception of traditional practice: Even with its minute varieties, traditional practice is revealed as just one possibility among many. This should not be taken for an argument for a total relativization of musical practice and interpretation; indeed in Chapter 7 I will argue that the problematization brought about by the radically idiomatic is premised on the strict discipline of traditional practice.

In the previous chapter, I suggested understanding instrumental practice as an apparatus pervaded by relations of power. I argued that instrumental practice is the main apparatus of subjectivation of the musician, as this is the nexus where all the levels of discipline and knowledge that affect musical practice are gathered and ordered in a strict hierarchy aimed at the interpretation of scores. How does the shattered apparatus of instrumental practice affect the subjectivation of the practitioner and the relations of power invested in the practice? Should the meticulous specification of the corporeal aspect of musical performance be seen as an expression of authoritarian capillary bio-power that exploits the good faith of individuals to submit to its oppressive corporeal conduct, an excessive domination of the performer who is forced to painstakingly reproduce – indeed to inscribe in his own body – the breakdown of his whole system of expression in a process of desubjectivation? Or should the gesture of the radically idiomatic be seen as an attack on the normalizing powers of tradition, an attempt to emancipate the performer from the domination of traditional discipline? This, of course, comes down to how one understands the machinery or gesture of

the radically idiomatic and the relationship between the radically idiomatic and traditional practice.

My discussion of the radically idiomatic instrumental practice of *colloid* has focused on the inherent heterogeneity of the practice. Discussing heterogeneity in a lecture from the 1979 Collège de France lectures on biopolitics, Foucault reminds his auditors that ‘heterogeneity is never a principle of exclusion; it never prevents coexistence, conjunction, or connection’. (Foucault 2008: 42) This conception of heterogeneity resonates well with my description of the practice of *colloid*, which has been directed towards interaction and agonism rather than opposition and antagonism among the elements of the practice – that is, towards the positive surface effects conditioned by the discursive relations of the practice. This suggests an understanding of the practice that seeks to bypass or dissolve the kind of dialectics that would result in such conclusions as those described in the previous paragraph. Following the assessment of heterogeneity, Foucault suggests a way beyond the dialectics of oppression and freedom that can strengthen my analysis of the radically idiomatic in this chapter:

it is precisely ... in this kind of analysis ... that we emphasize, and must emphasize a non-dialectical logic if we want to avoid being simplistic. For what is the dialectical logic? Dialectical logic puts to work contradictory terms within the homogeneous. I suggest replacing this dialectical logic with what I would call a strategic logic. A logic of strategy does not stress contradictory terms within a homogeneity that promises their resolution in a unity. The function of strategic logic is to establish the possible connections between disparate terms which remain disparate. The logic of strategy is the logic of connections between the heterogeneous and not the logic of the homogenization of the contradictory. (Ibid.)

What, then, is this non-contradictory gesture of strategies of the radically idiomatic? The ‘conservative’ and ‘progressive’ positions described above only expose two agonistic sides of the same coin that share a common conception of repression – what from one side is viewed as repressive from the other is a safe haven, and vice versa. There is seemingly no escape from this dialectic. However, with reference to Derrida I will open a deconstructive reading of the radically idiomatic that traces a possible escape from the repressive hypothesis – an emancipation from emancipation. Having assessed the guitaristic basis of *colloid* in this chapter, a decentring model for understanding the radically idiomatic will be sought in the framework suggested by the *Reißwerck* to be discussed in the next chapter.

4 Klaus K. Hübler's *Reißwerck*: the Decapitation of the Logos / the Erection of the Scaffold

'eine Kompositorik des Tuns'

Writing about his *Third String Quartet* (1984), Hübler describes his composition practice as a '*Kompositorik des Tuns*', a composition of doing – composition as a composition of instrumental practice (Hübler 1985: 147). *Kompositorik des Tuns* should here be understood in dialectical opposition to a traditional *Kompositorik des Tons*, composition with tones or pitch, for in Hübler everything is dialectic. In the same paper, Hübler describes his method as dialectical composition (Ibid.) – indeed, the *Third String Quartet* is subtitled *Dialektische Phantasie*, ('*Dialectic Fantasy*'), itself suggesting a dialectic between dialectics and its opposition. This turn from *Ton* to *Tun* can be said to make sense on at least three levels: *semantically*, it suggests radical idiomatics; *phonologically*, it suggests a slight metonymic displacement; and *graphematically*, as writing, it suggests to the eye a certain decapitation of the 'o', an opening of its circular closure. In this chapter I will argue that Hübler's strict pursuit of dialectics within the radically idiomatic inscribes the limits of this dialectic, in turn traversing this limit as a structure as it is torn apart. Thus the decapitation of the 'o' indicates more than just an opening up of the possibilities inherent in generative compositional procedures; far more important is the opening implied by this turn, which,

as I argue below and in the preceding chapters, is an ethical opening, an explicit opening toward the other.

4.1 Hübler and the radically idiomatic

Born in 1956, Hübler emerged as one of the most original and interesting composers of his generation in the mid 1980s. His career was abruptly cut short by grave illness in 1989, from which he has only partially recovered. In his work from the eighties, he explored the possibilities for handling elements of instrumental practice as separate parameters in his compositions. For instance, for bowed strings, he separates the action of the hands, but also the different elements of the action of each hand – bowing direction, bow pressure, what strings to bow on, performance dynamic as opposed to resulting dynamic, string position, different modes of attack, and even expressive nuances are singled out as separate elements in the notation. This working method is clearly in line with my definition of the radically idiomatic as an approach to composition that incorporates various idiomatic resources as musical material on a structural level in a composition, and bears its first fruits in *“Feuerzauber” auch Augenmusik* for three flutes, harp and cello from 1981. In the cello part of *Feuerzauber*, the actions of the hands are only partially synchronized (see Example 4.1). In this work, the cello is retuned to a second inversion open E chord (low to high: B–G-sharp–E–B). The upper staff indicates action with the bow on the four strings. The

The musical score for the cello part of "Feuerzauber" auch Augenmusik, page 11, is presented in three staves. The top staff uses a simplified notation for bowing actions, including dynamics such as *f*, *sf*, and *ff*, and string positions like 5:4, 4:5, 5:6, 5:3, and 3:4. The middle staff indicates fretting actions with 'x' marks and string numbers (IV, II, IV, IV, IV). The bottom staff shows the cello's pitch contour with dynamic markings (*ff*, *ffff*) and performance instructions such as *contutta La sforza frenetico*. The score is highly detailed and complex, reflecting the composer's focus on instrumental practice as separate parameters.

Example 4.1: "Feuerzauber" auch Augenmusik, cello part, page 11

two lower staves indicate the left hand action: the middle staff represents important sounding pitches and the lower staff (where most of the activity occurs) represents only fingerings according to standard tuning; the sounding pitch is a result of the performer's choice of fingering in relation to the scordatura. The middle staff is thus the notation of an overlapping of fingering and pitch. (Note the comment '*corde a piacere*' on the second beat.) In his short but detailed introductory leaflet to Hübler's work, Wieland Hoban suggests understanding the passages where the hands are coordinated as a sort of 'tutti' (Hoban 2005: 17).

In the flute and harp parts there is an analogous take on the instrumental writing. In the flutes, the blowing and fingering are worked out independently of one another, and the blowing mechanism is split into various separate parameters (harmonic projection, mouth position and so on). In the harp, the pedalling is treated individually, giving the notation of pitch the character of scordatura notation. This can be seen in Example 4.2.

The reference to the Renaissance notion of *Augenmusik* or 'music for the eye' in the title is noteworthy, as it highlights a gap between the notation and the

Example 4.2: "Feuerzauber" auch Augenmusik, flute 3 and harp, page 32

performance, as well as between the visual impact of the score and sounding result. It also has a secondary meaning, in that certain actions in the instrumental parts do not result in actual sound, or result in only the shadow of a sound (like the harp pedalling), so that their visible quality – the performative act, the *Tun* – is just as important as the actual sound. This double meaning is present in all of Hübler's work from the 1980s, and explored in great detail in the *Third String Quartet* (discussed further below). I will return to notion of *Augenmusik* in Chapter 5. What I would like to stress with the examples from *Feuerzauber* is that the actual sound producing apparatus is up front in Hübler's work after 1981, and that it is an important element in the works that this comes across in the performance – the score to *Feuerzauber* specifically indicates detailed amplification of the instruments to enhance the projection of the sound of the mechanical elements like the harp pedal or flute keys.

Hübler's works from before 1981 also indicate a particular engagement with the ambiguities of sound production. For instance, in *Musica Mensurabilis* for two violins and viola (1975–76), the attempt at exactly measured bow speed and/or pressure strongly affect the admixture of noise in the sounds. Also, at the very end of the guitar solo *Zwei Skizzen* (1980), each string is notated on a separate stave with individualized dynamic and timbre. This latter strategy is not without precedent – Alvaro Company had already devised a similar form of notation in his guitar solo *Las seis cuerdas* of 1963, a work also distinguished by its timbral richness and meticulous specification of point and angle of attack (Company 2013).⁴⁶

As Hübler turned to an explicit *Kompositorik des Tuns*, the formal planning of his works involved a careful mapping of the disposition of different instruments and instrumental behaviour. This is addressed in the text '*Besetzung und Form*' (Hübler 1989a) in relation to the work *Am Ende des Kanons – Musica con(tro)versa* for trombone and organ (1983), and in a 1989 interview with Robert H.P. Platz (Hübler 1989b) in relation to *Arie Dissolute* for solo viola and small ensemble (1987). Hübler explains how the form of the latter work was not outlined in terms of abstract material but stems directly from the instruments: from the temporal disposition of the elements of practice of the various instruments and their possible combinatoriality. However, Hübler is at his most precise when describing the *Third String Quartet*, and

⁴⁶ This idea has since been explored in greater detail by Claus-Steffen Mahnkopf in his guitar solo *El sueno de la razon produce monstruos* (2003).

I will discuss this work in some detail. In his short analysis of this work, Hoban points out the great resistance this work offers to a standard analysis – the score provides little information as to the actual sound produced by the instruments (Hoban 2000: 27). With the four instruments notated on five staves each, the notation is an expansion of the system used for the cello in *Feuerzauber* (see Example 4.3, next page).

Each of the five staves provides information on a specific practical parameter:

- Bowing technique (with the wood (*col legno*) or with the hair)
- Where to bow (*sul ponticello* – *sul tasto*)
- Bowing rhythm
- String changes
- Left hand actions (fingering, various forms of attack and pressure)

Each parameter (except, of course, bowing rhythm) is worked out with an individual rhythm and expressive contour, providing an extreme challenge to the performers in terms of corporeal coordination. Nevertheless, in composing the work, the formal layout and disposition of the practical parameters were conceived more as a challenge to the composer himself, as a ‘straight jacket’ from which the work was wrested by means of creative feints (Hübler 1985: 146). According to Hübler, a set of strictures against which the work was composed were predetermined. These strictures included

which instruments play at which point; what technique they should use; how often these change; the relative differentiation of articulation, dynamics etc. and whether these changes are collective or individual; the duration of coherent units and whether they are different or identical for the individual, collective or subensemble. (Ibid.)

These decisions, which cannot be said to belong to a category of musical material proper but which are still important in determining the possibilities of the directions the musical material can take, should be seen as determinate operations of rarefication of the discursive possibilities of the practice. Hübler also worked on a level even more remote from the actual sound of the music, determining ‘which method of composition or combination of methods should be employed at a given point, as well as when a given moment of the work should be recalled’ (Ibid.). Ferneyhough had similarly employed a predetermined scheme of permutational methods for his 1981 piano solo *Lemma-Icon-Epigram* (Toop 1990; I discuss this in Chapter 6).

The musical score for the Third String Quartet, page 15, is a complex piece of contemporary music. It features multiple staves for different instruments, including strings and woodwinds. The score is characterized by intricate rhythmic patterns, often involving irregular time signatures such as 5/4, 7/4, 9/8, and 6/5. Dynamic markings range from *pp* (pianissimo) to *ff* (fortissimo), with various crescendos and decrescendos. Performance instructions include *ord.* (order), *c.l.* (crescendo/decrescendo), *s.p.* (sforzando), and *mf* (mezzo-forte). The score includes numerous accidentals and articulation marks, such as slurs and accents. The overall texture is dense and highly rhythmic, reflecting the 'Music of the Margins' aesthetic.

Example 4.3: Third String Quartet, page 15

The comment on material recollection should not unreservedly be mistaken for a fanciful formulation of audibly perceived formal patterns – the recollections do not necessarily involve repetitions of earlier pitch material, they might just as well target one of the many non-pitched practical parameters addressed in the notation. Thus one can see that the turn from *Ton* to *Tun* – from sound to action – also involves the act of composition, and that the compositional process is explicitly drawn into the rarefication of the discursive field of the work.

Hoban draws attention to the multiple dialectical oppositions that permeate Hübler's *Third String Quartet* (Hoban 2000). This is not the place to go into the details of the highly inventive instrumental writing of this work. I will nonetheless highlight two interesting features, the first relating to pitch, the other relating to perception.

Hübler operates with fixed handgrips for the left hand in certain passages. This is not unlike the fixed handgrip found at the beginning of *colloid*. But whereas in *colloid* there is only one fixed grip, in the *Third String Quartet* a number of different fixed handgrips are employed. The notation indicates that a specific handgrip related to a specific fingerboard position should be maintained even when the hand is not actually in this position. When the hand is in a certain position the extension of the fingers should remain fixed, even if the hand is moved to another position, and the 'tuning' of the latter position is thereby distorted: If the hand moves to a higher position, the sounding intervals between the fingers increase microtonally, and by moving the hand to a lower position the intervals decrease. This is indicated in the score by specifying both the actual position of the hand and the position to which the handgrip should conform. Only the actual position of the first finger is indicated; the gripping fingers are indicated by numbers on a tablature system, which is inserted above the left hand stave for these particular passages. Thus, the player has to negotiate temperament and handgrip as separate entities; the distinction of practice and pitch breaks down. One could say that Hübler in this way reveals the handgrip as a form of 'tuning' inscribed in the hand – of the extension of the fingers – which can operate independently from the level of pitch proper. This problematic is further extended by the notation of pitch itself. In large parts of the work, the players are performing glissandi between fixed pitches or fingerboard positions, and in the latter half of the work quarter- and third-tones further work to destabilize the domain of pitch. The turn to the practice is not a

revolt or a revolution, it does not exclude the traditional domain of composition; the *Kompositorik des Tuns* implicates an opening up to the domain of practice, exposing the mutually conditional contingency of practice and sound to the point where this opposition breaks down, the one collapsing into the order of the other.

Even more elusive is the relationship between sound and silence. In many passages of the work, one or more players are involved in mute performance – they are instructed to perform their parts without producing any sound, without moving the bow back and forth on the strings. I will draw attention to three aspects of this silent practice. The first is related to the question of silence and sound itself. The silently performed sections are constructed as rigorously as the ordinary music, with the exception that the player is not meant to activate the strings with the bow; the bow-stroke parameter is mute, it has a pause. Nevertheless, other parameters related to the bow can be active, like string changes and timbral transformations. Additionally, the left hand can also be active in these sections. This means that even if the performer is instructed to play without producing any sound, the practice still sounds: the string changes activate the strings, and the left hand activity also inevitably results in sounds. The second aspect is that the performers are instructed not to make an effort to exaggerate the silent playing – these passages are to be approached with the same intensity and concentration as the rest of the music; they should not be approached with any sense of theatricality. The third aspect is therefore that of audience perception. Most of the mute passages occur when at least one other performer is active, and often, the change from sounding to silent performance (or vice versa) appears with no particular form of preparation; it is one of those apparently arbitrary strictures imposed by the composer in advance of working out the actual material. Thus, as the players continue their performance activity with no particular emphasis on intentionally not producing sounds, the silent passages are not necessarily perceived as such by an audience at a live performance of the work. As actual or near silent passages also have a prominent place in the work, the mute passages therefore have a particularly ambiguous character. These passages suggest at least two predecessors: Mauricio Kagel's *Sonant (1960 ...)* (1960) and Ferneyhough's *Second String Quartet* (1979). In the former, one of the movements might be repeated in its entirety with the performers all miming their parts, thus drawing attention to the theatricality of the performative act and the internal communication

of the ensemble. In the latter work, Ferneyhough addresses the question of the silence as a form of zero-level intensity, filling blank bars with material with (initially at least) minimum differentiation, but whose character will change dramatically in the course of the work.⁴⁷ Hübler's use of silence seems far more ambiguous than that of either Kagel or Ferneyhough. In the Hübler the 'dumb' passages are staged neither as an explicit questioning of abstracted modes of listening in favour of a contextualized perception nor as an immanent dialectic between levels of intensity and activity. The passages are not 'simply' silent, as they might be conceptualized from the point of view of intended sound (*Ton*); rather, from the point of view of the discursive activity of the practice (the *Tun*) they are the result of a distinctly practical strategy of removing one parameter or element from the polyphony of the practice. The inherent ambiguity of these passages suggest that the dialectics conceptualized by Hübler need to be questioned – the decapitation of the 'o' of *Ton* exposes the contingency of the sound on the practice; it even draws attention to the conditions of the dialectics of sound and silence, thereby questioning the superiority of the *Ton* as such. Indeed, the 'u' as the beheaded 'o' – its closed circularity violently ripped open – will guide the reading of *Reißwerck* which follows. What it suggests is that this 'o' torn open, this turn to the 'u', is not a simple overturning of the relationship between sound and practice but rather an opening – an *ouverture* – towards a reconceptualization of this relationship.

4.2 *Reißwerck*

Notated normally on a single staff, the notation of *Reißwerck* seems to convey a conception of practice more traditional than both *colloid* and Hübler's *Third String Quartet*.⁴⁸ But writing is always deceptive, and closer scrutiny will show that the practice of *Reißwerck* is also parametrically conceived. This not only opens up a new space of expressive possibilities beyond the concept of extended techniques, it also suggests a deconstruction of the apparatus of instrumental practice as a means of subjectivity. Before turning to the analysis proper, I will investigate the possible

47 I will discuss *Sonant (1960 ...)* in detail in Chapter 5; the question of 'coloured' silence in Ferneyhough will be addressed in Chapter 6.

48 The full score of *Reißwerck* is reproduced on pages 153–155.

meanings of the title of the work, suggesting a reading that will guide the analysis and discussion which follows.

4.2.1 What is a *Reißwerck*?

There is no such word as *Reißwerck* in modern German.⁴⁹ The title is a compound of two words, the verb *zu reißen*, to rip, and the obsolete spelling of the word *Werk*, *Werck*, meaning work understood both as a verb and noun. I will briefly look at the possible meanings and connotations of each of the two parts of the word separately before exploring the possible meanings suggested by the full title.

The verb *reißen* is usually translated as pull, rip, tear, snap, drag, wrench, tug. In the *Duden* the examples used to describe the various uses of the word are strikingly violent – a wolf ripping the throat of a lamb, to cut one's hand on a thorn, a bomb inflicting a funnel in the ground and so on (Duden 2007: 1379). Plucking or pulling a string, or even ripping it violently in a Bartók pizzicato would be obvious musical uses. Interestingly, the word can be traced back to the word *wrizan* or *writan* of the medieval *Mittelhochdeutsch*, words whose meaning lives on in the English *write* – the mhd. *rizen* or *wrizan* denotes writing in the form of making an incision or inscription, or to scratch or carve (as in the Norwegian *å risse*), or even making a drawing or a design (*Entwurf*) (Ibid.). This form of the word is also found in modern German in compound nouns like *Reißbrett*, *Reißzwecke* and *Reißverschluss*. In this form, there is also an etymological link to the English *raise*, to raise up.

The modern word *Werk* has the double function of a verb and a noun just as the English 'work'. As a verb it means the physical act of work, production or manufacturing in a process of manual labour. As a noun it has multiple meanings such as a work or product (say, of art), a piece of machinery, a factory or a mechanism. With other nouns, it forms such constructions as *Uhrwerk*, *Blätterwerk* or *Einigungsverk*. As in English, it also denotes a full body of work of an artist, writer, composer or scientist, a *corpus*, as in the expression *Gesamtwerk* (the complete works) (ibid.: 1919).

⁴⁹ At least not according to any standard modern dictionary. See for instance *Duden*, 2007.

For the enlightened guitar or keyboard player, the spelling *Werck* perhaps evokes the keyboard instrument for which Johann Sebastian Bach wrote his works for lute, the *Lautenwerck*. It is also the term used for the lute stop on the harpsichord. The *Lautenwerck* snaps the strings through a mechanical act of pulling. This very concrete sense of the word seems to be what is indicated through the older spelling of the word in Hübler's title – the sense of the actual manual or mechanical *act* by which something is produced. In the older uses of the word there seems to be little distinction between the craft (*Handwerk*) and the product, and in the present title it seems to point in the direction on the bodily act of *zu wirken* rather than the beautiful *Musikwerk*, that is, it points towards the haptic process rather than the teleological ideal – i.e. *Tun* rather than *Ton*. However, this latter word has another meaning quite different from that of the work of music: *Musikwerck* is the word for mechanical instruments.

What then to make of the full title of the work? An obvious association would be relating the pulling of the guitar strings with the musical work. There is a corporeal machinery of instrumental practice that creates a sounding work of music through the act of pulling strings, and in this sense (nearly) any piece of guitar music would be a *Reißwerk*. This reading would highlight what is instrumentally specific and idiomatic, in that the guitar is usually played with a pulling action of a finger, nail or plectrum, thus contrasting it with other instruments that are bowed, blown or struck.

The number of Bartók pizzicati employed in the work points to a more explicitly violent reading of *reißen* along the lines of the examples given above; 'Rip-work' could be an apt translation of the title in this sense. There is a strong sense of antagonism at the heart of this reading, though, as violence is usually not associated with the wholeness of a work in the sense of a construct. Immediately, violence would seem to imply the opposite – ripping open, tearing apart, or even destruction.

The word *reißen* can also be read in the sense of *to raise* – the word *Reißwerck* is homonymous and etymologically linked with the Norwegian *reisverk*, translated as scaffold or *Rahmen*, and thus closely connected to words like framework (*Rahmenwerk*), casing, grid and so on; it thus indicates a certain sense of structure. This gives a doubling of senses to the title: ripping/raising – mechanism/scaffold. We are thus at a point where the title takes on multiple layers of meaning that tend towards a double image of tearing down and building up, of structuring and destructuring, of a violent

processuality and the idealized stability of the work of art. Thus, a work constructed in the act of ripping it apart.

It is this reading of *Reißwerck* I follow throughout this chapter. I will only mention here that this reading seems analogous to the philosophical notion of deconstruction – this will be elaborated below in relation to the work of Jacques Derrida. And expanding my reading to include *reißen* in the sense of writing, we might even suggest that the title indicates an inscription of the work on the body – or even an inscription of the work *by* the body.

4.2.2 Analysis of *Reißwerck*

In the analysis of *colloid* in the previous chapter, I discussed general features of the music before going into details regarding the instrumental practice. In the analysis of *Reißwerck*, I will instead go straight to the practice and discuss the techniques involved. The relative brevity of *Reißwerck*, as well as the form based on a dialectic of textural differences, supports this approach.

References are made to the full score, which is reproduced at the end of the chapter.

Performative aspects – a description of instrumental practice

I will begin the analysis of *Reißwerck* with a discussion of the techniques employed. I categorize the techniques employed in the work according to the inherent relationship between the hands. Some techniques involve only one hand, some involve both hands synchronized, and some demand various forms of interdependency between the hands.

Techniques employed

Left hand:

- Left hand solo (×). A left hand finger hits the string at a given fret, resulting in two pitches, on either side of the finger.
- Left hand plucking (+). A left hand finger plucks a string (fingered or open).
- Slur. A left hand finger attacks an already sounding string.

Right hand:

- *Pizzicato non appuyé* (◄). The right hand fingers the fret lightly and plucks the string with another finger.⁵⁰
- Attack on open string (notated with 'o')
- Right hand solo harmonic (not specified in the score, at the liberty of the performer)

Synchronous actions:

- Normally fingered pitches as well as harmonics, Bartók pizzicato and attacks behind the fretting finger (■). The latter technique produces only the pitch of the string sounding between the fingered fret and the nut.

Non-synchronous actions:

- Delayed harmonic (given in the score as a harmonic diamond open on the top right). A left hand finger fingers a harmonic on an already sounding open string

The various techniques are used more or less equally throughout the work, without any of them receiving any place of priority in a possible hierarchy. This is important, in that it suggests that the normal sound and playing technique (●) does not function as a norm from which the other sounds can be perceived or conceived of as a deviation. The ● stands out among the other sounds as being free from noise (a characteristic shared with most of the harmonics and also with ■), and of course because of its familiarity, but must otherwise only to be considered as one sound among the others, or as the result of one possible relationship between the position of the hands along the strings.

Even among the synchronous techniques involving both hands there is a strong sense of desynchronization of the demands made on the two hands, or a destabilization of the relation between the hands that I will term *phasing*. For instance, in the first bar, the G-sharp/F dyad is attacked on already fingered strings, and the left hand solo B-natural on ③ could be viewed as a delayed fingering for the open string attack. This kind of stretching of the synchronicity of the hands is sometimes pushed quite far, as in bar 12 between the open ④ Bartók pizzicato and the (delayed) F harmonic in

50 I prefer to finger with *i* and pluck with *p*, but it is also possible to finger with *p* and pluck with any of the remaining fingers.

the upper part, or in bar 14, where the right hand is dependent on 1 remaining fingered on $\textcircled{2}$ between the (first) normal C-sharp around the middle of the bar to the (second) \blacksquare C-sharp. This kind of phasing of the hands is reminiscent of the splitting of synchronously notated bass and melody parts common in performance of romantic composers like Chopin, and can be viewed as an extension of the moment of attack. In practical terms, it means that the left hand often has to perform actions anticipating the actual sound. This is not unusual in the classical repertoire, but in *Reißwerck* this technique takes on a singular function in the actual sound production.

The relation between the hands is unstable throughout the work. Not only are they more or less out of phase, they are also often involved in different types of action on the same string, with one sound cancelling another, not allowing a sound to ring on. Apart from the obviously polyphonic and desynchronized bars (e.g. bars 7 and 9), and the bars involving only the left hand (bars 2, 5, 11 and 13), the hands move continuously in and out of phase, like cogwheels of different shapes and sizes trying to work together in a machine. It is as if the hands are playing a game of hide and seek, continuously probing their level of coordination and cooperation: the hands continuously give each other something (literally) to play *with* or *on* – a sounding string, a fretted note and so on. The hands articulate each other, in the sense given to this term by Laclau and Mouffe (1985). Each action on the instrument opens up and circumscribes a given set of possibilities to be explored; it delimits a concrete rarefication of the practice.

Rarefication

Thus each action on the instrument implies a *reduction* of possibilities for both hands. For example, when a left hand finger is fretting, the possibilities of fretting other pitches with other fingers is highly restricted by the reach of the fingers, the position of the fingers, and relation of the shape of the hand to the instrument (all of which change according to what finger is fretting, on which string, and in what position). The limitations represented by any given fingering is also a positive filter for pitch choices, in the sense that a given fretting makes a certain set of pitches in a specific register available, varying according to the fingerboard area where the fretting occurs. In the analysis of *colloid* in the previous chapter, the notion of rarefication played an important role. In *Reißwerck*, explicit rarefication is no less important; it is however structured according to completely different principles.

For the right hand, a fingered fret means that the open string and its harmonics are blocked. So if any harmonic or Bartók pizzicato is to be employed it has to be on other strings. A fingered fret offers the right hand two pitches, on either side of the fretting finger. So the hands work together like two sieves or grids on top of each other, with each attack or movement adjusting the filtering of possibilities and limitations available.

The instrumental practice is restricted by two imposed limitations, that of fixing the left hand in one specific area of the fingerboard, and in only employing a specific number of natural harmonics. Throughout the work, the left hand is fixed in position XIII or XIV, with one finger per fret. The first finger occasionally stretches one fret lower, and the fourth finger sometimes has to reach an F in the 18th fret on ②. However, none of the two highest frets/pitches of the instrument are in use. Fixing the left hand in this area implies a reversal of the mobility of the two hands. Usually, the right hand operates in a rather narrow area from the sound-hole towards the bridge while the left hand is active all over the fingerboard. In *Reißwerck* however it is the left hand which is fixed while the right hand is active along the full length of the string from the bridge to the nut. The restriction imposed on the left hand is a special form of rarefication which draws attention to the relation of the two hands as well as their contingent function. Similarly, harmonics are restricted to natural harmonics on XVII, XVI, XV as well as those found around XIV. One deviation from this rule is found in bar 4 with the C-sharp (9th fret) harmonic on ⑥. I will comment on this below.

Pitch and puns

Although many of the techniques, especially ◀, × and Bartók pizzicati, are relatively noisy and lack a clear pitch content, I would say that *Reißwerck* is a work that primarily deals with pitch, although in an obscuring and relativizing manner. Throughout the work, pitch is continuously confronted by the playing body, by the play of the body, by a continuously probing body that does not let itself be fixed in homogeneous expression and therefore displaces and defers pitch structure.

And the hands are not only playing a game with each other, they are also playing games with the eyes and ears of the player. Many of the techniques involved result in a pitch content quite different from the notated pitch. This is obviously the case with ■ and harmonics around XIV and on XV and XVII, but also the case with the bi-tone effect of the ×. A good example is found at

the very beginning of the work, where the second sound, the B-flat ■ on ③ results in a repetition of the preceding note F. The second half of the first bar is also interesting in this respect. The three A's at different octaves together spell out an A major chord: the A on ⑤ gives the notated pitch, but the A ◇ on ⑥ results in an E, and the A ■ on ① results in a C-sharp. Including the two C-sharps on ⑤ preceding the open ⑤, they both produce a sounding C-sharp (two octaves apart), with the × also resulting in a G (between the finger and the nut), thus giving a full A dominant 7th chord.⁵¹ For the rest of the bar, the open ④ Bartók pizzicato and the F-sharp and F harmonics on the same string spell out a D, an F-sharp and a C-natural respectively (that is, a D dominant 7th chord), and the G × on ⑥, the open ④ Bartók pizzicato and the B × on ③ result in a G and D, G, and B and F respectively, thus producing a full G dominant 7th chord. The real pun is that the first C of bar 2, the × on ③ results in both the notated C as well as an E a minor sixth below, which suggests a C major chord and thus the fulfilment of a cycle of fifths cadence from the A through D and G to C. Note that this is the sound of what is *offered* by the instrument and in the practice, 'naturally'; it is also an obvious reference to all those works in the history of the instrument from Tarrega and Turina to Berio and beyond that feed on this 'natural sound of the guitar'.

So in this work, what you see is certainly *not* what you get. What you see is where to put the finger. I will give other examples of this later, but here it is enough to note the continual reinterpretation or deferral of pitch content throughout the work, a polysemic handling of pitch that is closely related to the problematic of *Augenmusik* noted above.

Form

As is true of most of Hübler's work written between 1981 and 1989, the form of *Reißwerck* is easily described in terms of the disposition of instrumental techniques, and the general form of the work is quite simple. Every second bar, or more or less half of the work, is based on a heterogeneous, fragmented and abrupt texture involving most of the instrumental techniques described above in rapid and irregular succession, and, with one exception, lasting no more than one bar (bars 1, 3–4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14). I will call this texture α . Separating the bars of texture α are bars based on left hand solo attacks (bars 2, 5, 11 and 13), or a strict polyphony of × and ◀ where

⁵¹ Note that the preceding F × on ② also results in a G between the finger and the nut.

the action of the hands is strictly separated (bars 7 and 9). I will call this texture β .

Texture α

At least in the beginning of the work, these bars have a static quality where the impression is one of turning a timbral kaleidoscope rather than following a linear argument. Every sound is invested with different qualities that establish various affinities throughout the bar in a quasi-polyphonic fashion: as a listener, it is possible to follow patterns of pitch, but at the same time follow various patterns based on attack or even transitions from one type of attack to another, with these different levels working simultaneously to embed every sound in a network of superimposed qualities. Dynamics play a vital role in articulating these various levels, but also in undermining them, obscuring them, or letting them merge. The links established are mostly of a local character, from one sound to the next only, with the second sound usually going off in another direction from the first. These bars thus present a space of possible relationships rather than a clear sense of direction.

Again, the first bar provides a fine example. The first beat or so of the bar presents a short notated polyphony proper of \times and \blacksquare (and of the hands as well!), the former connected to the opening Bartók pizzicato through its percussive quality, the latter, as noted above, through pitch. The two parts reconnect from the high F \blacksquare ⁵² and the D-flat harmonic in the upper part that result in G and D-flat respectively (both with slight microtonal deviations), which are the same pitches produced by the C-sharp \times bi-tone on $\textcircled{5}$. However, the two sounds in the upper part hardly connect to each other, with the F \blacksquare rather connecting to the A \blacksquare on $\textcircled{1}$ slightly later. The D-flat harmonic is part of both the arpeggiated harmonic sequence at the end of the bar, and a separate strand of harmonics from around the middle of the bar; this strand is itself split in two parts: the A harmonics on $\textcircled{6}$ and $\textcircled{1}$ both result in E's that stand out from the F-sharp and F harmonics that connect strongly because of being performed on the same string (note that these connections cut across the polyphonic notation). At the same time there is a strong sense of connection between the \bullet sounds because of the lower range, the sound quality as well as the dynamic level of these sounds. And even this level is on the verge of splitting – the Bartók pizzicati seem to form one level that connects to the \times 's of beginning and end of the bar, but there

52 There is no indication of string for this sound, but I play it on $\textcircled{2}$.

is at the same time a very strong link between the sound of the open strings that make the first F stand out as a separate entity.

Texture β

Texture β presents, at least for the listener, a much simpler sound than texture α . In comparison to texture α , texture β has a clearer sense of direction, and often, as is the case with bars 2 and 13, heads towards the following bar. Over the course of the work, the various appearances of texture β represent a gradual shift of focus from the left to the right hand; the first appearances of texture β are based on left hand solo attacks only while the last involves only the right hand. In bar 7 the right hand solo *pizzicato non appuyé* appears for the first time, together with the left hand in strict polyphony. However, whereas the left hand is more or less fixed around XIII, the right hand moves all along the fingerboard. In the similar two-part writing in bar 9, the right hand finds itself around the lower half of the fingerboard only, with the different halves of the string shared between the hands in complete opposition to what is the traditional areas of working for the hands. The hands operate in complete independence of each other in these bars, rhythmically, dynamically, and in terms of general movement on the fingerboard. Given the high rhythmical density of these bars, the rough and percussive sounds, and the general blurring of pitch content in both techniques, the polyphony tends towards a polyphony of colour rather than pitch; and the variations in density and register are perhaps the most distinct features of development within the bars themselves. In bars 11 and 13 the left hand appears alone again, but in bar 14, the right hand appears below an almost melodic and linear presentation of texture α , anticipating the coda for right hand solo.

There is a slight transformation of the relation between textures α and β running through the work. On the one hand, bars 2 and 5, the \times 's of texture β are anticipated in the preceding bars and spill over into the bars following, giving a smooth sense of flow from one type of texture to the other. The use of \blacktriangleleft in bar 9 is similarly continued into bar 10. On the other hand, bars 7, 11 and 13 are highly independent of the surrounding bars, with the violent introduction of \blacktriangleleft in bar 7 being particularly striking. Nevertheless, moving from bar 13 to bar 14, there is still a continuation of texture β , but in a change of hands from the left hand solo in bar 13 to the right hand bass line of bar 14.

In texture β , there is an interesting difference in phrasing and dynamics for the two hands. Whereas the left hand action is quite lively, with a 'natural' dynamic often supporting the general movement of the line, the right hand is mostly soft with irregularly placed loud single notes. The first entrance of \blacktriangleleft is marked *meccanico*, something I take to be valid for this technique through the whole work.

As for the coda for right hand *pizzicato non appuyé* alone, it immediately gives the impression of a standstill. It presents some very long notes and two phrases to be played as fast as possible, surely a reference to the hectic performative challenges of texture α . The last of these phrases end the work in *pianissimo* with an extreme *ritardando* (*rit. estremamente*), marked *non dim.*, a clear reminder of the *meccanico* character annotated in bar 7. The *non dim.* and *meccanico* markings suggest that what is at stake in this work is the mechanical, technical and practical workings of the hands, and hints at understanding the *Werck* as an automaton.

Materials

In the search for pitch material I have used a quite simple method. I reduced the notated pitches of every bar to a single octave. This gives a set of ten pitches, a full chromatic octave lacking a major third, which in terms of Allen Forte's set theory could be described as the negative of set [2-4]. The disposition of the pitches within the bars do not conform to any clear structure. Pitch seems rather to be handled freely, often with pitch repetitions at various octaves. In the bars with obvious polyphonic writing (i.e. 7, 9 and 14), the single parts of the texture both conform to the model of the set. For the long passage for right hand in bar 7, it presents two transpositions of the set, the second starting at the C just after the middle of the bar. This corresponds to the slight change of register as well as to a change of fingerboard area (i.e. hand position). The shorter bars with less than ten separate pitches also correspond to the model of the set.

The function of the set seems to be to fix the fretting fingers in certain positions that vary from bar to bar. As observed above, both harmonics and \blacksquare involve a translation of pitch, which means that all notated pitches can actually result in three different sounding pitches. In addition, as has been mentioned already, the \times results in two pitches between which there is no clear hierarchy. It is interesting to note that in the bars of texture α , repetition of pitch in a given bar always involves a translation of technique – a pitch

is never repeated with the same technique, and thus never with the same pitch.⁵³ Perhaps it would be better in the following to substitute the term *fret* for the term *pitch*, changing focus from a notion of an abstract material (*Ton*) to the concrete and operational relation between the performing body and the box of wood (*Tun*).

Yet the practice always follows the dictates of the restrictions given in the pitch material, witness the C-sharp harmonic on ④ mentioned above. This is the only harmonic in the work not conforming to the limitations of harmonic and left hand fretting area of position XVI. Why is it not a G-sharp harmonic on XVI, which could give the same result? A G-sharp would not be part of the set of ten pitches for this bar. The left hand does not have to move out of its prescribed cage though, as the harmonic is easily touched by the right hand rather than the left. The right hand nevertheless has to arrive at this finger-board area in time to play the following A ■ on ③. Thus C-sharp rather than G-sharp.

The translation of repeated fretting appears with a certain kind of rigour. When a fretting appears several times in a bar it is always subject to one form of the following pattern: ●■◇. The pattern is present in nearly all bars of texture α in the form given, its inversion and/or with a cyclical displacement. It appears in the form given in bar 1 – ④, XV; in bar 4 – ②, XVI and ⑤, XVI (pattern starting on ◇; ● performed with a slur); in bar 6 – ③, XVI (× substitutes for ●, the × at the end of the bar might suggest another cycle commencing); in bar 8 – ⑤, XVII (pattern starting on ◇); in bar 12 – ⑤, XVI; and in inversion in bar 10 – ③, XV; 12 – ①, XVI.

However, while the pitch content of the fretting material is disseminated in the practice, there is a clear tendency towards searching out other pitch structures within the grids of technical translations, slippages and limitations described above. There is thus a play with signs and their possible signification – the notion of *Augenmusik*, touched on above, is very much in play here, in that there is a certain level of sense in the work that is only accessible through reading. Of course, another kind of sense constitutes itself in the act of listening, and it is difficult if not to say impossible to privilege one over the other. I have already noted the cycle of fifths cadential structure in bar 1. Other examples are found in bar 10, where the D-quarter-flat harmonic, the A ■ on ⑥, the C-sharp harmonic on ⑤ and the C-sharp on ② all give

⁵³ There is one exception to this rule: the B at the beginning and end of bar 6.

C-sharps in various octaves; or running from bar 10 to bar 12 the B harmonic and B ● of bar 10, and the bi-tone of the F-sharp × in bar 11 all produce B's that lead up to the B at the beginning of bar 12; the high G of bar 11 is the same pitch as the first harmonic of bar 12 (note also that the bi-tone of the A in bar 11 is the same pitch as the preceding F-sharp); and a particularly striking and exposed example is found in bar 14, where the E ■ on ④ in the upper part gives a C-sharp just like the following two C-sharps.

At other points, short melodic fragments appear and vanish in the texture, patterns emerge in a particular register across the various techniques, or the various techniques form a quasi-polyphonic web. Nevertheless, I would say that pitch is certainly a prime feature of the musical surface, even though the pitch formations appearing at the surface of the sound are not the same formations that appear on the surface of the notation. But, as has been noted, the connections established in sound are always of a local character, whether the connections are based on pitch or other qualities of sound or attack.

I will argue that the distinction between material and practice is difficult to sustain in this work – the former folds itself into the latter, which continuously feeds on the former like a parasite, both taking the role of the scaffold of the other; and, at the same time, breaking and tearing down the other in order to structure itself on its ruins. It is meaningless to discuss the structures of the one without in the same breath translating it to the language of the other – whose grammar is ever changing and never concluding. As I suggested above, the *Kompositorik des Tuns* is not a simple reversal of the traditional hierarchy of work and practice, it is an acknowledgment of the interdependency of the two.

***Reißwerck* and a radically idiomatic instrumental practice**

What is also becoming clear is that the language used to describe the various levels of *Reißwerck* is closing in on my reading of the title above. The work that is brought forth in the act of its own ripping apart is the *Reißwerck*. The musical form is incessantly traversing the limits of its dependency on its own outside, on the practice, on the alterity of the concrete and physical body that is to undertake its realization – put it into practice, so to say; the inside is permeated by the outside.

This seems to be the case even with the actual instrumental practice itself. The relationship with the definition of the radically idiomatic instrumental

practice is clear: *Reißwerck* is obviously a work of music where elements of the instrumental practice are structured as separate parameters. In a playful questioning of the efficacy of traditional practice, the actions of the body seem reduced to their bare essentials, touching or plucking the strings, or exchanging positions and functions and so on. The *weight* applied to a string variably produces either a harmonic, a fretting or, if applied with a certain speed, a percussive attack setting the string in motion; the right hand finds a parallel in a delicate brushing, an attack or a violent Bartók pizzicato. The hands operate independently or in a special kind of cooperation – not always in coordination, always chasing each other's tail, the one feeding like a parasite on the other's back. The radically idiomatic instrumental practice finds at its own root a dispersed matrix of biomechanics rather than idolatry, it is a practice that establishes itself in play through a given work, in a playful tearing apart of the work, just as the work itself is established through this same practice.

The practicing performer of this work finds him- or herself in a special and privileged position with regard to the various levels of sense in the work, being in actual and 'full' command of its substitutions, translations, deferrals, puns and aporias. These include also elements not part of this discussion like those found on the level of the haptic, those unheard and unseen secrets accessed only in the mutual inscription of body and instrument in the act of (the) practice – the role played by *weight* of both hands, the infinite varieties of *touch*, all those subtle and intimate twists and turns of the fingers and nails from which the performer establishes a working practice and a *body of work*.

Thus, with a radically idiomatic work, composition is pursued along two trajectories, which are not contradictory but rather mutually conditioning: the work structure embraces the conditions of its own realization – the inside of the work structure embraces its own outside so that the distinction between the inside and outside is blurred. These two trajectories largely mirror the double gesture of deconstruction associated with the work of Jacques Derrida. In fact, the constructive ripping-apart of traditional practice, implied by title *Reißwerck*, already suggests strong affinities with the word 'deconstruction'.

4.3 The radically idiomatic as deconstruction of instrumental practice

4.3.1 The double gesture of deconstruction

Derrida's strategy of double, or indeed multiple, writing is the '*general strategy of deconstruction*' (*Pos*: 41). The double writing addresses the binary oppositions of classical philosophy in order to show how the privileged terms of the traditional oppositional hierarchies of philosophy (of speech/writing, presence/absence, signifier/signified and so on) are conditioned on each other within a specific context, the limits of which can never be rigorously determined. According to Simon Critchley, the Derridean strategy of double writing⁵⁴ takes the form of a scholarly reconstruction of the dominant interpretation of a text as well as a destabilization of this dominant interpretation by tracing an element of alterity or exteriority within the text itself (Critchley 1999: 26). The element of alterity which brings about the destabilization of the dominant interpretation is an investigation into the historical and systematic conditions of the text, but also an investigation of the conditions of structure and signification in general on the most minute scale; the double reading is an investigation of the play of semiological difference – of the opposition of the signifier and the signified. However, as pointed out in Chapter 1, deconstruction is not simply a textual formalist method or a traditional critique in the Kantian sense, nor a neutralization or a Hegelian *sublation* of an opposition in a third term, but 'must, by means of a double gesture, a double science, a double writing, practice an *overturning* of the classical opposition *and* a general *displacement* of the system' of binary oppositions (*MP*: 329). I will claim that in *explicitly* opening the musical work up to the exteriority of practice – the simultaneous composition of the music as well as the specific practical conditions of the music, the turn from 'o' to 'u' – a radically idiomatic work similarly operates with 'two hands, two texts, two visions, two ways of listening' (*MP*: 65), structuring the practice and the work 'in a single gesture, but doubled' (*Dis*: 64), that is, it effectuates the movement of deconstruction.

54 'Reading' in the original. Critchley repeatedly highlights the fact that Derrida's writing always involves the *reading* of another text (see also Critchley 2008).

Derrida's work could be seen as an attempt to show how apparent unities are conditioned by their *others*, by alterity, by their own outside, indeed to traverse the margins of philosophy as such. One of the paradoxes of deconstruction is of course that the only means to approach such a writing is philosophical writing itself. Most of Derrida's early texts are therefore directed towards investigations of philosophical language, writing and science. The point of departure for Derrida's thinking is on the one hand the critical phenomenology of Husserl and Heidegger, and on the other a critical relation to the notions of essence, hierarchies and centred structures of the structuralist tradition after Saussure. Derrida's work carries on Heidegger's attempt at a 'destruction' of the Western metaphysical tradition, not least through Heidegger's own strategy of etymological analysis and the creation of neologisms, as well as textual experimentation.

In terms of method, it is important to note that texts such as 'Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences' (WD: 351-370) and 'Signature Event Context' (MP: 307-30) present a parasitic close reading – they draw their sustenance from other texts in order to show to what extent the arguments in texts read are based on and conditioned by their own opposites. In 'Signature Event Context' Derrida elaborates how the classical notion of writing as a means of communication of an extended presence breaks down when confronted by the radical iterability of the sign, or its *graphematic* structure. In 'Structure, Sign and Play', Claude Levi-Strauss's otherwise radical venture of a structural anthropology is criticized for not elaborating the methodological implications of confronting structuralism with an excess of empirical material, suggesting that Levi-Strauss gets caught up in the very historical presence, metaphysical nostalgia and originary purity he seeks to avoid through applying a method of *bricolage* (WD: 367-9).

In both these examples, Western thinking (and even the impressive modernist thinking of Levi-Straussian structural anthropology) is presented as based on binary opposites (writing/speech, presence/absence, material/form) that not only enact a polarization, but also always already represent a hierarchization and a subordination of the terms. Against this thinking, Derrida posits the Nietzschean *confirmation*, the joy over the decentred and interminable play of *becoming* in a philosophy where truth is substituted by interpretation and where the absence of any central governing principle receives a positive formulation (Ibid.: 369).

4.3.2 Radical idiomatics and the double gesture

Above, I read the title of *Reißwerck* as suggesting a structure that produces a musical work in the act of ripping (it) apart. It is important to note that in *Reißwerck* there is no question of giving up on the notion of the work, however much it is challenged. The grid of the radically idiomatic instrumental practice needs, and feeds on, the frames of the work in its own workings to resist the temptations of any spring green avant-gardisms. This is the suggestion made by Derrida against Levi-Straussian *bricolage*, investigating the historical and philosophical origins of thought, sustaining the old vocabulary in order to criticize it from the inside and seek out what's left when the metaphysical scaffold breaks down (*WD*: 358–9). Nevertheless, '[d]econstruction does not consist in passing from one conceptual order to another, but in overturning and displacing a conceptual order, as well as the nonconceptual order on which the conceptual order is based'. (*MP*: 329) I will claim that the operation of deconstruction is in complete analogy with the operational character of the radically idiomatic instrumental practice of *Reißwerck* and my reading of the title itself.

Thus the title suggests the double gesture of deconstruction. The two phases of writing of which Derrida speaks (*Pos*: 41), or the two trajectories of reading described by Critchley (Critchley 1999), find a parallel in the ambiguity of the *Reißwerck*, whose title and process carry out this double gesture: the work – the traditional entity – is constructed on the conditions of its own realization, from which it draws its sustenance. In this way, the traditional hierarchy of notation over performance is set in play, even if this does not imply that the latter is in a position to surpass its dependency on the former. I have noted how the material structures and the instrumental practice feed on each other in a mutually parasitical relation, as an incessant double inscription of the one through the other, the one articulating itself through the mouth of the other, displacing the other without being able either to let it go or to transgress it; the practice is invested with a certain structurality which is not a strict organization of *musical* structure, but which conditions the musical structure with which it is not identical, and which comes into being only through the practical realization, the margin or limit that separates the two being continuously traversed.

Similarly, but constructed according different strategies, *colloid* was read along processual lines where the relatively stable – indeed almost

traditionally pure – practice of the first third of the work is gradually supplanted by its own other in the form of ‘extraneous’ sounds like scratching, percussive attacks and muffled harmonics. If the general tendency of traditional practice – the gathering of the sensible elements of practice to conform with an ideal of unity, the returning of all elements to a sameness that mirrors the stability of tonality (indeed, rather than calling this common practice ‘traditional’ one could apply the adjective ‘tonal’) – is one of homogenization, the heterogeneous and continuously bifurcating practice of *colloid* is a disseminating practice where the sense implied by the single elements are variously bundled together to produce single sounds, sounds formed as sheaves of divergent trajectories. Thus the radically idiomatic works implies a notion of practice as writing, not only in the banal form of marks in a notation – of which it would be the positive expression – but along the lines of that *arche-writing* that Derrida conceptualizes in his reading of Saussure.

4.3.3 Practice as writing; *différance*; the dissemination of practice

The concept of musical notation is not the primary target in this investigation. Nevertheless, in assessing the *arche-writing* of practice, notation serves as a convenient entrance. With the term notation I refer to modern, Western, notation. According to the *New Grove* ‘[a] musical notation requires, in essence, two things: an assemblage of “signs” and a convention as to how those signs relate to one another’ (Bent et al., 2001: §II, 1).⁵⁵ These signs can be both descriptive and prescriptive; they represent musical sounds and their qualities as well as certain actions of the performer; different forms of notation lean more to one side of this axis than the other. The notation of *colloid* and *Reißwerck* conforms to this concept: the signs employed imply sounds of the music and actions to be performed. Now, and this is most clear in *colloid*, the specification of the practical elements (in *colloid* the right hand fingerings, strings and so on) explicate how these elements have been caught up in the traditional writing of music; they are marked in the score with distinct signs, and they form units of distinct regularity. From this follows that the material elements of the practice (i.e. the body and the

55 I note in passing that this definition is in line with the Saussurean definition of the sign in general.

instrument), just like the signs of the printed notation or the actual sounds that the printed notation is said to 'represent', should be recognized as a separate system of material and concrete signs. This latter system of signs is the domain of the practitioner, of instrumental treatises, of instrumental teaching.

As a system of signs, practice could therefore be viewed as a form of writing. We learn from Saussure that any system of signs is a system of differences, that signs articulate themselves in their difference from other signs. This holds for the signs of the practice as well, their different elements or signs are of course clearly differentiated (fingers, strings, frets) from each other, but the elements are also differentiated internally (different fingers, different strings, different frets). Like the single elements of other systems of signs, for instance the single sounds of language analyzed in phonetics, the individual elements of practice are not invested with any originary meaning: the relationship between the signifier and the signified, between the inside and outside of the sign is arbitrary (*MP*: 10–12). In Chapter 3, I noted that the elements of the practice are themselves mute; this is because in themselves the elements do not signify – signification, as the production of a sound, only comes about when more than one element come together. The elements combine to form different sounds, and this is only possible because of the iterability or graphematic structure of the sign: the sign can be repeated in different contexts to form different meanings. This combinatorial arbitrariness leaves the practice as a chain of signifiers: right hand finger–left hand finger–string–fret–right hand position–left hand position–pressure–weight–force–tuning and so on. This chain of signifiers bundles together for every sound, the sound comes about only within the context of the bundle. Practice is therefore not writing because it can be notated as marks in a score – because it can be fixed in writing – practice is writing because it is a system of signs and as such is founded on the iterability of the sign, in the graphematic structure of language, that is, in that which is proper to writing understood as a means of transmission of meaning to an absent addressee. The iterability of the elements or signs of the practice is thus what makes it a form of writing, a writing which must precede any concept of practice as such. In Derrida, this writing which precedes any concrete semiology or writing is variously called a 'general writing', *arche-writing* or *différance* (*OG*: 56–65; *MP* 1–27; *Pos*: 39–47). From this non-conceptual basis of any semiology – non-conceptual because it suggests the deferral

of closure that underpins all differentiation and therefore any semiology of difference – sense, meaning or signification is gathered only within specific contexts, implying that signification is always necessarily local, transitory and contingent.

Every sign, *linguistic or nonlinguistic* [emphasis added], spoken or written (in the usual sense of this opposition), as a small or large unity, can be *cited*, put between quotation marks; thereby it can break with every given context, and engender infinitely new contexts in an absolutely nonsaturable fashion. This does not mean that the mark is valid outside its context, but on the contrary that *there are only contexts without any centre of absolute anchoring* [emphasis added]. (MP: 319)

Such is the radically idiomatic conception of instrumental practice: a practice without any centre of absolute anchoring outside the specific context of the given work. In its form, *colloid*, with its explicit chains of practical signifiers, the ever-shifting matrix of practical elements exposes this contextuality that leaves the traditional and homogenizing, indeed logocentric, practice as one possible context among a plurality of contexts in the dissimulation of this practice through the work. As a chain of signifiers, the instrumental practice of the radically idiomatic works imply a spreading of sense in the gathering of the practice, both practically sensible and audible-intelligible, what Derrida calls *dissemination*: ‘an irreducible and *generative* multiplicity’ (Pos: 45). Dissemination plays on the hinge between the two trajectories of the deconstructive gesture: ‘Dissemination is a systematic exploration of the interval [between an inversion and new concept which could not be contained within the previous regime]’ (Pos: 42). In Chapter 5, I will suggest a genealogical understanding of the radically idiomatic in such terms in relation to the revolt of the avant-garde.

This practice as writing, whose mute and scattered elements are ‘neither absolutely separate nor simply separable’ (Dis: 177), is the general field of practice conjured in Chapter 2. This is the zero point sought by Barrett when writing *Ne songe plus à fuir*. A zero point of practice – a *pratique degré zéro*. Surely, this is a reiteration of the modernist trope of purity found in the works of Anton Webern, for example, or in the paintings of Piet Mondrian, or in the early Boulez of *Structures*.⁵⁶ For a composer actively engaged in free improvisation, who claims Hans-Joachim Hespos as part of his ancestry, such a concept cannot be understood as anything but one of those fictions Barrett

56 I will return to Boulez in Chapter 5. See Boulez 1975: 55.

claims he needs to carry the work through (Toop 1988: 31).⁵⁷ For surely such a thing must be an illusion: as I outlined in Chapter 2, both the instrument and the performing body are entangled in networks of power/knowledge relationships; these elements are handed down through history, serving the *telos* of traditional interpretation as logocentrism. Nevertheless, such a 'dream of purity' (Bauman 1997) which sees the elements of the practice in their most disparate state, is what facilitates the understanding of practice as writing as the second trajectory of the deconstructive gesture. The interval in which dissemination operates can only be marked in a *bifurcated* writing, (the 'new concept of writing, that simultaneously provokes an overturning of the hierarchy speech/writing, and the entire system attached to it, and releases the dissonance of a writing within speech, thereby disorganizing the entire inherited order and invading the entire field' (*Pos*: 42)), that is, a writing of deconstruction; as the analysis of *colloid* showed, such a writing dissimulates ('releases the dissonance of a writing') the elements of traditional practice in a dissemination of the body. The corporeality of the radically idiomatic is a dispersed body, indeed a body of writing: a written body.

4.3.4 The decapitation of the logos

This dispersed and stratified body suggested by the etymology of writing as ripping or incising in *Reißwerck*, this body as writing in which the work inscribes itself through the practice, this is the corpo-reality of the radically idiomatic implied by the decapitation of the 'o' implied in the turn from *Ton* to *Tun*. The dispersed body of writing, like the radically idiomatic practice, is decentred, it has no fixed centre around which it gathers sense; the *Tun* is not yet bundled together in the *Ton* which would form its signified – it is a body of becoming, of potentialities to be bundled together. In Derrida, such a lack of a fixed central signifier is linked to the psychoanalytic concept of castration, which, as Derrida reminds us, is substitutable for the figure of decapitation: "To decapitate = to castrate" (Freud quoted in *Dis*: 40). So castration, or decapitation, is always associated with the absence of a structural centre, with the ungluing of sense,⁵⁸ the lack of a transcendental signifier around which sense or signification (in the present case: the body

57 A somewhat different and more literal understanding of Barrett's concept of fictions is presented by Christopher Fox (Fox 1995).

58 Derrida discusses decapitation as ungluing in relation to Mallarmé in *Dis*: 178–9.

or practice) could be gathered. Now, the figure of decapitation has already been central to this chapter, in the form of the slippage from *Ton* to *Tun*, the decapitation of the 'o', and its implied deconstruction of the hierarchy of sound and practice. Although not expressly directed at Derrida, Joe Hughes's definition of the concept of castration points out its function in Derrida: 'To be castrated means nothing more than to lose a principle of organization: the phallus, or the conjunctive synthesis of partial surfaces'. (Hughes 2008: 34) The ungluing, decapitation or deconstruction of the concept of the transcendental signified 'which, at one time or another, would place a reassuring end to the reference from sign to sign' (*OG*: 49), is a key aspect of Derrida's work. Its target is the identification of presence with truth and logocentrism, 'the exigent, powerful, systematic, and irrepressible desire for such a signified'. (ibid.) I will return to the critique of presence (and by implication logocentrism) in relation to Ferneyhough in Chapter 6. My suggestion is that the decapitation of the 'o' elaborated in relation to *Reißwerck* and the radically idiomatic in general should be understood as the deconstruction of such a central principle of organization – of *Ton* as the *logos* of musical expression and practice – as the exposure of the contingency of music as sound, so that musical sense, expressivity and subjectivity must always be thought of as emanating from a practice on which neither a work nor a performer subject can impose strict limits. Interestingly, this body or practice without a central principle of organization, the body of writing or general practice, is the familiar body and practice of instrumental treatises and biomechanics,⁵⁹ a body of strictly determined corporeal behaviour familiar to any practitioner of classical music. This is the docile body addressed by disciplinary apparatuses, the body perforated by capillary power/knowledge relations. My claim is that radically idiomatic works suggest a deconstruction of the apparatus of instrumental practice, that is, of the conditions of subjectivity of the individual practitioner, which should be understood in terms of the 'ethics of deconstruction' elaborated by Simon Critchley. This claim will be fleshed out in Chapter 7. At this point it suffices to suggest that the traditional familiarity of this dispersed body of the radically idiomatic, of this body as writing, is the medium with which the radically idiomatic offers itself to tradition, this is the *hinge* to a traditional practice which it can not overcome. Because strictly speaking, a practice cannot in itself be deconstructive, it can only be practised deconstructively; it must be put to work as a deconstructive

59 Fine examples of the former would be Pujol (1952) and Carlevaro (1984); for the latter, see Iznola (1998) and Farias (2010).

practice in the dissemination of a musical work. Based in iterability and dissemination, practice as writing can never be fully formalized; only within the context of a given work can the rules of its play can be instituted. It does not strictly oppose traditional practice, but rather traverses the closure of context implied by the traditional practice. The radically idiomatic works are therefore not strictly speaking the outside of traditional practice; rather they explore the limits of the traditional relationship between a score and its realization within the context of a musical work in a way which questions the limits of these concepts by explicitly addressing the outside of the work, its own realization, its own immediate context. The radically idiomatic works thus described 'supposes both that there are only contexts [...] but also that the limit of the frame or the border of the context always entails a clause of nonclosure. The outside penetrates and thus determines the inside'. (Derrida 1988: 152–3) I will argue in Chapter 7 that this must also be the conditions of traditional, homogenizing, logocentric practice.

4.4 Re-capit(ul)ation

In this chapter I have presented a close reading of *Reißwerck* from the point of view of the practice and suggested understanding radical idiomatics along the lines of a Derridean deconstruction. This has resulted in a bifurcation of conceptual oppositions to be deconstructed and the elaboration of the practice and the body in terms of a certain form of practice as writing: a dispersed practice of mute elements. In Chapter 2 I argued that instrumental practice is an apparatus, a prosthesis of subjectivation, permeated by power/knowledge networks. How can these two conceptions of the practice come together – if they can come together at all? I have already suggested that the turn from *Ton* to *Tun* of the radically idiomatic works is a deconstructive movement, which would also be a deconstruction of the power/knowledge network of the Foucauldian apparatus. Nonetheless there are bits of the picture of the radically idiomatic still missing; the analysis of Ferneyhough's *Kurze Schatten II* will address the question of presence so central to Derrida, which will further suggest a return to the question of the deconstruction of the apparatus in Chapter 7.

However, before turning to *Kurze Schatten II*, I would like to delimit an historical frame of reference for the notion of composition as a writing of the

body through the practice in twentieth-century composition. The radically idiomatic seems to have entered history fully formed through a qualitative leap – the turn from *Ton* to *Tun* – as the extension of parametric thinking and/or stochastic compositional techniques were applied to an idiomatic and corporeal framework. How was the relation of body and structure articulated before this turn, and how can this articulation be read according to the claims of a radically idiomatic instrumental practice? These questions form the background for the argument in Chapter 5.

für Magnus Andersson

Reißwerck

Klaus K. Hübler, 1987

ca. 38

p — *mf* *p*

④ ③ ② ⑥ ④

9:5 6:4

f — *p* — *f* — *f* — *f* [*pp*] — *mf* — *f* — *pp*

mp — *p*

① ④ ②

② ④ ⑤ ③ ⑥ ⑤ ①

7:6 4:3 4:3

f *p* — *mf* *pp* — *f* [*pp*] — *f* — *p*

mf — *f* — *mf*

④ ③ ⑥ ④

5:3 5:3

③ ⑤ ④ ② ⑤ ① ② ⑥

p — [*pp*] — *p* — *f* — *p*

Wb.2234

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Example 4.4: *Reißwerck*, full score

The musical score is presented in three systems, each featuring a complex rhythmic structure with multiple layers of notes and rests. The notation includes various dynamic markings such as *p*, *f*, *mf*, *ff*, *pp*, and *ppp*, along with articulation like *meccanico*. Rhythmic ratios are indicated by numbers like 3, 7:4, 7:5, 8:9, 4:3, 6:5, 7:9, 7:6, 5:3, and 11:6. Fingerings are shown with circled numbers 1-5. The score is written in a single staff with a treble clef and a 3/16 time signature. The piece is identified as Wb.2234.

Example 4.4 (cont.): *Reijswerck*, full score

The musical score consists of three systems of music in treble clef, 4/4 time. Measure 13 features a triplet of eighth notes with a dynamic marking of *f* and a crescendo to *ff*. Measure 14 is a complex rhythmic passage with multiple layers of notes, including a 9:5 ratio and a 4:3 ratio. It includes dynamic markings of *pp*, *f*, *mp*, *p*, and *f*, along with fingering numbers 4, 3, 1, 2, 4, 5, 2, 3, 2. Measure 15 is marked *m.d. sola* and features a melodic line with dynamic markings of *f*, *p*, *f*, *pp*, *f*, *pp*, *f*, *p*. The score concludes with a *rit. estremamente* marking and a *non dim.* instruction.

Wb. 2234

Example 4.4 (cont.): *Reißwerck*, full score

5 Prefiguring the Radically Idiomatic (Preliminary Sketch for a Genealogy of Twentieth-Century Music)*

In the preface to *negatives* Barrett rhetorically poses the question of origin – and this question should be seen as the question of the origin of the radically idiomatic as such – ‘is it relevant to speak of influences?’ (Barrett 1993: 2).⁶⁰ Certainly such a question could simply be seen as a young composer’s attempt at boasting his own originality; indeed, outlining Barrett’s private pantheon would arguably be the simplest of exercises. Nonetheless, explicitly raising instrumental practice to the level of musical material, as done by Ferneyhough, Hübler and Barrett, must be regarded as an unprecedented event. The dissociation of *Ton* and *Tun* exposes their profound entanglement. The double gesture of the radically idiomatic, as simple as it is shattering, marks an abyssal event in the history of musical composition and performance that leaves nothing intact. This event suggests a retroactive projection of its stakes, and thus the works articulate a critical relation to history. This relation should be taken into account when assessing the historical context that allows for the emergence of the radically idiomatic. Again I turn to Foucault – the critical relation to history and the dismantling

* Parts of this chapter have been published in Førisdal 2015

60 Interestingly, this comment is *not* taken up in the argument developed by Hawkins in his discussion of the different forms of discursive marginalization related to composers associated with the term new complexity. See Hawkins (2010).

of the traditional hierarchy of work and practice offered by the radically idiomatic complies with his notion of genealogy. The present chapter will therefore not amount to a history of the radically idiomatic as a search for origins, which would nevertheless be found in the inherent disparity of the musical sign and the heterogeneity of *Ton* and *Tun*. Rather, it is an attempt at a partial re-reading of certain works of the twentieth century as a form of genealogy, through the retroactive lens of the radically idiomatic.

5.1 Foucauldian genealogy

The body is the surface of the inscription of events (traced by language and dissolved by ideas), the locus of the dissociation of the Me (to which it tries to impart the chimera of a substantial unity), and a volume in perpetual disintegration. Genealogy, as an analysis of descent, is thus situated within the articulation of the body by history. Its task is to expose a body totally imprinted by history and the process of history's destruction of the body. (NGH: 375–6)

The analyses of two radically idiomatic works suggest a number of wide-ranging historical questions regarding the relationship between musical structure, practice and the body. How was the body addressed in an era when it was part of neither musicological nor theoretical discourse, and when idiomatic writing simply meant writing for a specific instrument? How did composers come to address the question of the performing body through an explication of expressive conditions within musical notation? How did composing music come to be a writing of the body? In the following I will only outline a response to these questions. The radically idiomatic can be situated historically between the parametric dissolution of material structure that followed in the wake of the liberation of the dissonance and the Dadaist lineage with its focus on the performative. As the radically idiomatic works are concerned with addressing the practical conditions of the musical work, the works themselves seem to question their own double heritage, positing and traversing structure and the performative as an inescapable and contingent double bind that inscribes itself into the notation and the performer body. To paraphrase Foucault, the radically idiomatic notion of instrumental practice exposes the body as a surface inscribed by musical events, dissociating the body from the 'Me' as a subject of practice. In this the works carries a genealogical impulse.

Following the view of Arnold Davidson, I consider Foucauldian genealogy as an expansion of the temporal and epistemological basis of the archaeology that formed the basis of Foucault's work up until 1970: 'genealogy does not so much displace archaeology as widen the kind of analysis to be pursued' (Davidson 1986: 226).⁶¹ The methodological shift was already outlined in Chapter 2; the widening suggested by Davidson being the expansion of the primarily structural analysis of types of knowledge that characterizes the work before 1970 into the analyses of power, subjectivity and practices of the seventies. One of the important elements of both archaeology and genealogy is the possibility of a displacement of the concepts of origin and essence. Following this lead, I will not engage with the historiographic question regarding origin that has been such an important topos in the attempt to establish musicology as a properly scientific discipline and which infuses so many texts on twentieth-century music and the quest for novelty and originality.⁶² The search for historical origins as a methodological purveyor of truth is strongly opposed in Foucault as a 'metahistorical deployment of ideal significations' (*NGH*: 370). 'What is found at the historical beginning of things', according to Foucault, 'is not the inviolable identity of their origin, it is the dissension of other things. It is disparity' (*Ibid.*: 371–2). In musicology, the notion of style has been one such important 'ideal signification' that continues to provide an important marker in the rarefication of musicological discourse. The radically idiomatic is not a style, however, but a distinct approach to the relationship between musical structure and practice that exposes the body as an imprint of history. Certainly, any musical practice marks the performing body as scarred, although this is nowhere raised as a question of musical composition as in the radically idiomatic works. The following sketch of a reading of twentieth century music as genealogy gathers some 'discreet and apparently insignificant truths' (Nietzsche quoted in *NGH*: 370) concerning the relationship between sound, sound production, articulation, and the body – in short, instrumental practice – and composition technique in the twentieth century, not in order to expose a linear relationship from one to the other but rather to indicate and outline certain retroactive effects of writing exposed by the double gesture of the radically idiomatic. Certainly, such a strategy is not without precedent in musicology. For instance, Carl Dahlhaus, in his *Nineteenth-Century Music*, analyzes

61 See also Koopman 2013: 30–44.

62 See for instance Rehding 2000 and 2003 on the question of origins in German *Musikwissenschaft*.

rhythm and pitch in Bruckner and Mahler according to principles of parametric thinking (Dahlhaus 1989). Thus, as an extension of the principles for the archaeological analysis outlined in Chapter 2, I read the quantification of timbre and dynamics in early serialism in terms of the embodiment of practice, relating it to the notion of practice as text, and the questioning of cultural rituals in Kagel's music theatre is read as suggesting a field of potentialities to be domesticated. Somewhat surprisingly perhaps, the chapter ends with a deconstructive reading of Aldo Clementi's strict contrapuntal textures as radically idiomatic, a reading which suggests the undecidability of *Ton* and *Tun* as the ultimate horizon of the radically idiomatic. I intentionally configure my reading around canonical figures and texts in order to stress the necessity of a reassessment of certain features of their work, features that are usually treated as marginal side-effects, that is, as 'discreet and insignificant truths'.

My initial question for the following is this: How does practice and the body surface as an explicit problematic of musical composition? In tracing an answer to this question, another question immediately raises itself: Where to begin? Since the genealogical question is one of a dispersal of conditions, rather than locating an originary source – a question of *how* rather than *who* – pinpointing temporal and geographical coordinates loses some of its importance. Certainly, a proper history of the radically idiomatic should discuss also the flamboyant virtuosity of the baroque era, or the analogue interest in the virtuoso performer and the body in the nineteenth century (as in Davies 2014); the transition to writing for specific instruments that exploited the particular traits and symbolic function of instruments (as in Monteverdi's *Orfeo* for instance); the expansion of instrumental technique in the twentieth century. Such a history should perhaps even venture as far back in time as neumatic notation and its relation to corporeal gestures.⁶³ Given the large transformations of musical life in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and the parallel emergence of disciplinary power systems, the era of Beethoven certainly offers certain key events in such a history. The changes of the functions of music in bourgeois society, the changes in musical education with the establishment of conservatories and a new didactics, the transformations of theoretical (Schelling, Kant, the Jena Romantics, Hoffman, A.B. Marx etc.) and practical aesthetics, the separation

63 'In general Latin usage, the word *neuma* meant "gesture, sign, movement of the hand" (Hiley and Szendrei 2001, 1.11).

of the role of composer and performer (mirrored in the gradual exclusion of hitherto compulsory theoretical discussions in instrumental treatises), the new elevated and panoptic position of the conductor, the cult of the heroic virtuoso – to this list of apparatuses more could undoubtedly be added others. Nevertheless, such a history of the present will have to wait, as the primary target of this thesis is the limited context of the radically idiomatic, and the function of this chapter is to provide a context to the analytic chapters. So, following convention – which possibly enables highlighting the change of focus towards the retroactive corporeal effects of changes in compositional practice – I begin in Vienna, not at the beginning of the ‘long century’ but rather at its very end.

5.2 Interpretation as a problem

Composers have always engaged, of course, in matters of performance practice and the (more or less explicit) expansion of the possibilities of musical expression, and vocal and instrumental technique. During the Baroque era there was a clear and increasing tendency to exploit idiomatic instrumental writing, and in the Classical and Romantic eras there was a continual exploration of the limits of instrumental technique and virtuosity. Nineteenth-century instrument construction saw a parallel development, for instance in the extension of range of the piano, increasing the length of strings on string instruments to alter the sound and increase the volume, the invention of new instruments and so on. In the twentieth century these tendencies continued. The exploration of new or ‘extended’ instrumental sounds, techniques and practices, whose proliferation escalated in the late fifties, has transformed the field of expressive possibilities in instrumental music immensely.

With the radical music of the Second Viennese School, interpretation and performance became an explicit problematic of composition. The ‘new music’ challenged the inherited notions of beauty and musicality, and posed hitherto unimagined challenges to the performers, not only in technical terms but also in terms of projecting sense and coherence within the new, fragmented idiom. The problematic is summed up by Adorno in the opening statement of the *Aesthetic Theory*: ‘It is self-evident that nothing in art is self-evident anymore, not its inner life, not its relation to the world,

not even its right to exist.' (Adorno 2002: 1) Following this loss of self-evidence, musical interpretation becomes a matter of art's own right to exist – indeed a matter of the life and death of music. Schoenberg himself was keenly aware of this problematic and devoted much energy to establish a new performance practice through his private chamber music sessions, with the establishment of the *Verein für musikalische Privataufführungen* in Vienna in 1918, and not least in his collaboration with performers such as Rudolf Kolisch and Eduard Steuermann. The specification of *Hauptstimme* and *Nebenstimme* in his scores should be seen in this context, as well as the note to performers in works such as the *Fourth String Quartet* op. 37 (1936). Musical performance also underwent a transformation in this period, not only with the concentrated energy demanded by such works as the miniatures of Webern, but also with the more extrovert piece like *Pierrot Lunaire* or a composer-performer like Alberto Savinio, whom Guillaume Apollinaire in praise predicted would destroy every piano he got his hands on because of his violent performances (Apollinaire 1914). The interpretive ideals of Kolisch, both as a soloist and in the Kolisch and Pro Arte quartets, are closely linked to Schoenberg's ideals as a composer, not least importing the idea that no note should be superfluous, either in a composition or in performance (Smith 1986: 105; Mattes 2007: 73–82). Interestingly, Kolisch remained an ideal performer for Adorno, as is evident in the posthumously published *Theorie der Musikalische Reproduktion* (Adorno 2001). Schoenberg's efforts in the area of performance practice became a model for Boulez and others, who established specialized ensembles or institutions like the Ensemble Intercontemporain or IRCAM, and included often-lengthy explanations of notation and performance ideals found in many scores as well as in programme notes, interviews and other outlets. The collaboration between composers and performers is taken for granted in the contemporary music scene of today, as is composer participation in the running debate on contemporary music. In this way, composers exert great power over their work, a situation that, as already mentioned in Chapter 2, poses methodological challenges to the musicological reception. In my view, this is related to a question of structure and interpretation which emerges as a distinct problem with the works of the Second Viennese School.

5.3 The rupture of the social body

In approaching the genealogy of the radically idiomatic, of the relationship between the body and composition, the works of Gustav Mahler demarcate a rupture in relation to traditional orchestral writing. Breaking with the prevailing seamless organic ideal of orchestration found in the works of Wagner or Bruckner, in Mahler the orchestra is unleashed as a many-headed corpus that makes itself heard in a way that is intrinsically bound up with the structure of the works. This is highlighted in Adorno's book on Mahler, where he writes that '[i]n Mahler's orchestra the balance that was still maintained in Wagner is upset for the first time, despite the increase in colour as compared to classicism' (Adorno 1992: 15). In Mahler's orchestra, the instruments do not necessarily go together to form a balanced whole, but are often associated with certain standardized characters that refer to specific social practices involving music (i.e. military bands or folk music). According to Adorno, '[c]haracterization in Mahler's acoustic material extends to the physiognomies of instruments that leap untamed from the tutti' (Ibid.: 51), creating a brokenness of tone that Adorno relates to Nietzsche and the insight that 'the system and its seamless unity, its appearance of reconciliation, is dishonest' (Ibid.: 64). As a whole, Adorno relates the brokenness of Mahler's orchestra to his activity as a conductor; in Adorno's argument, Mahler is writing for his own instrument, something Adorno sees as a decisive aspect of Mahler's creativity:

The conductor as composer has an ear not only for the sound but for the practice of the orchestra, the capabilities of the instruments as well as the exertions, weaknesses, exaggerations, and dullnesses that can be turned to his perusal. Borderline and exceptional situations, which the conductor studies through mistakes, extend his language, just as the experience of the orchestra as a living entity, correcting any static notion of sound, helps the music to produce itself spontaneously, to keep flowing. Orchestral *praxis*, a hard and unhappy fetter in the commercial sphere, releases Mahler's creative imagination. (Ibid.: 30–31)

That is, Mahler uses the instruments in ways that are not always considered good or proper, writing in awkward registers or keys, exploring unusual doublings, or challenging soloistic writing. This confrontation with the good taste of the received tradition is to a certain extent dramatized in the works themselves as what Adorno sees as a positive negation, exemplified by the very opening of the first symphony:

The tormenting pedal at the start of the first symphony supposes the official ideal of good instrumentation in order to reject it. In his search for the estrangement Mahler only hit on the use of harmonics for that note after the event. (Ibid.: 15)

It should be noted that the subtitle of Adorno's book explicitly addresses the problematic of surface and meaning that I have charted out for the analysis of the radically idiomatic. In Adorno's Mahler, god is dead, there is no fixed centre and meaning must be sought in the positivity of the concrete relations that are established on the musical surface.

Schoenberg's notion of *Klangfarbenmelodie* should be regarded as an extension – a structuralization – of Mahler's orchestral writing, and is a special case in point as it sets timbre and sound itself (although not sound *production* as such) apart as a possible structural determinant. *Klangfarbenmelodie* cuts through the social fabric of the orchestral body, which has been ingrained through years and years of collective effort, and establishes relationships that go against the traditional orchestral ideal. Although the employment of this concept in itself does not affect the single performer directly, by extension, at least when tailored to a single instrument, the *Klangfarbenmelodie* has the potential to transform the performing body of the individual musician. On the last pages of his *Harmonielehre*, Schoenberg speculates on the possibility of constructing timbral patterns whose structural quality could be analogous to pitch melodies (Schoenberg 1922: 506–7). This idea was first set to work in the *Five Pieces for Orchestra* op. 16 of 1909 (particularly in the third movement). However, it is with the music of Webern that the notion of *Klangfarbenmelodie* was to take on a structural responsibility on par with pitch and rhythm. Webern developed a method of instrumentation that highlights his dense motivic writing. For instance, in Webern's *Five Pieces for Orchestra* op. 10, of 1913, which could be seen as a response to Schoenberg's orchestral pieces, Webern achieves an idiosyncratic motivic/melodic fragmentation by distributing the material in the ensemble rather than stating the material in full by one instrument. In the later twelve-tone works, as the motivic coherence of the material is ever tighter, there is really nothing separating the form of the material from what now needs to be bracketed as 'instrumentation'. For instance, in the second movement of the *Symphony* op. 21 (1928), the 11-bar clarinet theme of the following variations is a palindrome not just on the levels of pitch and rhythm, but on the levels of articulation and dynamics as well. However, it is interesting to note that where the dynamic articulation of the first part of

Example 5.1: Anton Webern, Symphony op. 21, second movement, clarinet, bars 1–11

the clarinet theme reinforces other parameters, in their retrograde form the parameters seem to work against each other: The slur on the rising major seventh of bar 4 is marked with a decrescendo which in the retrograde becomes a combination of slur and crescendo, a paradoxical figure, at least if the slur is understood in the classical sense of a strong/soft relation (see Example 5.1).

The first variation follows a similar structural pattern, but this variation is scored for strings only, so the comparatively reduced timbral palette increases the importance of articulation as a means for differentiating the motivic structure.⁶⁴ In the *Variations* op. 30 (1940) the distribution of the motives within the instrumental forces is so strict that the coherence of the twelve-tone rows, which is supposedly supported by the instrumentation, is simultaneously subverted in favour of the continuous variation of the individual motives. This suggests a reading in an analogy with Arnold Whittall's understanding of the contingent relationship between horizontal and vertical structures in Webern's writing (Whittall 1987). However, more interesting in the context of the radically idiomatic is the *Variations for piano* op. 27 (1936). Here, it seems that the musical material has a disposition based in the practicalities of piano playing just as much as in the projection of twelve-tone structures. Eduard Steuermann is lucid when he states that even though he never played a piece without having a very clear conception about the role and function of every tone in the piece, in performance he is not thinking of serial structure but the function of the single note within the structure of the work (Schuller 1964: 28).⁶⁵ This is clearly in opposition to the post-World War II climate where the projection of serial structure was regarded as being of great importance in Webern performance practice. In this regard mention should also be made of Peter Stadlen's 1951 performance

⁶⁴ See Nelson 1969: 77–9.

⁶⁵ See also Smith 1986: 79.

of the *Variationen* op. 27 at Darmstadt and his subsequent edition of the work.⁶⁶

The purpose of discussing the *Klangfarbenmelodie* here is to highlight how Schoenberg's theory and Webern's practice offer the opportunity to perceive timbre as a force that has the power to effectively fragment, decentre and restructure the unitary image of any sounding *corpus*. If this *corpus* is the body of a single musician – such as a pianist performing the *Variations* op. 27 – it may be seen as a fragmentation, decentring and restructuring of the actual performing body.

5.4 Practice as text

Olivier Messiaen

The dodecaphonic technique suggested the possibility of raising the status of articulation and dynamics, and of treating them as separate strands in composition technique. This is what Messiaen did in his seminal piano study *Mode de valeurs et d'intensités* of 1949. It is not necessary to go into the details of the modal organization of the piece in the present context; it suffices to highlight the use of an unordered set of 12 types of articulation.⁶⁷ In the foreword to the score, Messiaen describes the basis of the structure (Messiaen 1950). The piece is based on a set (*mode*) of 36 pitches fixed to a specific register and divided between the three divisions or parts, 24 rhythmic values, 12 types of articulation and 7 dynamic values. The relation between the various parameters remains fixed throughout the piece, which means that a given pitch always has the same matrix of duration, articulation and dynamic attached to it. The texture thus created is one in which the identity of the single note is very strong, and notes stand out as single points rather than melodic lines – a texture famously characterized by Stockhausen as a 'fantastic music of the stars' (Wörner 1973: 81). The fixed correlation of parameters hinders the possible free play of the individual parameters characteristic of serialism proper, and Schweizer quite rightly observes that because of the fixed pitch registers and lack of pauses in the texture, articulation ends up in a position subservient to the dynamic values (Schweizer

66 For an account of the debate over Webern's op. 27, see Wason 1987.

67 See Toop (1974) and Schweizer (1973) for detailed discussions of the structure of the work.

1973). A few years later, Messiaen was to envisage a more complex treatment of timbre in *Livre d'orgue I* somewhat related to the heterogeneity of Webern sketched above. In section II of the *Livre*, timbre is employed to fragment, disject and recombine the material like 'a protean monster who sticks the hand of the one on the arm of another, the colour of the one on the aroma of the other' (Messiaen quoted in Forte 2002: 24). However, as Grant has observed, in *Mode de valeur*, 'precisely because each note is conceived as a distinct, unchanging entity, with commonality of pitch class lacking in importance, the two "secondary" parameters are on equal footing with pitch and rhythm' (Grant 2001: 63). It is interesting to note that both Schweizer and Grant downplay articulation in their discussion of the piece; in listing the parameters that make up the mode of the piece, Grant actually fails to mention articulation (Ibid.: 61). This might be interpreted as symptomatic of musicology's methodological difficulties in handling 'soft' matters like 'secondary parameters', but also shows that there are perhaps more points to be missed in discussing this seminal work.⁶⁸ Schweizer further comments that had the piece been conceived for an instrumental ensemble possessing a rich palette of timbres and colours, the different types of articulation could have served a very different function (Schweizer 1973: 27) – this is indeed the case with several pointillist works of the subsequent years. However, in the present context it is precisely the restricted instrumentation that gives the piece its importance as this is a) what might have prompted Messiaen to raise articulation as such to the level of structure (rather than say instrumentation as a kind of *Klangfarbenmelodie* of 12 'values' as attempted by Boulez in *Polyphonie X* (see Toop 1974: 143)) and b) that the conception of instrumental practice is severely challenged by the prospect of achieving the strict values of dynamic and articulation called for by the score. The important point, of course, is that *every note* in the piece has a different notated attack, which means that an ideality of sound is effectively decentred: the normal sound no longer has the privileged fixity around which the other types of attack can be related.⁶⁹

68 I am indebted to J.M. Grant (2001: 63) for this pun.

69 A similar example can be found in Stockhausen's *Klavierstück V*, where staccato and legato attack are given in quotation marks in the performance instructions to the piece (Stockhausen 1955).

Pierre Boulez

Although *Mode de valeurs* is not strictly serial in structure, both its novel sound world and the explicit ordering of all its material elements of made a strong impact on the young generation of composers. Works like Boulez's *Structures 1* and Stockhausen's *Kreuzspiel* seem to have been conceived as direct adaptations of the ideas proposed by *Mode de valeurs*; both employ serial treatment of articulation as a separate parameter, as do countless other pieces following in their footsteps. However, as is noted by Forte (2002: 4), the absence of a reference to *Mode de valeurs* in Boulez's important polemic *Schoenberg est mort* is striking, as this is where Boulez first suggests generalizing the serial technique to include pitch, rhythm, dynamics and articulation – as had evidently already been done by Messiaen (Boulez 1966). Boulez shows his indebtedness in practice, though, as the series of *Structures 1* is taken from the first 12 pitches of the first division of *Mode de valeurs* (Boulez in Goléa 1958: 160; see also Jameaux 1991: 51 and Forte 2002: 7). That is, he strips Messiaen's mode of its distinctly modal and expressive characteristics and makes it operable for serial transformations. This qualification is also applicable for the adaption of the other parameters of Messiaen's mode, the values of which, with the exception of dynamics, whose values are extended from 7 to 12, are identical in both pieces. *Structures 1a* unfolds as a series of presentations of different textures, with between one and six voices based on the different basic permutations (P, R, I, RI and transpositions) of the row. The different voices usually have different dynamic and articulation, and in most sections the notes of one or more voice are not sustained (i.e. their initial sustained rhythm is filled by a pause after the attack). Additionally, all the voices are spread over the full range of the piano, giving the piece its distinctive anti-melodic and fragmentary character. Between the sections, there is usually a change in tempo and number of voices, as well as in the dynamic and articulation assigned to the individual voices. One of the main differences between *Mode de valeurs* and *Structures 1a* is the absence of regular (audible) associations between the parameters in the latter, something which results in an ever-changing variation. In *Mode de valeurs*, we saw that dynamics and articulation formed a unity – indeed, a parametric bundle – that gave each note a singular character. In *Structures 1a* there is no such unity, and the parameters are often in clear opposition to each other. However, in the present genealogical perspective, I would interpret this apparent opposition as an example of a particular notion of writing

– *écriture* – emerging from within musical notation itself, a notion of writing that does not shy away from exposing the possible paradoxes or aporias of the notational system itself. For the performers, the piece is undoubtedly a great challenge that requires extreme precision in terms of attack. However, as suggested by the discussion of writing in Chapter 2, when extending the concept of *écriture* to cover performance practice and instrumental technique, it is possible to conceive of the notation as more than just a performative challenge at the limits of a fertile musicianship. Beyond this, one could take the position that the main challenge is not directed at the performer as such, but against a tradition of interpretation that values direct and practical information, and even against the notion of the limit itself: Where do the limits between parameters of pitch (and register), duration, articulation and dynamic blur and intersect? Where does the one interfere with or even transform into the other? As is evident in Lynden DeYoung’s analysis of correspondences between pitch and rhythm in *Structures 1a*, the piece seems to appropriate ideas from Webern’s *Variationen* op. 27 just as much as those of Messiaen (DeYoung 1978: 28).⁷⁰ However, somewhat typical of the reception of *Structures* (and serialism in general), DeYoung fails to consider a broader context for his interesting findings at the expense of anything but pitch and rhythm. In fact, following Ligeti’s claim that the piece is a textbook example of integral serialism (Ligeti 1975), most analysts fail to discuss aspects other than the organization of pitch and rhythm at all – aspects like the importance of registers, the variation in polyphonic and tempo densities, or the formal disposition. And the work’s reception has generally not cared to discuss the listening experience of the work or even the somewhat obvious cultural context of a work with such a title,⁷¹ focusing solely the unity of the generative procedures as a guarantee of perceptive unity and aesthetic quality, as if the analysis was some kind of rescue procedure.⁷² Although the

70 Interesting in this context though is Toop’s discussion of the relations between Webern’s *Variationen* and Goeyvaerts’s two-piano *Sonata* of 1951. See Toop 1974: 153.

71 In recent years there has been a change of focus in favour of a broader contextualization, of which Grant (2001), Campbell (2010) and Dobretsberger (2005) are good examples. The details emerging in Dobretsberger’s interview with Boulez regarding his reading habits and relation to authors associated with (post-)structuralism and the journal *Tel Quel* is very informative in this respect (Dobretsberger 2005: 293–302).

72 This is even the case with Jameux despite the intention to write a listener’s guide. What he achieves is a misleading analysis of the serial structure of the piece, mistaking his own perception for generative procedures. See Jameux 1991: 269–84. Interestingly, Boulez’s own seminal role in the reception of Webern has been criticized for an exaggerated structural focus along similar lines.

reception of *Structures 1a* occupies an important place in the historiography of twentieth-century music, the reception of this central (to the discourse) and absent (from the concert stage) monument of serial music, in taking Boulez's own statements about the work as a Barthesian '*degré zéro*' of emotive and intentional involvement (Boulez 1975: 55; Jameaux 1991: 45, 51) at face value (rather than living up to Barthes's critical notion of the death of the author... (1977a)), has failed to grasp the singular expressive character of the work. For this reason, the reception has missed that its presumed automatism could be seen as effecting a bracketing of the serialized parameters, thus actually possibly highlighting other aspects of formal articulation and expression. One finds this, for instance, in the relationship between register and row forms, resulting in interesting and important local events like the continuous pitch/register relationships that run throughout the movement. Good examples are provided by the E-flats/D-sharps repeated in the same octave in both pianos in bars 8–9, and the many analogue pitch/register relationships in bars 14–15 to give just two examples, the result of these relationships being the creation of a sense of unity through the fragmentary texture.⁷³ It would be mistaken, though, to see the repeated notes as 1:1 identities as the differences in attack and dynamics of the repeated notes give every such connection a special character. The possibility of such occurrences are due not only to the interval properties of the series, but just as much to the octave placement of the individual note and its placement in the series in relationship with the row transposition as well as the local rhythmic relationships between the voices. Perhaps one could say that, because some elements are 'automatized', one could change focus towards all those elements that are *not* automatized and that therefore might reveal themselves as not only central to compositional decisions (i.e. 'subjective expression'), but also to musical expression as such. An investigation along those lines might end up suggesting that *Structures* is as much a part of that event in the history of structure that exposes the structurality of structure – of which Derrida writes about in the critique of Levi-Strauss referred to in Chapter 4 – as it is the negation of expression. Am I digressing? No – as I will suggest in relation to the reception of Ferneyhough below and in Chapter 6, Ferneyhough's music is to a large degree victim of the same servitude and positivist attitude. Perhaps this could be termed a 'generative fallacy'

73 Of particular interest in relationship to the problematics of idiomatic *écriture* would be the D-sharp in the lower part of piano 1 bar 9 which is, of course, the same key as the sustained E-flat in the upper part; see also the 'doubling' of F-sharp in both parts of piano 1 in bar 15.

of musicology. Accusations of servitude could possibly be directed at the present text as well, and throughout the dissertation I repeatedly return to the composer's own statements about their own work – however, I strive to extend my position beyond merely *exposing the system* behind the works in a positivist manner, enabling rather the works' own heterogeneous *positivity* as an intermediary between the notation and the performer to be set in motion.

With generative procedures not as easily absorbed in positivist terms as those of *Structures 1a*, the poetic exoticism of *Le Marteau sans maître* (1954–57) has ignited another type of receptive discourse supplementing the analytic writing. The focus of the present discussion will be limited to a brief discussion of the serialization of articulation in the *bourreaux de solitude* movement of the work, the principles of which have been uncovered by Wayne C. Wentzel (1991). Extending the analysis of pitch-duration associations (PDAs) unearthed by Steven D. Winick (1986), Wentzel has established a consistent relationship between pitch, duration, dynamics and articulation, in addition to correcting certain shortcomings in Winick's account as well as misprints in the score. In short, in *bourreaux de solitude* there is a fixed relationship between the four parameters fixed to a chromatic pitch layout and transposable according to the chromatic scale (there is no row in this movement). That is, the relationships are fixed, but the whole parametric matrix changes depending on the starting point of the chromatic scale, which is easily identified in the score as semiquavers. In this movement he relationship between pitch and duration is very simple as the rhythms are based on multiplications of the basic semiquaver value. So if the chromatic scale starts on C, the C is a semiquaver, C-sharp is a quaver – and B natural is a dotted minim. There are six pairs of similar dynamic values (between *pp* and *ff*), and the first value in each pair is modified by one of three articulative values (*sfz*, *>* and *-*) that are also arranged in pairs.⁷⁴ Although the *bourreaux de solitude* movement has been the object of much analytic detective work, none of the analyses even raise the question of instrumentation in relation to the other material except in order to point out that the xylo-rimba plays only pitches with low durational values (or: it is assigned only the durations accorded to the first three values of the DPA set).⁷⁵ However, a

74 The full matrix is reprinted in Wentzel (1991: 147) and Nonnenmann (2000b: 380).

75 Interestingly, Wentzel (1991: 165) associates the sharp attack of the xylo-rimba with the integral serial style of *Structures*.

relevant question would be whether there is any form of plan regarding the disposition of timbre or the entry and order of the instruments. In the recent writing on Boulez, it seems that a new character is emerging, distinct from the structuralist persona he fashioned for himself early in his career. In a short but pointed article, composer Georg Friedrich Haas responds to Ulrich Mosch's claim that it is impossible to reconstruct Boulez's generative procedures for the second movement of *Le Marteau* on the basis of the matrixes found among the sketches.⁷⁶ Haas (maybe because of his own insight as a composer rather than as one who looks for water-tight structures and strictly linear procedures?) manages to explain how the pitch material was generated and how the matrixes fit together, and that Boulez's techniques are more loosely organized than previously imagined.⁷⁷ Interestingly, Foucault already suggested as much in a late text on Boulez, where he claims that Boulez's work is based on the establishment of rules as they are broken, in a liminal movement clearly relatable to Bataille's theory of transgression as confirmation elaborated in *L'Érotisme* (1957); he thus suggests a completely different context for assessing Boulez's work than that which dominates the reception (Foucault 1982).

5.5 Stretching the body

Immediately after the few essays in total structural control following in the footsteps of Messiaen's *Mode de valeurs*,⁷⁸ there was also an increasing interest in performance variabilities, the gradations of which could also be structured along serial principles. An example of this is Stockhausen's 1956 woodwind quintet *Zeitmasze*, where there is a graduation of ensemble synchronization based on the physical abilities of the individual performers – their ability to play very fast, to articulate clearly, or to play a phrase as slow as the breathing capacity allows. What is interesting about this latter detail is that musical decisions concerning ensemble coordination as well as the pace and phrasing of the music is occasionally given up in favour of complete dependency of the physique of the individual performer. That is, one of the

76 The sketches for Boulez's works are held at the Paul Sacher Stiftung, Basel.

77 In this context, Guldbrandsen (1997) has also made a valuable contribution.

78 In addition to the textbook example of *Structures 1a*, notable examples are found in Michel Fano's 1951 *Sonata* for two pianos or Karel Goeyvaerts's *Nummer 1* (piano, 1950) or *Nummer 2* (ensemble, 1951). See Toop 1974.

basic bodily functions is given a structural function in the articulation of form in the work.

Mauricio Kagel

A more explicit focus on the performance situation and the onstage performer is found in the work of Mauricio Kagel. In numerous works, Kagel scrutinizes the performance situation with its rituals and conventions. This problematic is in his work also often reflected on the level of musical structure, notation and instrumental detail, producing a body of work that is like a heterogeneous carnival. For instance, in *Transición II* (1958) for a pianist, a percussionist and two tape-recorders, the two performers have to collaborate on performing on the same piano. While the pianist is positioned in the traditional way in front of the keyboard, the percussionist is active inside the piano, manipulating the strings with dampers and harmonics, scratching them and striking the frame. Crucially, the two performers are equally important in the production of sound, and one should see the actions of the pianist as giving the impetus for the sounds produced by the percussionist.⁷⁹ Although the percussionist is enriching the timbral range of the piano, this could be regarded not just as an 'extension' of traditional piano practice but as the premise of the piece in accordance with the dictum later formulated by Lachenmann: 'Komponieren heißt: ein Instrument bauen' (Lachenmann 2004: 77). However, building an instrument by necessity includes devising a practice, and in this piece the practice is a shared agency – and responsibility – of making sounds. In fact, there is a mutual and complex interplay between the two performers about the creation of the piece (not unlike the collaboration found in a homogeneous medium like the string quartet), which subverts the notion of a hierarchy between the performers. There is also a built-in element of struggle and fight between the performers, and this tension between cooperative and antagonistic activity – and the blurring of these categories – is what gives a performance of this piece its characteristic theatricality (Heile 2006: 25). In fact, this sort of blurring of categories is reflected on most levels of *Transición II*, in its material structure, the form, and not least its overflowing wealth of ideas – the piece is a veritable catalogue of contemporary tendencies from both sides of the Atlantic – and Björn Heile comments that the piece 'eschews closure, coher-

79 Simon Steen-Andersen sets up a very similar situation in the piece *Rerendered* (2004) for pianist with two assistants and extreme amplification.

ence and unity' (Ibid.: 29). This is reflected in one of Kagel's two texts about the piece, 'Translation – Rotation' (Kagel 1959b), where Kagel describes how he devised serial techniques according to a highly idiosyncratic theory of geometrical permutation. The text itself has a very ambiguous position: it exposes a typical form of the theorizing expected of an avant-garde composer at the time while also presenting a decidedly heterogeneous theory. This ambiguity is at the heart of Kagel's aesthetics, and the theatricality of the performance is intertwined with 'extra-musical' activity such as theorizing to the point of breaking down the barrier between the 'outside' and 'inside' of the music. I follow Heile's reading of the Kagel reception in this regard (Heile 2006: 30). In the other essay related to *Transición II*, Kagel develops a theory of clusters (Kagel 1959a). An interesting point of this essay, in the present context, is his discussion of various performance parameters not only related to what parts of the hand or arm a pianist could employ in the execution of a specific cluster chord, but also the height from which the hand should fall and at what speed (Ibid.). As Grant points out, in Kagel, as in Schnebel, the physical gesture is not a translation of the musical notation; it is the actually material of the music (Grant 2001: 182), and Kagel thus prefigures the step taken by Barrett in *Ne songe plus à fuir*. Kagel thus explicitly integrates or reinstalls the performing body in the musical text, the interpretation and execution of which can no longer be regarded as a representation along the lines of ends and means: corporeality is elevated to the level of expression.

In *Sonant (1960/ ...)* these ideas are developed in a much more refined musical context. The piece is of particular interest in the present context not only because it includes a guitarist, but because of what Kagel does with the guitar. If the wealth of *Transición II* translates badly into a short verbal description, *Sonant (1960/ ...)* might be even more difficult to adapt to summary. In addition to the extreme complexity and inventiveness of the composition and notation, the score overflows with detailed information about performance options, seating, ensemble communication and so on, and this is not the place for a detailed exposition of the work; I focus on aspects relative to the current discussion. In *Sonant (1960/ ...)*, the theatricalization of performance, observed in *Transición II*, informs the structure of the work on another level. According to Heile, Kagel began work on the piece by cataloguing and structuring the playing techniques of the instruments rather than with abstract material like pitch and rhythm. The instrumental

actions of the performers are often chosen for their visual impact just as much as for the acoustic result. Thus the physicality of the instrumental practice is not subordinate to an ideality of sound; rather, the two are on equal footing in the conception of the work: 'the physicality and kinesis of playing is not a mere means to produce music but is central to it' (Heile 2006: 35). Heile describes it as a reversal of the traditional hierarchy of musical imagination and realization, but I would argue that Kagel, stepping outside the dialectic implied by the concept of reversal, exposes the interdependency of composition and realization, giving precedence to neither. The actual sound of the work is so strictly controlled by the composer that it is difficult to see it as a mere by-product of actions – actions that are indeed chosen for their specific aural qualities.

The relationship between sound and action is actually explicitly problematized in the work. More often than not, the sound is very soft (the classical guitar should always be the loudest instrument) while the technical demands of the players are extremely high. Also, in two of the movements, one performance option is to repeat the movements as precisely as possible without making any actual sound. In effect, this draws attention towards the performance situation as such, as the energy and concentration demanded of the performers is captivating. This invites a comparison with the 'silent' sections of Hübler's *Third String Quartet* described in Chapter 4, but the two situations are not similar. In the Hübler the absence of one crucial parameter – the back and forth movement of the bow – results in a performance which exposes the compound and highly ambiguous conception of the practice (underscored by the instrumentation). In the Kagel, the more clear-cut situation rather directs focus away from the instrumental practice in favour of the absurdity of the performative situation. This is highlighted by the fact that part of the activity of the players is to signal to the other performers, mimicking a rehearsal situation: the players obviously communicate but still no sound is produced. The sound world of *Sonant (1960/ ...)* is an exploration of timbres and tone-colours in infinite nuances, mirroring the infinite combinatorial possibilities of the unsynchronized instrumental parts. This latter feature is also explored in the guitar part alone for which Kagel has devised a notation that translates the play of forces observed between the performers of *Transición II* to the individual hands of the guitarist. With a simple and

Example 5.2: Mauricio Kagel, *Sonant* (1960/ ...), *Faitres votre jeux II*, first line of guitar part

unprecedented notational gesture that will be extremely influential,⁸⁰ Kagel dissolves the unity of the performing body: in the movement *Faitres votre jeux II* the actions of the hands are notated on separate staves. The interdependence of the hands in guitar performance, which is a main point of reference in this thesis, is exposed in all its complexity and frailty with this device (see Example 5.2).

Although Kagel's employment of this notation in this particular piece must be understood in the context of instrumental theatre, the notation as such not only shatters the traditional relationship between the hands, it also opens up an infinite number of instrumental possibilities as the separated activity of the two hands are open to separate treatment. Thus, in *Sonant* (1960/ ...), the concept of practice as writing discussed in the previous chapter is explicitly suggested, something that according to Heile is recognized by Kagel himself: 'novel ways of graphically encoding music ... result in a new relationship between the acoustical imagination of the composer, the score and the performance' (Heile 2006: 29). One could elaborate this as a critique of the unity of the performer subject; in one sense, this notation is emblematic for the argument of the present text. It is interesting to note that the theatricalization of the practice makes Kagel give up on exact rhythms – that this staging of the practicalities results in a global approach to certain important details that are left to the performer's discretion, even if the work is based on serial techniques. This is mirrored in the relationship between the performers. The musicians of *Sonant* (1960/ ...) are more often than not synchronized with each other, only coordinated by signals specified in the score. Thus the communication within the group becomes a part of the structure of the piece, an element that is approached in different ways in

⁸⁰ Though not acknowledged – Heile (2006) repeatedly mentions the often unacknowledged traces of Kagel's ideas in other composers.

the various movements. If the communication between the performers suggests that the rehearsal situation is brought on stage, the separate notation of the hands is suggestive of the well-known practice method of breaking down the technique into its smallest details, working on separate elements of instrumental technique individually. What Kagel does, then, is to bring the whole music making apparatus onto the stage, displaying the mechanisms by which the music is learned and made by the individual performers as well as by the group as a whole.

I would like to stress Kagel's procedure of ordering the instrumental resources as the first step in his compositional process. This was also the case with *Improvisation ajoutée* (1962) for organ with two assistants. For this piece, Heile points out, Kagel lists and orders 11 different playing techniques, of which the normal method of using the fingers is only one among many others (Ibid.: 43). Thus the piece is structured according to the material practice involved and not in terms of abstract schemata. In this piece, the assistants controlling the organ stops are not subordinate to the organist proper but have independently worked out parts that are often as virtuosic as that of the organist. In analogue to *Transición II* the piece explores the social dynamics of musical performance as the relationship between the three performers is one of mutual dependence and contradiction in the production of sound on the instrument.

Iannis Xenakis

In certain works by Iannis Xenakis one can also observe a tendency towards the structuring of instrumental practice as a separate level of the composition process, in seemingly complete opposition to Kagel. The early string quartet *ST/4* (1955–62) presents an interesting example of how generalized textures are defined by the playing technique(s) involved. Xenakis wrote the work with the help of a computer, defining the mode of attack as a central parameter. Thus, a kind of abstract practice emerges based on generalized behaviours rather than minute serial details – a practice that conveys a very strong and idiosyncratic bodily presence in actual performance. The same is the case with Xenakis's first work for solo cello, *Nomos α* (1966). In this piece, the cello is transformed into a sounding body with a very rich palette of sounds and timbres that bears little resemblance to the full-toned beauty of traditional cello playing. Composed with a greater care for the details

of the practice than *ST/4*,⁸¹ the piece to some extent redefines the means and ends of cello playing, although within a strictly teleological framework. Different levels of sound production are worked out separately from other parameters with reference to set theory, but the focus is always on the resulting sound and not on the free combinatorial play of the practice.⁸² Like much of Xenakis's music from this period, the piece is spectacularly difficult. In this piece, the virtuosity is partly the result of a re-evaluation of the elements of cello performance with little thought to idiomatic considerations – virtuosity as sheer difficulty.⁸³ Interestingly, the method of construction has strong affinities to that of Kagel: ordering modes of playing, rotating the material structures according to geometric shapes. The example of Xenakis is much more strict though, and where a piece like *Sonant (1960/ ...)* stages the ephemeral qualities of sound, *Nomos α* not only develops at a pace where the details can achieve a structural function, it is also a display of the brute force of which the cello is capable. Xenakis has himself stressed the interest in unstable timbres as opposed to the classical ideal of a full tone. This is certainly one of the main features of *Nomos α*, and one could say that the fuzzy spectres that Xenakis seeks through a high amplitude is mirrored in the fleeting and soft-spoken timbral instability of *Sonant (1960/ ...)*. Let this comparison serve as an example of how a change of methodological focus can reveal new connections among the material. It is also interesting to compare Xenakis's approach to that of the Barrett of *Ne songe plus* – in the case of Barrett there is a clear engagement with the interconnectedness of the different levels of the practice that seems to be completely lacking in the example of Xenakis where the structural focus is on the sound result. However, in response to the question posed by *colloid* regarding influences, the name of Xenakis is certainly one that would make it onto such a list. Another piece worth mentioning in the present context, which also pushes instrumental virtuosity towards, if not beyond, its absolute limits, is the piano concerto *Synaphai*. If Kagel in *Sonant (1960/ ...)* poses an ironic challenge to the guitar player in notating the hands on separate staves, there is certainly not the least hint of irony when Xenakis designates up to ten staves to the piano part in this work. Again, the method adopted is the result of a practical necessity, in order to clearly convey the sound intended. But even

81 Xenakis worked very closely with an instrument before writing the piece. See Matossian 1986: 190.

82 The method is described in Varga 1996: 86–8. See also Matossian 1986: 184–90.

83 For a performer discussion of virtuosity in Xenakis, see for instance Couroux 1994.

though the pianist actually has to negotiate all ten staves only towards the end of the piece, it is a telling move when it comes to suggesting how the piano part was conceived.⁸⁴

5.6 The case of Helmut Lachenmann

Despite the adherence to serialism, the primary features of Kagel's music of the sixties are the experimental and theatrical aspects. The tendency towards the experimental was of course an important aspect of much music in the late fifties and early sixties, and many other works and composers are relevant in the present context. György Ligeti's *Aventures*, the *Maulwerke* of Dieter Schnebel, or the work of Hans-Joachim Hespos or Heinz Holliger could also have been part of this discussion, as they have all been important in the problematization of the social and aesthetic practices of Western music performance. In the example of Xenakis I outlined how cello practice was redefined in order to produce specific sonic results. However, in the works of Lachenmann one finds a reworking of the instrumental practice and the relationship to compositional structure forming the materiality of the works themselves. In the following, I will discuss this relationship between instrumental practice and compositional structure in Lachenmann, and argue against seeing Lachenmann as a radically idiomatic composer.

A cornerstone of Lachenmann's work since *temA* (1967) and the percussion concerto *Air* (1968) is his notion of *musique concrète instrumentale*. With this term, Lachenmann encapsulates his focus on the material and kinaesthetic qualities of sound production in this period. The term has also come to signify the special sound world of his early work, the characteristic sound of instrumental friction and delicately nuanced instrumental noise of works like *Pression* and the string quartet *Gran Torso* (1971). With his work from this period, Lachenmann explored the possibilities of instrumental sound production with a hitherto unseen level of detail in a questioning of the traditional notion of beauty and habitual listening. All the while, there is no evidence to suggest that Lachenmann set out to organize the elements of the practice as such in his compositional process except possibly in *Pression*

⁸⁴ For a piano piece where the fingers are indeed notated on ten separate staves throughout, see Wieland Hoban's solo piece *When the panting STARTS*. Hoban (2004).

and the piano miniature *Guero* (1969),⁸⁵ but rather that he reorganizes the practice in order to produce certain kinds of sound. Lachenmann states repeatedly that the aim of his work is to challenge habituated modes of perception and the traditional concept of beauty.⁸⁶ These sounds are nevertheless not to be understood outside of their material and physical mode of production, the aural surface of the music being inextricably linked to the material, physically concrete conditions of the relationship between the performer and the instrument. I will discuss *Pression* and the guitar duo *Salut für Caudwell* in closer detail below, but first I will explain some of the details of Lachenmann's working methods.

In an interview from 1970, Lachenmann suggests that he is working with predetermined structures along serial principles (Ibid.: 148).⁸⁷ Lachenmann seems not to be committed to carry out these structures automatically in a given work, though, he sees them rather as a creative support to generate material and to clarify for himself what he wants to do with a given work. Pietro Cavallotti, in his work on Lachenmann's compositional process in *Tanzsuite mit Deutschlandslied* (1979/80), explicates how these structures are worked out in a structural grid ('*Strukturnetz*') that organizes the material of a composition (Cavallotti 2002: 79–128).⁸⁸ Cavallotti also discusses Lachenmann's formal organization of his work in terms of different 'families' of material. These families are the different materials of a work and are based on specific rhythmic, timbral, tonal or instrumental characteristics.⁸⁹ The principle of families of material is evident in Hans Peter Jahn's analysis of *Pression* (Jahn 1988). Jahn explains how the piece is organized according to different combinations of types of left and right hand activity: left hand on the strings or on the body, right hand with or without the bow. The material is further divided into four groups of material development: continuity, repetition, accents and combinations of continuity and repetition. The four sections of the piece each focus on one particular material family or instrumental sound type. Although the number four is accorded a certain structural weight in Jahn's analysis, on his account the work seems however to be composed at the instrument rather than on the basis of a

85 See Nonnemann 2000b.

86 See for instance Lachenmann 2004: 152, 194–8, 271, 345, 354.

87 Lachenmann states offhandedly: '*Serielle Mittel als Inventionshilfe – warum nicht?*'

88 See Cavallotti (2005) for an analysis of *Mouvement – vor der Erstarrung* based on the sketch material held at Basel.

89 Lachenmann describes his notion of material families in Lachenmann 2004: 88–9.

typical *Strukturnetz* as is discussed by Cavallotti. This is at least suggested by certain concrete, physical transitions such as the one in bars 11 and 12 (see Lachenmann 2012).⁹⁰ In bar 11 the left hand is sliding along the strings towards the bridge while the bow is held still with the frog on the bridge. In bar 12 the left hand reaches the bridge and continues its trajectory along the hairs of the bow, the left arm of the player suddenly and surprisingly moving away from the instrument in what seems an unlikely suggestion to be made by a predetermined structural grid. Although Cavallotti makes a lucid argument about Lachenmann's lack of a strict commitment to carrying out the structural grids literally, there seems to be a case for further research on the composition of *Pression* that could clarify the compositional process of the work. Nevertheless, *Pression* is an emblematic piece in the sense that it encapsulates Lachenmann's own search for sounds and novel timbral, material and structural connections, a seminal work where the cello is offered as an excavation site of sound. At least in my view, the piece stages this archaeological search in a way that exposes a surface affinity to the instrumental theatre of Kagel.

Nonetheless, Lachenmann's own writing exposes a decidedly critical view of Kagel, Schnebel and Ligeti, who are often lumped together in a rather derogatory manner. However, it is reasonable to view his development in the mid-sixties as a formalization of the efforts of these composers. Lachenmann's writing from this period betrays how eager he was to distance himself critically from what he saw as a kind of decadence in his immediate predecessors: they are variously characterized as 'regressive' and as 'exposing a superficial and ultimately bourgeois radicality'.⁹¹ And the reception literature – when it acknowledges any predecessors at all other than his teacher Nono – takes his statements about these figures at face value. Both Rainer Nonnenmann (Nonnenmann 2000a) and Jens Magnus Engel (Engel 2005) are lucid when it comes to situate Lachenmann's early work in relation to Ligeti in particular. Nevertheless, Nonnenmann, as is typical of the Lachenmann reception, identifies too strongly with his subject and assumes the character of an advocate rather than a critical interrogator when it comes to the historical situation in the mid-sixties. Lachenmann's critical stance against Kagel is of course fully in line with Peter Bürger's

90 In the original version of 1969, this passage is found on the fifth line (page 2 of the score). See Lachenmann 1972.

91 See for instance Lachenmann 2004: 84–5, 343.

analysis of the dialectic of the avant-garde (Bürger 1984). One must not overlook fact that in compositions from the years between Lachenmann's time with Nono in Venice (1958–60) and the fully formed conception of *musique concrète instrumentale* in works like *Air* and *Pression*, one finds a veritable explosion of instrumental and, in particular, vocal sounds. There is a clear relationship between the vocal works of Schnebel (*Für Stimmen* (1958) and *Glossolalie* (1960)), Kagel (*Phonophobie*, 1963), Ligeti (*Aventures* of 1962, *Nouvelle Aventures* and *Requiem*, both from 1965) or Berio (*Sequenza III*, 1965) and Lachenmann's writing for voices in *Consolations I* (1967), *Consolations II* and *temA* (both 1968), which is paralleled in the instrumental writing of the same years.⁹² One should certainly read *Pression* in the context of a work like Kagel's *Match* (1964) for two cellists and percussion. Through his focus on concrete poetry and the aesthetics of Pierre Schaeffer, Nonnenmann is keen to support Lachenmann's distance from the contemporary repertoire. Nevertheless, with a change of focus from the theatrical and Dadaist quality of the liberated sounds of the voice to that of the vocal materiality and concrete conditions of the sounds and the energy employed in the sound production, Lachenmann infuses the sounds of his immediate predecessors with a critical thrust, critically assessing those undomesticated sounds of which Schnebel writes in relation to Kagel (Schnebel 1970: 15). One could certainly imagine a work like *Sonant* (1960/ ...) written for another set of instruments; this is not the case with Lachenmann's work after *temA*, where the fragile transition and connection of one sound to the next is always conditioned by the materiality of sound and sound production, rather than by an overall concept concerned with performativity as in Kagel.

The guitar duo *Salut für Caudwell* (1977) proves an interesting work in this context. Like the guitar part of the *Faites votre jeux II* from *Sonant* (1960/ ...) discussed above, the actions of the hands are notated on separate systems. Now, *Salut* was written for Kagel's long-time collaborators Wilhelm Brück and Theodor Ross, for whom Kagel had written such works as the *Zwei-Mann Orchester* (1971–73); Brück had performed the guitar part of *Sonant* (1960/ ...) at the premiere performance of the work and was therefore well-acquainted with this form of notation. But where the explosive energy

92 For a thorough discussion of this repertoire, see Attinello (1997). However, it is telling point regarding Lachenmann's position in the US in the nineties that his name is not mentioned in Attinello's dissertation. One could indeed wish for an in-depth historical study of the crucial role of the voice in *temA* as a pivot in the development of the *musique concrète instrumentale*.

of the instrumental practice of Kagel's work is directed outwards, centrifugally, and is governed by the theatricalized format of the concert ritual, in *Salut* the energy of the practice is directed inwards, towards the possibilities inherent in the musical material and the physical materiality of the practice; the music is carried by the finely graded nuances of sound, timbre and rhythm. In *Salut*, nothing is left to chance, every detail carries a structural weight, and a performance that does not live up to the meticulous standards set by the score will become nothing but an exercise in extended techniques. I will argue that the concept of extended techniques does not apply to *Salut* – or indeed to Lachenmann's work after *temA* – because of the reciprocal determination of instrumental practice and musical structure, and the way the musical structure is an elaboration of the practice as its material. Of course the sounds and techniques are in many cases new, and were certainly not developed with such attention to detail before Lachenmann, but still they are such an integrated part of the work itself that the notion of extension becomes void of meaning. It is perhaps even mistaken to say that the new sounds are integrated in the material structure, because without these specific instrumental actions and sounds there would indeed arguably be no *Salut* at all.

In *Salut*, a wholly new instrumental practice for the guitar is constituted on the basis of the material conditions of the instrument and the hands of the performers, as well as two additional tools: a plectrum and a (metal) slide. Only rarely are the strings pressed against the fingerboard; rather, the left hand usually employs the slide or lays a barré⁹³ lightly against the strings. The result of this is that the typical harmonic structure of the open strings⁹⁴ is omnipresent throughout the work. The interval structure of the open strings is exposed in the aural surface at certain critical points in the piece, such as line 27 in guitar 1 (bars 188–195. See Example 5.3.)

In Example 5.3, the left hand stops the strings at an A, and the strings are plucked high to low with normal attack, notated in the score with normal note head. The pitches for these sounds are given on the bottom stave. Since the strings are not pressed against the fingerboard both sides of the stop can

93 With a barré fingering, more than one string is held down in the same fret with an erected left hand finger.

94 I.e. E–A–D–G–B–E low to high. The second guitar is tuned a semitone lower, notated with scordatura.

Example 5.3: Helmut Lachenmann, *Salut für Caudwell*, guitar 1, bars 188–195

resonate, and the many ways of damping this resonance is a very important technical aspect of the work.

One could analyze this piece along the principles of hand activity laid down by Jahn in relation to *Pression*, as the instrumental practice is clearly conceived combinatorially like in *Pression*. However, given the detailed level of instrumental invention presented in *Salut*, it seems more appropriate to follow the development of the various families of sound and their interaction. Regarding the form of the work, I understand it as a spelling out of the sound production or attack of the instrument. There are several ways of delineating the work. For instance, one can follow the tempo changes that run through the work according to a set of metric modulations that end up roughly at the opening tempo. These sections can be further divided into several units according to the sound families. This gives the following outline of the form:

Part	Bars	Tempo
1	1–13:	$1/8=100$
2	14–27:	$1/4=80$
3	28–207 (according to tempo)	
	α 28–54	
	β 55–178 (speaking + tail)	
	γ 178–212 (212 according to sound family)	
4	207–434	$1/8=126$
	α 212–222	
	β 223–291	



- c 292–318
- d 319–360
- e 361–434
- 6 435–533: $1/4=54$
- a 435–467
- b 468–533

However, another large scale sectioning is suggested by Yuval Shaked (Shaked 1985). Shaked suggests dividing the piece into three large sections according to the following plan:

- Section 1: bars 1–211
- Section 2: bars 212–360
- Section 3: bars 361–533⁹⁵

Shaked's plan deviates from the metric plan of the work – it rather follows a logic according to the development of the musical form. I argue that neither of these divisions are satisfactory and will propose another division altogether. In bar 55, the guitarists are speaking a text by British writer and literary critic Christopher Caudwell, in whose memory the piece was written. An analysis of the work must take into account the fact that the guitarists are speaking for quite some time, but also take into consider what they are speaking of. Additionally, in terms of sound families, members of one family can visit another family, or there can be a gradual change of focus from one

⁹⁵ Based on Shaked 1985: 102. Shaked's text follows the original edition of *Salut*, and I have changed the bar numbers of his text according to the editorial changes introduced in the later edition. The original bar numbers are 1–210, 211–358 and 359–530 respectively.

family to the other. These local 'meetings' produce a musical coherence that runs through the whole fabric of the piece.⁹⁶

I see the opening of the piece, bars 1–54, as an introduction to the speaking which runs through bars 55–171. Together these comprise the first section of the piece. Bars 1–54 are mostly based plectrum attacks, the strings being stopped by either a barré or the slide. The music is in continuous flux, and there is always at least one aspect of the sound which undergoes some kind of transformation. This may be pitch, timbre, dynamics, resonance, degree of pitch quality and so on; additionally there are tempo changes which are always prepared through syncopated textures (i.e. metric modulations) that fade in and out of each other. The text in bars 55–171 is taken from the then-recently-published German edition of Caudwell's *Illusion and Reality* (Caudwell 1937), which – with slight changes made by the composer – cannot be seen as anything but a manifesto. The text addresses the relationship between freedom and aesthetics in bourgeois society, and, speaking directly to the audience, the guitarists argue that the magical spell of habituated and corrupt categories of perception must be broken if freedom of expression is to be realized. I understand the prophetic ending '*dann werden wir sagen ... [then we will tell ...]*' as a kind of colon – *here it comes, now, we will show you, we will strip our means of communication bare, these are our instruments, our means of artful communication, and laying them bare we will produce fantastic music* – suggesting that this is the point where the piece proper actually begins, so that everything up to this point has been an argument for what is to come. And what is to come, what will emerge in the following bars? The critical exposure of the material conditions of the work as the work and its material conditions unfold in a double gesture. Based on this reading I suggest that the first section ends at bar 178, when the steady beat which propelled the text rhythm is over. After the end of the text there is a transition towards a new kind of material which comes into its own from bar 179. Bars 179–211 present a transitory state, a kind of fantasy on bright staccato sounds and harmonics, with steady activity again gaining pace from the scratching sounds at bar 212. Nonnenmann emphasizes Lachenmann's reference to Stockhausen's theory of *Eigenzeit* (Lachenmann 2004: 1–20; see especially 8 and 17–18), the inner time of a sound, commenting that the

96 Lachenmann is not the only composer to approach his material anthropomorphologically. For instance, Michael Finnissy, in a lecture at the Norwegian Academy of Music in 1999, explained how he tried to imagine how it would be to take his material for a walk, or take it to dinner.

works explore development in time of the sounds and the corporeal movements. Nonnenmann argues that the form of the early orchestral works spell out the inner time of a sound (Nonnenmann 2000a). The logic of the *Eigenzeit* is possibly present in *Salut* as well, in bars 179–434, which I see as the main section of the work. There is certainly a case for seeing the material families as a segmentation of the various components of the guitar attack. In bar 176 the second guitar introduces a pitched click with the side of the plectrum against the strings. This sound is employed until bar 211. From bar 186, the scratching sounds from guitar 1 make a short (re-)appearance before entering centre stage in bar 212. Bars 224–291 are based on violent plectrum attacks and left hand barré sounds (often with unspecified harmonics) or short slide sounds. Then, from bar 292 until 435, the music is based mostly on resonating sounds in two large subsections, in bars 292–360 and bars 361–435. The first of these sections is based on plectrum attacks and resonances on both or either sides of the slides, the second, when the plectrum is put away for good, is based on a continuous sound made by the slide on the strings. The second section can be divided in three compartments, the third of which (from bar 412, where the slide tremolo stops) somewhat ironically ends with a full slide barré on the first fret of guitar 2, thus actually producing the sounds of the open strings of guitar 1 (i.e. at standard tuning). This spells out the components of the guitar attack as a model for musical form: preparation (often inducing an unwanted nail click); a scratch along the string when right hand pressure is applied; the actual letting go of the string – in a sense, the plucking proper; and lastly the resonance (sustained sounds) both of actual pitch as well as the sympathetic resonance of open strings which even end the section. It should be clear from this short analysis that *Salut* could be said to be site specific: it is intimately bound up with the guitar, and the musical material is formed on basis of the instrument-specific materiality. I see the two last sections as a sort of coda. The first of these (bars 435–467) is the most complex section of the work, at least for the performers. A wide variety of sound and articulation types are employed in this section. The right hand holds the slide and is doing most of the playing proper, the left hand activity being reduced to either muting the strings or fretting barrés in different positions thus producing different transpositions of the basic guitar resonance. In the last section, the left hand activity is reduced even further, only changing an E major chord and an A minor chord and back to E. Ironically, when the hand is allowed to fret the strings for the first time in the piece it does so in the form of an *objet*

The image shows a musical score for guitar, Example 5.4, spanning bars 179-184. It consists of three staves. The top staff is a grand staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). It features three time signatures: 4/8, 3/8, and 5/8, indicated by a dashed line above the staff. The middle staff shows rhythmic patterns with downbeats and upbeats, and a large black block indicating a muting gesture. The bottom staff shows chordal structures with circled numbers 1 and 5, and a circled number 5 at the end.

Example 5.4: *Salut für Caudwell*, guitar 1, bars 179–184

trouvée: the two chords are of course fingered with the same fingering, the change in harmony being produced by moving the chord from strings five, four and three to strings four, three and two and back. The right hand activity is also reduced here to keeping a pulse going, muting the strings as the hand makes friction sounds across or along the strings. As a continuation of logic of the *Eigenzeit*, the gesture of the hand muting the strings is of course what a guitar player does at the end of a song or piece of classical music. So it is in *Salut* as well, only the actual gesture of muting receives attention in the form of what Lachenmann calls an elaborate tango (Lachenmann 2004: 157).

Why this elaborate discussion of a work that does not belong to the argument proper of this dissertation? The question, of course, is how *Salut* stands in relation to the radically idiomatic. According to the definition given earlier *Salut* is clearly a radically idiomatic work. However, there is no evidence in either Cavallotti's sketch analysis or in Nonnenmann's detailed study of the aural surface that Lachenmann has organized the various elements of instrumental technique independently of each other outside the realm of his work with material families and their graded potentials. Neither does Hans Peter Jahn's analysis of *Pression* specify the use of any single elements of the physical practice as structurally determined. Intense analytic efforts and ten years of performance experience of *Salut für Caudwell*, as well as numerous discussions with Lachenmann, have also given me little evidence in this direction.⁹⁷ Given Lachenmann's stated adherence to serial

⁹⁷ The sketches for *Salut* at the Paul Sacher Stiftung are rather meager, mostly dealing with the rhythmic setting of Caudwell's text.

methods as well as the strong evidence of post-serial techniques given in the literature,⁹⁸ it is not unlikely that traces of serial techniques are found in *Salut* a well. This is reflected both in the left hand positions and the plectrum clicks. For instance, the left hand positions in the first line of guitar 1 presents a succession of 13 pitches (C, B-flat, D-flat, E-flat, A, B, E, F, D, G-sharp, A, G) that of course includes one repeated note. Similarly, in guitar 1 from the end of bar 179 until 184 there is a succession of 12 individual pitches (see Example 5.4). The two rows are however only very distantly related.

In other sections the material seems to be worked out in terms of cells of falling or rising patterns. This is clear from bar 223. In fact, these cells transform seamlessly into slide glissandi, and as such there is a long transformation from bar 223 all the way until bar 434. In relation to my understanding of the *Eigenzeit*, this long transformation extends over the whole long part that corresponds to the attack and resonance of a tone. Other more local events suggest that they have been worked out in order to establish a kind of

* die mit Plektrum (▼) gespielten Töne sollen loco erstickt klingen

Example 5.5: *Salut für Caudwell*, bars 22–23

98 i.e. in Cavallotti (2005), Nonnenmann (2010), Sielecki (2000).

play between the two sound sources. A good example is found in bars 22–23 (see Example 5.5).

As one can see, the guitars swap left hand positions (between G and G-sharp, positions XV and XVI respectively). However, in bar 22, the harmonics of both guitars, the sounds of which are given above the staff, result in corresponding pitches (NB: guitar 2 sounds a semitone lower than notated), something which suggests that this local event has been worked out on the basis of this concrete possibility. In fact, if one has the intention of using harmonics or resonance on both sides of a slide one needs to be very careful about left hand positions. Lachenmann plays with this fact of course, in contrasting the somewhat arbitrary harmonic ringing in bars 223 ff (Example 5.6) and the later sympathetic sliding resonances that emerge after bar 293 (Example 5.7).

The right hand is notated on the six staves of the top system, and the left hand position on the lower system. In bar 324, the slide moves first from B-flat to G-sharp and then to A in a triplet rhythm. After the A, the lower strings are attacked violently with a plectrum (indicated by the triangular note heads), but all strings are immediately damped between the slide and the bridge and released again (indicated by the crossed circle and the open circle above the top system respectively), something which stops the sound. The attack of the plectrum transmits through the slide to the other end of the string, though, producing soft sympathetic ringing. The slide slides slowly up to B in the next bar. At this harmonic node, the bridge side of the string starts to ring in sympathy with the vibrations of the nut side producing a distinct and chiming swell. Because the two parts of the string correspond with a 2:1 relationship between the nut and bridge sides respectively, the sound of the nut side of the string is one octave higher than the bridge side. However, the resonance of the nut side transmits better to the body of

Example 5.6: *Salut für Caudwell*, guitar 1, bars 223–225

the guitar, so what is first the sound of a downwards glissando is taken up at the octave at the node and continues as an upwards glissando towards a C in the next bar.

Hence the material seems to be worked out in direct relationship with the

instrument, at least in large sections of the work. Of course, there is also a possibility that different material families have been treated differently. But I have found no evidence that suggest that Lachenmann has organized the use of different modes of attack or forms of resonance according to a pre-planned scheme in analogue with the grid of a *Strukturnetz*. It seems rather that Lachenmann works first from a global perspective, defining the formal outline, then specifies the various families and their eventual interaction (that is, the dialectic of the different types of material), after which the details are worked out with an explicit focus on their material, kinaesthetic and practical aspects. Following from this is the conclusion that Lachenmann's work does not set out to alter performance practice or organize the elements of the practice structurally as will be the focus of the analyses in the following chapters, even if his compositions are inextricably bound to the sounds of which they are composed. I find support for this conclusion in Nonnenmann, who writes with a typically densely dialectical and convoluted formulation that

The effort to free the physical, kinaesthetic and temporal conditions of the sounds and the sound production is concerned with what is only a part of his concrete instrumental compositional work that must not overshadow that this work, whose concretion of the fundamental connections of the sounds is only a main trait of his work and not its primary aim, but only a – even if decisive – condition. (Nonnenmann 2000a: 22–3; my translation)⁹⁹

The image shows a musical score for guitar, consisting of two staves. The top staff is in treble clef and the bottom staff is in bass clef. The time signature is 4/4 at the beginning and changes to 3/4 at the end. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings. There are also some symbols that look like circles with a cross inside, possibly indicating specific techniques or effects.

Example 5.7: *Salut für Caudwell*, guitar 1, bars 324–325

99 [Es handelt] sich beim Versuch, die physikalischen, kinestetischen und temporalen Bedingungen der Klänge und der Klangproduktion freizulegen, nur um einen Teilaspekt seines instrumentalkonkreten Komponierens, der nicht darüber hinwegtäuschen sollte, dass die gleichermaßen materiale wie die mediale Koncretion der fundamentalen Zusammensetzungen des Klangs zwar ein Hauptcharakteristikum seines Schaffens ist, aber nicht primäres Ziel, sondern lediglich eine – wenn auch entscheidende – Voraussetzung.

That the transformation of the practice is only a decisive part of the project of concrete instrumental composition and not its primary aim has become clearer as time has passed. Violinist David Alberman is of course correct in his observation that Lachenmann's works cannot exist outside the specific medium for which they are conceived, that they are in a sense parasitical to their medium (Albermann 2005). But for all his instrumental inventiveness, as I have tried to show and for which I find support in the writing of Nonnenmann and others, Lachenmann actually composes on the basis of the resultant sounds and not *primarily* with the techniques themselves nor the organization of the body or the practice. Therefore, in his assertion that Lachenmann's notation 'illustrates the composer's order of priorities in creating his music' (Albermann 2005: 48) – that Lachenmann deals with instrumental technique rather than sound as his primary material – I think Alberman's literal reading of the notation fails to recognize that the function of Lachenmann's notation is to be a manual for the performers and not an ideal representation of the sound result even if these latter are the aim of the notated instrumental activity. In other words, that the efficacy of traditional notation is no longer fully effective. Comparing the different editions of *Pression*, as has been done by cellist Tanja Orning (Orning 2014: 158–73), is an instructive exercise in this context. The different editions of the work expose a clear tendency of a normalization of the notation. The focus of Lachenmann's notation on the practical aspects of performance can thus seem like a paradox, and in her lament of what she sees as a loss of interpretive freedom in the recent edition of *Pression*, Orning seems to be in agreement with Alberman about what *ought to have been* Lachenmann's priorities (Ibid.: 172–3).

5.7 The emergence of radically idiomatic: Ferneyhough in the seventies

Although I devote a full chapter to Ferneyhough later in the dissertation, it seems appropriate to discuss his work from the seventies briefly at this point. In the guitar solo *Kurze Schatten II*, traces of the radically idiomatic are located subsurface; but in his work from the seventies, and in particular in the *Time and Motion Studies I–III* and the flute solo *Unity Capsule*, the structural determination of instrumental parameters is clearly available on the surface of the notation. Indeed, this was pursued as an intentional

compositional strategy: 'in [*Unity Capsule*] the overt multi-stranding of articulatory qualities was pretty much carried out on the surface as a sort of formal carapace, so that the ultimate sound result was clearly synthetic in nature'. (*CW*: 387)

As was the case with Barrett, the relationship between compositional methods and instrumental practice is hardly discussed in the growing corpus of analytic writing on Ferneyhough. Although the challenges posed to the performer are discussed at length, the perspective of virtuosity tends to lose sight of the structurality of the instrumental and vocal practice of the works. Additionally, most analytic writing on Ferneyhough focuses on the music after the *Second String Quartet* (1980) and the piano solo *Lemma-Icon-Epigram* (1981) – that is, the period of *Kurze Schatten II* – where, as already suggested, the radically idiomatic is not immediately evident in the scores. Therefore I find little support in the existing literature for the discussion that follows. Again I find this surprising, as Ferneyhough repeatedly explicates his interest with regards to a structural approach to the idiomatic, as in the quotations given above and in Chapter 2. When the topic is treated in interviews or articles, it seems that the impressive multidirectionality of Ferneyhough's notation, and his verbal foliage, leave most commentators baffled, and they opt for taking his verbal and musical statements at face value rather than seeking below the surface. As with Lachenmann, because of the level of reflection that goes into the compositional work, Ferneyhough's work comes across as overdetermined, the means and aims already exhausted. At least this the impression one gets with most of the reception, impressive though it might be in its wealth of detail, the function of which seems to be that of the medieval biblical exegete rather than a critical interrogator. This is the case with the writings of Lois Fitch, whose recent and impressive monograph on Ferneyhough (Fitch 2013) will surely be the standard work on his music for a long time. Fitch repeats the composer's thoughts on the 'psychologization' of the notation, viewing this as the content of the works as if there is a necessary correlation between the level of notational detail and the psychic activity of the performer. Similarly, Ross Feller has repeatedly argued for an aesthetics of resistance in Ferneyhough, and that his instrumental writing entails a radical 'defamiliarization' of instruments (Feller 1994: 171; see also Feller 2000 and 2002), and Nicholas Darbon and Ferdinand Levy have described Ferneyhough's work in terms of transcendent virtuosity and unperformability (Darbon 2005; Levy 2008).

1) Before 15" pause: extend head-joint fully.

2) 15" of absolute silence and lack of movement (playing stance)

Presto
sempre senza vibrato

I. 1. i.
(no tongue)

Flute
Voice

lip-gliss.
sim.
poco
marc in mf

pppp
pppp
pppp
mf

N.B. The absence of information on the voice line indicates a normal mode of production, unless contrary instructions appear in the flute part.

Example 5.8: Brian Ferneyhough, *Unity Capsule*, opening (bars 1–3)

This might be true at the level of the composer's conceptualization of a work, but is not necessarily valid for the performer or listener. Certainly, a musician facing a score by Ferneyhough for the first time might see the notation as nothing but obstacles to a natural musical expression,¹⁰⁰ but this does not make for a weighty and generalizable argument about the instrumental practice of his music. Therefore I find little support in the existing literature for the discussion that follows. I will now examine some details of Ferneyhough's 1975 solo flute piece *Unity Capsule*.

There is the body, and a metal tube with holes and keys. Picking up the tube, the arms and hands position the shining object in relation to the body with a certain determined vigour, pulls the loose end of the tube and waits, silently. Then, after 15 seconds, a slight whisper is heard. Again silence. With the tube at the lips, another whisper as the tube is turned outwards, somehow dragging a quiet hiss out of the body which responds with activating the muscles of the lower belly in order to push the tongue down from the palate towards the teeth with a sudden flow of air from the lungs: [t]!, the muscles of the hand contracting simultaneously to produce a click on the keys of the tube.

Already in these first few bars of *Unity Capsule* (Example 5.8), one finds that the performance of the music is formed as a result of the relationship between the body and the instrument taking part in a game of sound production – a discursive practice. The angle between the flute and the mouth

100 A view held by for instance Roger Heaton (Heaton 1987) and Roger Marsh (Marsh 1994).

out all the more clearly. And the pitch transformation is not as simple as it might appear at first glance.

In this little section, a glissando rises from a B-flat to an E. This is shown with a diamond note-head as the second partial of the E-flat square note-head, the 'o' above the diamond designating the harmonic. Above the 'o', there is a half-filled square that indicates the level of embouchure tension (open square = loose embouchure; half filled square = medium embouchure, and filled square = tight embouchure). The U above the embouchure square signifies the angle between the flute and the lips, graded according to five levels. The signs \supset and \subset means that the flute should be turned inwards and outwards respectively, as far as possible 'whilst still producing recognisable pitch' (Ferneyhough 1975, notes for performance); U means normal position, and the angled sign means a position between the normal and either extremes. One can observe how the practice takes on a textual character outlined in the previous chapter, single elements being identified with separate signs and inscribed in the notation. The score includes further instructions that will be clarified in the following.

The phrase is formed on the basis of the glissando of a given duration. The glissando, which is performed with the fingers, is confronted with another layer of glissandi performed by the lip, shown in the score as modifications to the basic line. The first lip glissando is below the basic glissando, the second above and below, then above, below, and finally above and below. However, there is further activity that affects the pitch content. For instance, there are two trills around the middle and second half of the 6/8-bar. Also, the turning of the flute as well as the change in embouchure tension subtly affects the pitch. Although the different levels are clearly articulated in the notation, in practice they rather suggest the Derridean dissemination of structurality discussed in relation to Hübler in the previous chapter – their structure is dispersed centrifugally rather than articulated, the single sound being the result of a dense and always local negotiation of practice.

Though uninterrupted, the glissando is subject to accentuations that are specified below the ledger line underneath the stave. In addition to the normal accents, a further layer of pulsation is found in the graded tremble of diaphragm impulses, which occurs twice in the example and is notated with a jagged line and marked '(diaphragm)'. These impulses also affect pitch. The sound is further sculpted by vibrato, marked n.v. or v.m. (non vibrato or molto vibrato respectively), dynamics, and towards the end of the example,

flutter tongue. The vibrato and diaphragm vibrato are in a sense conflictual, as vibrato in flute playing is often produced by diaphragm trembling.

In addition to the flute playing, the player performs certain vocal actions. These vocal sounds, which are notated on the line below the stave, are closely linked to the various shadings in the flute. The four vocal actions have a similar dynamic envelope, and the first and last end on rapid tremulation between tremolo between β and f , and on l respectively. The first of these sounds, the β , is produced by the same lip configuration used for normal flute playing – and normal embouchure should be synchronized with the start of the vocal action – which means that it is the f that stands out, further articulating another level of pulsation which is picked up by the diaphragm vibrato. The second vocal action is based on a single sound, and the third has a gradual transformation from a ‘th’ sound to a ‘s’, thus gradually transforming from a dark to a bright sound not unlike the first vocal action.

In my view, the vocal actions should not be seen as a complement to the sound of the flute proper. Rather, the two strands interact and interfere with each other in a way that could better be described as polymorphic than polyphonic. Indeed, the whole apparatus of the practice is polymorphic, as many of the levels of sound production operate in relation to same flow of air or diaphragm inflections. In the example, the various levels of articulation come together at certain critical junctures. This happens at the first lip glissando, where the basic sound is affected by the dip in pitch that is simultaneous with the vocal crescendo, the onset of diaphragm vibrato as well as normal vibrato, and the turning of the flute away from the mouth. The flute is returned to normal position as the lip glissando is finished, and the normal vibrato stops. As the diaphragm settles, a new lip glissando develops, underscored by a small crescendo, along with rapid turning of the flute and change of embouchure tension. Again from the normal sound a new vocal action and diaphragm vibrato sets in, seemingly to trigger yet another lip glissando, as well as the onset of a trill, the tightening of the embouchure and a turn of the flute. As the sound just about reaches normal, the third vocal sound sets in, this time reaching its maximum dynamic simultaneously with an increase in vibrato that commenced with the second vocal action and ends as the last one is fading in. Also, along the dynamic climax of the third vocal action, there is another lip glissando and the flute is turned outwards as embouchure tension changes abruptly. A trill bridges the junction to the last vocal action, which is again synchronized with the normal flute position and

marked by a small crescendo. The last lip glissando is triggered by accents, and develops in parallel with the flute position. The vocal action reaches its peak dynamic with the onset of tremolo, together with a turn of the flute and the last dip in pitch from the lip. The vocal sound fades out as the flute sound grows more present – the flute is returned to its normal position as the tongue is pulled into the mouth cavity so that a flutter tongue extends the vocal tremolo performed at the lips. Additionally, the embouchure changes rapidly, in unison rhythm with accents, and the phrase is brought to a close. Thus, the different practical elements inscribe themselves into each other reciprocally as a chain of signifiers, one level affecting the articulation of the other making them neither absolutely separate nor simply separable.

The different articulations that I have described in detail form a single musical phrase. What is the material of such a phrase? Should the various transformations of sound and texture be seen as an addition, a colourful supplement, to the allegedly basic finger glissando? Is it possible to sustain a position that views the different elements of the practice as something outside the music proper? I will say no. I suggest, instead, viewing the different elements of the practice as a play of meaning between the various parameters, a game where the differentiated interaction of the elements produce a structure of instrumental practice without a fixed centre. Excepting the vocal actions, the performer activities sculpted in this brief excerpt are all important and basic elements in flute playing. These are unhinged by Ferneyhough and given individual status in the compositional fabric, the intrinsic heterogeneity of the practice being unleashed with centrifugal force in the game of negotiation between the different practical parameters – the genealogical body as a volume in perpetual disintegration of which Foucault writes. This game negotiates the conditions of the musical surface, the relations of the discursive instrumental practice determining the scaffold – the *Reißwerck* – from which the music as sound emanates. The instrumental practice found in *Unity Capsule* is a discursive practice, engaged in the double inscription of itself in the performing body through an extended period of study, as well as in the ear of the other, the listener, as an extension of the interminable play of signification. In *Unity Capsule*, this practical game is spelled out visibly in the notation. In later pieces, like *Kurze Schatten II*, the double gesture of the radically idiomatic is not always upfront, but rather found below the surface.

5.8 The notion of *Augenmusik*: the secret art of the radically idiomatic

I have shown how the radically idiomatic entails a displacement of the relationship between practice and sound as an effect of writing. However, by means of this displacement the radically idiomatic also highlights the distance between the written sign of musical notation and its practical and aural realization. The notation of radically idiomatic works therefore addresses the act of reading, deciphering and interpretation, just as much as it suggests a visual correlate of the music as sound; it suggests a non-representational capacity of the musical sign, an instance of what Derrida calls spacing – another word for *différance*. It is not so surprising then, that Hübler's first essay in radically idiomatic writing bears the title "*Feuerzauber*", *auch Augenmusik*, thus referring to the practice of encoding notation as a visual symbol of the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries. According to Thurston Dart, *Augenmusik* refers to a form of 'musical notation with a symbolic meaning that is apparent to the eye but not to the ear' (Dart 2001), a form of visual excess which is not simply exhausted in its practical realization. Bearing on a purely visual element of notation, *Augenmusik* should be strictly delimited from other kinds of musical symbolism like madrigalist word-painting or various forms of cryptography. A typical example of *Augenmusik* is the chanson *Belle, bonne, sage* by Baude Cordier which opens The Chantilly Manuscript, a dedicatory piece on the love of a lady and a lord whose notation has the shape of a heart. Another typical example is the use of black notes to depict death, as in Josquin's lament on the death of Ockeghem, *Nymphes des bois*. A later example is Telemann's *Gulliver Suite* from *Der getreue Musik-Meister*. In this work, which traces the tale of Gulliver's travels, the Lilliputians are depicted with a chaconne in 3/32 and composed mostly of 128th and 256th notes, while the Brobdingnagians are depicted with a gigue in 24/1 composed of breves and semibreves. The notational depiction of the characters as well as the obvious mismatch of dance character and meter is only apparent to the reader of the score and has no necessary bearing on the musical outcome. Notable is also the mid-eighteenth century *Musikalischer Kunstbuch* of Johann Theile, which opens with the famous *Musikalischer Baum*, a ten part canon notated in the shape of a tree. If the radically idiomatic works cannot strictly speaking be said to be *Augenmusik*, they share with this notion an appeal to a reader to decipher the notation not just as sound. In Chapter 4 I showed how

Reißwerck deliberately plays on the difference between the visual image of the notation and the practical realization. This difference will also be discussed in relation to *Kurze Schatten II* in Chapter 6.

Related to the tradition of *carmina figurata* or shaped poems, a famous example of which is George Herbert's poem *The Altar* (1633) whose layout is shaped like an altar, the notion of *Augenmusik* should be seen in the light of the prevailing concept of knowledge of the day and its grounding in the idea of analogy and the theory of resemblances (see Foucault 2002a). A discussion of analogy in Ferneyhough follows in Chapter 6.

Interestingly, the term *Augenmusik* has a distinctly derogatory connotation as a form of mannerism, a notational excess, a sign of decadence. Though supported by theorists like Zarlino and Cerone, it was opposed by Vincenzo Galilei in his *Dialogo della musica antica et della moderna* (1581) as an extravagant mannerism (Dart 2001) and has been used condescendingly to describe any kind of 'learned' or complex music from late Baroque counterpoint (see Yearsley 1998: 239) over Beethoven (the late quartets were described by Theodor Helm as 'the most genial Augenmusik' (quoted in Knittel 1998: 69)) to Babbitt (Taruskin 2005b: 168). The critique of a visuality solely directed at performers as a form of excess devoid of meaning was popularized in the writings of Alfred Einstein, notably in *The Italian Madrigal* (1949). It is interesting to note that *Augenmusik* has received little theoretical attention – to the extent that the article on 'Eye music' in the recent edition of *Grove* must predate 1971, which is the year of the death of its author Thurston Dart. Thus, Einstein's assessment of the term is repeated uncritically by a number of writers including Richard Taruskin (see Taruskin 1986: 261). The term's derogatory connotations are so strong that even a writer such as pianist Ian Pace apparently needs to 'reject the idea that Ferneyhough's work is primarily a type of *Augenmusik*' (Pace 2015a: 102). Indeed Taruskin, in a typically sweeping statement, condemns any music disseminated by notation as *Augenmusik* in *The Oxford History of Classical Music*, stating that 'composers who indulge in Augenmusik tacitly equate notation with music' (Taruskin 2005a: 778).

Though the scores of Barrett, Ferneyhough or Hübler cannot be said to be *Augenmusik* strictly speaking, their work suggest a positive reevaluation of the term and the act of reading. Their work is *Augenmusik* to the extent that it highlights that the notation needs to be read and deciphered critically to be understood, and thus underscore that musical notation is not and can

never be simply a visual representation of sound with which it can never be identical: it must always bear within it the traces of practice and writing. The ordinary use of the term is analogous to Derrida's traditionalist description of 'bad writing' in the *Grammatology*: 'the perverse and artful is technique, exiled in the exteriority of the body.' (OG: 17) Bad writing, like *Augenmusik*, disrupts the unitary presence and totality of the autonomous (art-)work. It is against such a totality that Derrida suggests the generality of a deconstructive conception of writing, of which Hübler's decapitation of the *Ton* is a parallel gesture: a disruption of the closed concept of the work by means of the performing body, a substitution of a unity of presence by the contingency of practice.

The double bind of *Ton* and *Tun*, of aural structure and practice, will in the subsequent Chapters be read in terms of an ethics of undecidability. To introduce the deconstructive logic of the undecidable, I will end this chapter with a brief discussion of Aldo Clementi's guitar solo *Ricerca* (2002) where a strict four part counterpoint is by necessity disintegrated in performance. Practice serves a rarefaction of the contrapuntal structure. The discussion of Clementi will also serve to suggest the extent to which the radically idiomatic in its deconstructive form is not necessarily related to a certain style of music.

5.9 The undecidable counterpoint of Aldo Clementi

The question of the undecidable relation between musical structure and practice as suggested by Hübler's decapitation of the *Ton* is most directly addressed in certain works by of Aldo Clementi where a strict contrapuntal structure is continually dissolved because of the limitations imposed by the practicalities of musical realization. This strategy is pursued in many of Clementi's works for solo instrument like the *Fantasia su Giorgio moEnCH* for violin (1983–85)¹⁰² and *Lento* for cello (1984). As in so many other pieces, in the *Ricerca* Clementi creates a dense polyphonic texture which covers a chromatic field on the basis of a long, diatonic melody.¹⁰³ The opening of the work is shown in Example 5.9, where one can see the initial build up of the

¹⁰² For a discussion of Clementi's works for solo violin, see Mattietti 2011.

¹⁰³ Gianluigi Mattietti (2001) provides a comprehensive discussion of Clementi's 'diatonic' period.

(A - B)

♩ = 90

mp

p

pp

ppp

Example 5.10: Aldo Clementi, *Ricercare*, first line of the score

texture starting with the bass part, the remaining parts entering at distinct registers.

The guitarist confronts problems of fingering already at the entrance of the alto part at the end of the first bar, and these problems grow increasingly prominent towards the entrance of the soprano at the end of the line. In short, it is impossible to sustain the notes as written, either because several notes have to be on the same string, because of impossible left hand stretches, or because the fingers have to leave a note – or the hand has to leave its position – to finger another note. Not only does this cause incoherence and distortions of the melodic material, it also causes the parts to blur into each other and establish new melodic configurations between the parts. It seems futile to go into a detailed discussion of these problems which face the guitarist persistently throughout the score. These problems are in fact so great that Australian guitarist Geoffrey Morris, the commissioner and dedicatee of the work, asked Clementi to write him another piece to replace the *Ricercare* (Morris 2009: 572).¹⁰⁴ Noting that the problem of note-sustainability is not only encountered in Clementi's *Ricercare*, Morris argues that it is 'the number of times that the counterpoint is unable to be maintained that is so problematic' in this particular piece (Ibid.). Problematic by what standards? According to Morris, 'in all of Aldo Clementi's music, the pitches are chosen due to compositional logic and not ease of execution or a desire to produce idiomatic music.' (Ibid.: 573) One must pause to question Morris's appeal to a notion of the idiomatic, under which lies the subdued appeal to an interpretive ideal based on the notion of *Werktreue*. The problem for Morris is the discrepancy between the notation and realization of the work, the disintegration of the polyphonic structure in performance due to number of instances the polyphonic web is breached, that is the number

¹⁰⁴ This resulted in the composition of *Otto Variazioni*.

of instances the compositional logic is corrupted by idiomatic limitations. Before asking Clementi to replace to work, Morris had suggested to Clementi numerous amendments to the work, one of which was to perform the work as a guitar duo. Although this solution would allow the performers to overcome the problems posed to the single guitarist it was not endorsed by Clementi on the grounds that a duo performance would alter the nature of the piece 'where an individual performer illuminates the text' (Ibid.: 572). The fact that Clementi does not subscribe to the suggestion of performing the piece as a duo is telling, as it indicates that Clementi's interest lies not so much in the perfect rendering of musical structure as the problematization of interpretation itself; indeed it suggests that the performative aspect is vital to the conception of the work and not simply as a means of rendering an abstract structure audible. That the practice will act as a filter which persistently disrupts the meticulously crafted musical coherence of the polyphonic structure must be seen as internal to the work structure – the inside of the work is permeated by the externality of embodiment which leaves only remnants of its material structure recognizable.

Interestingly, as the density of the texture increases or decreases according to the number of active parts so does the problem of note-sustainability and thus also the musical coherence. The work has two times five sections, each of which is based on a run-through of the theme which is always presented in the bass. The sections all conform to the same structure of an increase and decrease of textural density and thus present a similar formal pattern. As the texture grows more dense at the beginning of each section, the problem of note-sustainability increases and so does the disruption of (the notated) musical structure. As the polyphonic density decreases the material again becomes more coherent and recognizable. Interestingly, this process also affects the temporal aspect of the work – it should be recognized that the *Ricercare* not only targets the question of pitch but also that of musical time. This is in fact a typical trait of Clementi's work as a whole. The difficulties involved in performing the work will necessarily affect the flow of musical time as the player has to move about the neck in a particular fashion involving frequent long distance position changes or unusual fingerings. Morris describes similar challenges in *Otto Variazioni*, the piece that replaced Morris's commission (Morris 2009: 573–6). In the *Ricercare*, the change of density thus also implies a disruptional change in the temporal flow analogous to that of the melodic (dis-)coherence. Additionally, each

pair of sections follow a change of tempo from semibrevis = 90 to semibrevis = 60 and back, which means that when the density decreases towards the end of a section, and the material becomes more coherent and recognizable, the basic tempo has changed without the temporal transformation however being clearly noticeable due to the disrupted temporal flow. According to a note in the score, the transformations of tempo serves to give an unstable flexibility to the piece. (Clementi 2002: 'Avvertenze') Also, the rhythmic structure is organized isorhythmically so that the basic durations of the material changes from section to section. These various levels – the change of tempo, the isorhythmic structure, as well as the disruption of the temporal flow and the fragmentation of melodic coherence - all suggest a conscious attempt at problematizing the relationship between musical structure and performance, and creating a work where the two interact to create a special kind of ebb and flow not dictated by a strict compartmentalization of time. If the formal outline of *colloid* exposed a bifurcation of practice and sound, in Clementi's *Ricercare* one finds that a mediation of practice and sound, of *Ton* and *Tun*, follows the large scale ebb and flow of the work. The relation amounts to a form of polyphony where the two parts take turns in being the most prominent according to the temporal unfolding of this relation. The relation is not simply contingent, it bears the mark of what Derrida calls the undecidable, a reversal of two terms which in the act of reversal is exposed as impossible to hierarchize except through an act of violent distortion – the one element is presupposed in the other and vice-versa.

The undecidable is not merely the oscillation between two significations or two contradictory and very determinate rules [i.e. work/practice, or indeed any of the bifurcating dichotomies explored in the analyses] ... it is not merely the oscillation or the tension between two decisions, it is the experience of that which, though heterogeneous, foreign to the order of the calculable and the rule, is still obliged ... to give itself up to the impossible, while taking account of law and rules. (Derrida 2002b: 252)

In the *Ricercare*, it is impossible to decide whether the practice simply serves to render the compositional logic audible or if the compositional logic in fact presupposes the practice. The traditional dichotomy set up by Morris between compositional logic and idiomatic writing is suspended, undulating undecidably between the two terms: The compositional logic is not merely directed towards creating a chromatic field of varying density but rather in addressing the temporal flow of the music by implicitly targeting the practice. Interestingly, in the implicit problematization of the performative

Clementi is brought into great proximity with Ferneyhough as will be evident in the next chapter.

Imagining that the impossibility of performative realization of the notation is an error on Clementi's behalf when approaching the guitar can only be the result of a grave miscomprehension, of a subsumption of the unfamiliar under the familiar, of reducing difference and alterity, indeed radical heterogeneity, to homogeneous identity. The dislocation of structurality, and by extension, sense and meaning, implied by the demands posed to the performer is a mainstay of Clementi's work since at least the early sixties (notably since the orchestral piece *Informel 3* of 1963) and not grounded in a lack of knowledge about an instrument for which he had at the time used in numerous works. An analogue strategy had already been pursued in his first guitar solo *Dodici Variazioni* (1980) where a strict material structure is disseminated on the fingerboard of the instrument, not least indicated by the notation of treble and bass strings on two separate staves. I have discussed this work in great detail elsewhere (see Førisdal 2003: 11–24). In the latter work the relation between material, practice and time is explicated in the score: according to a note in the score, despite the fragmentary musical surface the piece is supposed to give an impression of an uninterrupted musical corrugation traversing a true and proper *rubato* (Clementi 1985. My translation).¹⁰⁵ To paraphrase Derrida, one could say that Clementi aims at calculating the incalculable temporal unfolding of music (c.f. 2002b: 244).

I would claim that Clementi's work, just as that of Hübler, Barrett or Ferneyhough, addresses the contingent relationship between musical structure and instrumental practice. And like their work, Clementi's *Ricercare* addresses this relationship between *Ton* and *Tun* as an undecidable and deconstructive bifurcation, indeed as a dissemination of structure within the work-structure itself and not something imposed from without. Thus one can see that the definition of the radically idiomatic as an approach to composition which incorporates elements from the practice on a structural level fits very well with the *Ricercare*. From this perspective, any assessment of this particular work, and indeed of Clementi's work since 1963 as a whole, which does not take into account the undecidability of *Ton* and *Tun* must be seen as a violent reduction of the agonistic and articulatory tensions played out in performance. Indeed, I will argue that Clementi's work raises

¹⁰⁵ 'Il pezzo deve dare l'idea di uno scorrere ondulato e senza soluzione di continuità, attraverso un vero e proprio *rubato*.'

a number of questions that will be aired in the remaining pages of this text – the question of the idiomatic and the proper, of ex-appropriation and the undecidable as the ultimate horizon of the radically idiomatic.

In this chapter, I have revisited certain central works of the twentieth century, assessing them from the point of view of the radically idiomatic. The critical, genealogical, perspective offered by notion of the radically idiomatic has enabled instituting a double trajectory of structure and the body in these works. This displaces the polemical antagonism of structurality and avant-gardism and reads twentieth century music as exposing the performer body as a 'body totally imprinted by history'. The analysis of *Kurze Schatten II* in the next chapter will expand this argument, focusing on the work as a 'locus of the dissociation of the Me' through a deconstruction of presence and identity.

6 Brian Ferneyhough's *Kurze Schatten II* – a Shadowy Presence*

Having sketched genealogy of twentieth century music through the prism of the radically idiomatic in the previous chapter, I argued that Ferneyhough's work marks a breach in this genealogy in explicitly addressing the practice with which a work is to be realized. In a seemingly simple technical manoeuvre – raising the elements of the practice to the status of musical parameters – Ferneyhough opens up a compositorial space where it is possible to target the apparatus of instrumental practice not simply as a means to discover new sounds or a critique of tradition, but as a space where the relationship between musical and practice can be played out in all its inherent heterogeneity. In the analysis of Barrett's *colloid* in Chapter 3 I showed how the parametric conception of instrumental practice exposes the contingency of the practice and how the mute elements of the practice can only *make sense* when the elements intersect to form articulatory nodal points within the network of elements. With the reading of Hübler's *Reißwerck* in Chapter 4, this contingent parametric conception of practice was conceptualized in terms of Derridean deconstruction, Hübler's turn from a *Kompositorik des Tons* to a *Kompositorik des Tuns* being understood as a decapitation of the *Logos* of practice, of the possibility of establishing a transcendental signifier for the practice in the form of an ideal of performance, sound or expressivity. The decapitation of the *Ton* on the scaffold of execution is a

* Parts of this chapter have been published in Førisdal 2015

repetition of Ferneyhough's breach in the seventies. Interestingly, as his student Hübler produced his first essay in radical idiomatics "*Feuerzauber*" *auch Augenmusik* in 1981, Ferneyhough had seemingly already relegated the explicit question of practice to a sort of afterlife as a shadowy presence in the underworld, lurking still somewhere just below the surface of the notation. In this chapter I aim to show that this shadowy presence can be understood in terms of a deconstruction of presence, of the identity of the instrument, the practice, and the performer's relation to self.

Before turning to the discussion of *Kurze Schatten II*, I will briefly generalize the question of instrumental practice in Ferneyhough's works from the seventies, as well as assess the reorientation found around 1980 with works such as the *Second String Quartet* (1979) and the piano piece *Lemma–Icon–Epigram* (1981). The claim of a deconstruction of presence will commence along the lines of an understanding of the relation to Walter Benjamin, and a reading of his text *Kurze Schatten*, which provided Ferneyhough with poetic stimulus for the guitar piece, will reintroduce the deconstructive problematic by way of a passage through Nietzsche. The question of presence will initially be addressed in connection with a discussion of resonance and scordatura and the general form of the work, before being more directly pointed towards an analysis of the structural function of natural harmonics (first and sixth movements), the relationship between notation and sounding pitch (second movement) and the arbitrary employment of handgrips (movement movement). To a certain extent, my discussion will take Jean Paul Chaigne's analyses (2008) as a point of departure. Like so many Ferneyhough scholars, I have also consulted the sketches held at the Paul Sacher Stiftung in Basel. However, writing from the point of view of the practice provides a particular perspective which has not yet been explored properly in the reception of Ferneyhough's work.

6.1 Ferneyhough after the *Second String Quartet*

6.1.1 Surface and depth, and some reflections on method

In the previous chapter, I discussed *Unity Capsule* at length. In the *Time and Motion* series Ferneyhough similarly addressed performative questions.

This series comprises three works: *Time and Motion Study I* for bass clarinet (1971–79), *Time and Motion Study II* for vocalizing cellist and live electronics (1976–77), and *Time and Motion Study III* for 16 singers with percussion instruments and live electronics (1973–74). With the exception of Fitch's scanty treatment of these works (in Fitch 2013) and a short article on *Time and Motion Study II* by Martin Iddon (2006), there are no in-depth analyses of these works in the literature. This is unfortunately not the place to provide such analyses; I will let *Unity Capsule* stand as the example of Ferneyhough's explicit engagement with instrumental practice in the seventies.

In Ferneyhough's output, the *Second String Quartet* (1979) and the piano solo *Lemma–Icon–Epigram* mark a reorientation (Toop 1990: 64; Fitch 2013: 71–3; 230–32). With these two works there is a distinct shift towards more clearly defined forms and a more focused formal disposition of musical energy than in the earlier pieces. There might be something about the genres and forces themselves that fuelled this change; the string quartet or the piano sonata format (which *Lemma–Icon–Epigram* mimics with its tripartite fast–slow–fast layout) is very different than an amplified cellist with tape machines attached or a dadaist choir decentring their own identity with percussive instruments, spatial redistribution and electronic manipulation. This tendency towards relative clarity¹⁰⁶ is also immediately evident in the notation and the idiomatic writing – gone are the extremely detailed performance instructions,¹⁰⁷ as is the rather dirty superimposition of instrumental techniques and explicit performative parameters. This is also the case regarding the role of instrumental practice in *Kurze Schatten II*. Whereas *Unity Capsule* and the *Time and Motion Studies* spell it all out with regards to idiomatic treatment, in *Kurze Schatten II* the idiomatic considerations and other forms of material are interdependent on a subsurface level in a way which is not immediately apparent in the score. Regarding instrumental practice, this shift is reminiscent of the comparatively simple and normal notation observed in *Reißwerck* in comparison with the more extrovert notation of other Hübler pieces like "*Feuerzauber*" auch *Augenmusik* or the *Third String Quartet*.

106 One could indeed be tempted to term it a classicizing tendency.

107 Although compared to other composers, the performance instructions are still highly detailed.

The *Second String Quartet* and *Lemma–Icon–Epigram* also mark a reorientation in terms of working methods. As Toop notes, ‘in earlier works, the surface structure of the work more or less coincided with compositional structures that had generated them. But starting with the *Second String Quartet* ... the generating processes start to move underground’ (Toop 1990: 64). This was suggested to Toop in conversation with the composer, who remarks that ‘all works contain immediate expression (or message presentation), and skeleton’ (*CW*: 275). He contrasts the early *Sonatas for String Quartet* (1967) where ‘the surface is the skeleton’ with the *Second String Quartet*, where ‘[t]here is a vacuum that exists between the surface presentation – now that’s what I call the carapace of the *Second String Quartet* – and the subsurface generative structures’ (*Ibid.*). Ferneyhough elaborates (and I allow myself to quote at length):

... in the *Second String Quartet* the surface is very much the sediment of those already disappeared processes which have leadenly disappeared below the surface, like anchors, or like half-deflated balloons beneath the stratosphere: they’re swimming at different levels, and in different distances from this surface, so that the degree of sonorous causality is different for each type of activity. It allows us, as it were, to mentally distance ourselves, and forces us to refocus; it gives a sort of analogy (though not in a direct sense) to innate, inbuilt tonal prejudices, so to speak. (*Ibid.* 275–6)

One notes the vivid imagery Ferneyhough employs to conceptualize his work; indeed, as I will return to below the tendency to think in images is central to the reorientation outlined above.

The recognition of the relative detachment of the aural surface and generative structures is thus of great importance for Ferneyhough: it allows him to perceive in his own work – indeed within the development of his own *oeuvre* and self-conscious style – a contextual depth on par with that surrounding tonality: ‘The re-integration of some form of depth perspective depends on re-establishing contact between surface features of a work and its inner, subcutaneous drives’ (*CW*: 25). The reference to an ‘inbuilt tonal prejudice’ above illuminates this latter quotation, as it suggests that the ‘depth’ sought is the embeddedness of music in a wider cultural horizon explicitly cultivated by the composer over the (usually, for Ferneyhough that is) extended period of composition which allows this depth to settle. The early interest in medieval and Renaissance thinking (in particular related to alchemy and the emblem) should be mentioned in this context as based in the relative status of musical thinking in these periods in comparison with

our own time (Zivkovic 1982: 71). That is, he sought a re-embedding of music in a wider cultural discourse: 'If music in some way could be reintegrated with as many areas of life as possible, there is a chance that it will once again become a part of society' (Ibid.: 73). In earlier works, such a contextualization had been approached by way of integrating external references. For instance, Ferneyhough comments on the *Missa Brevis* that he set a religious text because he 'wanted a verbal substructure which was sufficiently strong, certain of its own identity, to act as a firm counter-foil to the distortions and liberties which the exigencies of the purely musical material demanded', and that the *Missa* text was taken 'in its connotation of culture-object, not of meaning-constellation' (CW: 210). For Ferneyhough, the intra-musical depth perspective pursued since the *Second String Quartet* is what 'allows the surface material to take on different degrees of auratic presence' (CW: 275). One notes at this time an increased importance of pitch (Zivkovic 1982: 74–6), something which is immediately clear when comparing the sketches for works like *Unity Capsule* or *Time and Motion Study II* with later works. More importantly, with the works from the later phase there is a strong tendency to pursue composition as an explicit meta-critique. For instance, in *Lemma-Icon-Epigram* the permutation of the material is itself treated as a form of material, the composer permutating the application of the various transformational processes employed (see Toop 1990: 61).

The relative detachment of the aural surface and generative processes is pursued as a project; indeed, as Ferneyhough explains to Toop, 'the surface can remain the same while the techniques used to generate that surface change' (CW: 260). One could say that Ferneyhough has not only recognized a non-causal relationship – or indeed arbitrary, in the sense elaborated in relation to the sign in Chapter 4 – between a work's notation and how it was composed but also that he deliberately addresses this problematic in his own practice. The problematic was also recognized in the early works, though in somewhat cruder fashion. For instance, in *Sieben Sterne* (1970) for organ with two assistants, the performer is asked to improvise in a way that resembles 'the fully written-out passages as nearly as possible' (Ferneyhough 1970). This non-causality also finds itself explicitly problematized between other levels of the work: between the notation and its realization, and of course between the performer and the listener or analyst.

This poses great methodological challenges to the reception: where should one locate the object of analysis? In the score, among the composer's

sketches, or in the sensual perception of the work? The most extensive engagements with Ferneyhough's work makes recourse to the sketch material held at the Paul Sacher Stiftung. This is the approach pursued by Pätzold (2002), Cavallotti (2002), Chaigne (2008) and Lippe (2000 and 2004) as well as in several items by Toop (1990, 1991 and 1994), and shed important light on Ferneyhough's working process. Nevertheless, it seems to be a consistent trait of this genre that the analytic pursuit is determined by the extent of the sketch material available. Neither of the mentioned writers seem to be interested in venturing further than what they are able to deduce from the sketches, which are incomplete. The attitude is most resolutely formulated by Cavallotti: 'The analysis of the different composition methods is actually *the only way* to shed light on Ferneyhough's reflections on force in the music' (Cavallotti 2002: 131. *Italics added*).¹⁰⁸ For me, this is a decidedly defeatist stance, which downplays the critical faculties of the analyst and betrays a traditional view of the possibilities inherent in the receptive position. I would argue that the recognition of the non-casual relation between the means and ends of composition articulates the act of composition as a performative, or as a discursive practice in its own right. This practice is articulatory, in the sense defined by Laclau and Mouffe, that is in the sense that 'the practice establishes a relation among elements such that their identity is modified as a result of the articulatory practice'. (Laclau and Mouffe 1985: 105). Ferneyhough's practice articulates the conditions for the realization of the work, that is to say its material, its notation and its practice, in a single gesture that modifies all of these three levels of the work. Laclau and Mouffe's definition of the articulatory seems to suggest the necessity of going beyond the analyses of notation of Chapters 3 and 4, and, in a move completely in line with the dominant strand of Ferneyhough research, use the available sketch material as an important source of empirical knowledge about the work. However, and this relaxes the apparent paradox of such a move, the quotation from Laclau and Mouffe suggests that the path I will pursue is not that of the dominant reception: just as their concept of articulation stresses the modification of elements as they enter a relation with other elements, I will highlight how the methods employed have a generative function but also simultaneously deconstruct the interlaced strata of the parametric fabric in a modification of their articulatory relations. As much as Ferneyhough's parametric methods generate structure, they also

108 'Die Analyse der verschiedenen Kompositionstechniken ist tatsächlich der einzige Weg, um Ferneyhoughs Überlegungen der Kraft in der Musik zu beleuchten.' My translation.

dislocate structure and thus state structure *as such* or structurality as a problem. The analyses that follow can be seen as a meticulous elaboration of this argument.

A mirror-image of Cavallotti's position regarding the importance of studying Ferneyhough's methods is found in those who, like Fitch, discuss the works and the composer's statements as if there was always a necessary and causal relationship between the two. This position is most succinctly formulated by Zagora Zivkovic, who writes that it is only Ferneyhough 'himself who can give the widest perspectives and most powerful psychological grounding' for understanding the works (Zivkovic 1982: 68). Fitch's work seems to comply with this position; indeed her dissertation is fashioned as an extended commentary on Ferneyhough's verbal discourse rather than his musical works. Certainly, given the impressive and persuasively thorough reflections exposed in Ferneyhough's numerous writings and interviews, it is difficult to detach or even escape the contextualization provided by the composer for his own work. Indeed, given the difficulty of understanding any unknown phenomenon, why not go directly to the source? The reason for engaging with any artistic endeavour must undoubtedly be an intuition that the artist in question has something important to say? Nevertheless, one must try to resist a simple grounding of the significance of the music in the composer's own discourse, not mistaking 'practical messages' (Wimsatt and Beardsley 1946: 469–70) for the possible significance of a work. Certainly, one must acknowledge certain basic empirical facts – but not necessarily their implied signification or interpretation. For my own part, this means in particular being wary of the determinate psychological effects occasionally intended by the composer. For instance, Ferneyhough talks about the rests '[in] the concluding viola solo in my *Third String Quartet*, where the immediately preceding whirlwind of linear motion causes the violist to perceive the rests as major impediments. The effect of this perception on the way he then attacks the intervening events is very evident in performance' (*CW*: 378). Certainly, the violist's perception of these rests is beyond the composer's control. Similarly, the extended empty bars in the third movement of *Kurze Schatten II* are described as 'likely to confront the player with a number of thorny psychological barriers' related to counting out these silent bars, resulting in 'a polyphony, as it were, located almost entirely in the mind (and its physical extensions) of the performer' (*CW*: 143–4). After Cage's *4'33"*, how can counting out a few silent bars be seen as such a big thing? I see no reason to doubt

the importance of these and similar forms of conceptualization on the part of the composer; however, they must be seen as what they are – as the composer's own conceptualizations or, following Barrett, fictions, regardless of how persuasive and appealing they might be.

It seems necessary to restate the relevance of Foucault at this point, which can be felt at two levels. One is the level of verbal discourse, where the structuralist aspect of Foucault's early work can help distinguish the interlaced layers of Ferneyhough's own statements and the relative weight and significance they should carry. The second relevance is of course related to the earlier suggestion of viewing music as a discourse in Foucault's sense; indeed the explicit and intra-musical problematization of the relative detachment of the musical surface and subcutaneous generative processes will be discussed in terms of a discursive practice below. Or rather as a deconstruction of the discursive practice from the point of view of the apparatus of instrumental practice.

6.1.2 Ferneyhough and 'deconstruction' – the gesture and figure, and lines of force

The mediation of the aural surface and subcutaneous generative structures is conceptualized with the terms 'gesture' and 'figure'. These terms, the discussion of which forms the basis of Fitch's dissertation,¹⁰⁹ are formulated by the composer in order to describe his own working methods in the period which has been the focus of this exposition. While the term gesture is used in a rather traditional manner as a musical object, the notion of the figure 'represents a way of perceiving, categorizing and mobilizing concrete gestural configurations' (*CW*: 41). The figural is thus a form of liquidation of the concrete gesture the means of which is subcutaneous parametric analysis; the surface features of a musical work are conceived as a continuous reconfiguration of gestural activity conditioned by the simultaneous dissolving of these same gestures and conditions. One should note that Ferneyhough's explorations of these terms go counter to normal usage in which a figure would have a somewhat iconic status (one thinks for instance of the

109 These terms have become a mainstay of the reception, though rarely critically assessed. This is particularly problematic in Fitch's writing (2004, 2013). See also Cavallotti (2002), Lippe (2000 and 2004) and Chaigne (2008). See Pace (2015a and 2015b) for a critique of Fitch.

Figurenlehre of the Baroque era or the figural tropes of classical rhetoric) and a gesture would be a less materially distinctive musical configuration. The notions of gesture and figure were first explored in two texts from the early eighties, 'Form – Figure – Style: an Intermediate Assessment' (*CW*: 20–28) and '*Il tempo della figura*' (*CW*: 33–41). It is interesting to note that in both these texts the notions of the gesture and figure are formulated within the framework of a critique of what he perceived as a reification of musical expression in then recent works by German and Austrian composers like Wolfgang Rihm, Wolfgang von Schweinitz and others. The works of these composers are portrayed as resorting to 'false forms of directness'¹¹⁰ because of what Ferneyhough perceives as uncritical reference to and adoptions of earlier forms of musical expression. Both texts also present a critique of serialism based on the problematic relation between compositional abstraction and perception:

The deepest doubts concerning serial thinking are related to the perception that total mobility of parametric deployment tended to generate a series of contextless monads, whose aural logic by no means obviously followed from the abstract rules of play to which they owed their existence. (*CW*: 26)

Against this double critique of total ossification and total liquidation, which mirrors Adorno's critique of Stravinsky and Webern in *Philosophy of New Music* (Adorno 2006), Ferneyhough posits the interaction of these polar extremes with his terms of the gesture (the solid) and figure (the liquid) in a highly generalized manner and beyond the question of stylistic reference. One is tempted to suggest a reading of the gesture and figure along the lines of Catherine Malabou's terms elastic and plastic, where whereas the elastic represents that which is capable of returning to its initial shape after being exposed to external stimuli the plastic stays with its new shape after a similar exposure (Malabou 2011: 61–6).¹¹¹ In Ferneyhough's conception, the gesture and figure can never reach the extremes of total solidification or liquidation but are conceived in their interrelatedness – the gesture can always be broken down into its constituent and mobilizing parts as parameters, and the figure cannot exist as music outside of a gestural configuration, it 'does not exist, in material terms, in its own autonomous right' (*CW*: 41).

A gesture whose component defining features – timbre, pitch contour, dynamic level etc. – display a tendency towards escaping from that specific

¹¹⁰ One notes the distinctly Adornoesque formulation.

¹¹¹ Malabou's work combines deconstruction with neuroplasticity in a highly original and interesting way.

context in order to become independently signifying radicals, free to recombine, to 'solidify' into further gestural forms may, for want of other nomenclature be termed a *figure*. (CW: 26)

The conceptualization of the gesture and the figure were prompted by Gilles Deleuze's 1981 book on Bacon, *The Logic of Sense* (trans. Deleuze 2003), not least in the notion of 'lines of force' which is quoted at the opening of 'Form – Figure – Style' (CW: 21), a favourite expression of Ferneyhough taken up by the reception.¹¹² The expression captures the parametric nexus into which the gestural is dissolved. In an interview from 1991, Ferneyhough mentions that the book 'was instrumental in making concrete some fundamental intuitions concerning my own work' (CW: 415). These intuitions could probably be related to Ferneyhough's extensive study of alchemical texts which forms the basis of both the *Time and Motion Study III* (1974) and *Transit* (1972–75); indeed, the operative tendencies of the figure and gesture more than parallel the alchemical processes of *solve* and *coagula*. Nevertheless, and despite the insistence of composition as a manipulation of lines of force, both texts on the gesture and figure make explicit reference to either Derrida or deconstruction, thus more than suggesting the importance of Derrida in the way Ferneyhough manipulates those lines of force into 'mobile figural constellations' (CW: 27) of musical discourse. Indeed, the conceptualization of musical material along the lines of the gesture and the figure mirrors the double characteristics of Derrida's term *différance* elaborated in conjunction with Freud in *La Différance*: musical material is always differentiating and its potential meaning deferred to the musical context (cf. MP: 18). The parametric analysis suggests a form of spacing whereby the musical object is compartmentalized, its different components disseminated throughout the fabric of the work. Thus musical material can never be fully present in itself but only in the bifurcating process of differentiation and deferral (cf. MP: 18-21). The *différance* of musical material and structure as an effect of parametric writing.

Nonetheless, it is worth injecting a word of caution at this moment about the notion of deconstruction in Ferneyhough. In Chapter 4 I used the term with strict and explicit reference to Derrida. However, as Courtot points out, Ferneyhough's use of the term seems not always to be in line with Derrida's terminology (Courtot 2009: 78). For instance, in positioning himself in

¹¹² Not only does this expression appear several times in both essays, it also surfaces repeatedly in the texts and interviews gathered in the *Collected Writings*.

relation to Kagel and Schnebel with regards to the use of new vocal techniques, Ferneyhough states that in a work like *Time and Motion Study III* it was not a question 'liberating the voice from any particular conventional constriction'; rather, 'it was a question of taking the now deconstructed, mobile atoms of articulation and recombining them into new, syntactically meaningful units' (*CW*: 321). Clearly, such a use of the term deconstruction refers only to the first of the two slopes of Derridean deconstruction described in Chapter 4, whose double gesture would also include the actual recombination of the mobile atoms of vocal articulation within its term. Also, in a passage quoted by Courtot, Ferneyhough, discussing his working methods in terms of his idiosyncratic definitions of the terms figure and gesture, talks of the possible deconstruction of the latter into its inherent parametric tendencies (Courtot 2009: 76; the passage in question is found in *CW*: 285). One notes the context of deconstruction for discussing the gesture and figure in this quote; nevertheless, in this particular passage Ferneyhough's use of the term clearly corresponds to a non-philosophic usage, in line with the definition given by the *Oxford English Dictionary*: 'The action of undoing the construction of a thing' (OED online), a definition that lacks the positive, constructive aspect of Derrida's philosophic practice – it's second slope. Although deconstruction is not given an operative status in Courtot's book, Courtot nonetheless more than suggests that Ferneyhough's work could indeed be understood in properly Derridean terms. Thus, without concrete reference either to the aural 'surface presentation' or the 'subsurface generative structures', whose fundamental difference Ferneyhough stresses with the notions of the gesture and figure (*CW*: 275), a tentative relation between his work and Derrida can nevertheless be established. In the course of this chapter it is my aim to show how the engagement with instrumental practice, already introduced in the discussion of *Unity Capsule* in the Chapter 5, assumes no insignificant position amongst the other deconstructive lines of force that partakes in the configuration of the aural surface of Ferneyhough's music.

Lois Fitch's dissertation provides the most extended reflection on Ferneyhough's terms. A notion of deconstruction plays a decisive role in her dissertation even if the reference is made to Lyotard's early book *Discourse, Figure* rather than Derrida's work (Fitch 2004). In fact, Fitch presents Lyotard's work, by way of the commentators from whom all her quotations from Lyotard are taken, as a critique of Derrida (*Ibid.*: 147–9). Although

this is not the place for an extended philological investigation of the relation between Lyotard and Derrida, nor of Fitch's work itself, which hardly touches on instrumental practice at all, in her uncritical reliance on secondary sources for Lyotard,¹¹³ it seems Fitch fails to grasp the extent to which Lyotard's text is permeated by Derridean topoi and terminology and that her quotations from Lyotard, taken as they are from secondary sources, are often taken out of context. In my view, *Discourse, Figure*, rather than critiquing Derrida, presents an attempt to make operative Derrida's early work in the field of perception and aesthetics.¹¹⁴ Indeed, Lyotard does not designate his work as deconstruction as such:

The present book is not that good book [i.e a book of deconstruction – 'a book where linguistic time (the time in which signification evolves, the time of reading) would itself be deconstructed'], for it still stakes out a position in signification; not being an artist's book, deconstruction here *does not operate directly, but is signified*. (Lyotard 2011: 13, italics added)

This is of course also the case with the present text. Nevertheless, Fitch's understanding of Ferneyhough's conceptualization of the figural, which she traces back to Lyotard by way of Gilles Deleuze's book on Bacon, would align well with a Derridean perspective, a perspective already explicated by Ferneyhough.

Thus, I would question Fitch's claim that 'the gesture and figure are dialectically related (as Manhkopf and Paddison both suggest)' (Fitch 2004: 105), a claim which is certainly problematic given the deconstructive framework she proposes for her work by way of Lyotard. Though she seeks support in

113 An English translation of *Discourse, Figure* did not appear until 2011 (Lyotard 2011). Interestingly, in his introduction to the English edition, John Mowitt is also trying to save Lyotard from the shadows of his more famous colleague in what seems to be a typical move in the reception of Lyotard directed at the spectre of Derrida (see his 'Introduction: The Gold-Bug', in Lyotard 2011, xi–xxiii).

114 This reading of Lyotard finds support in Bill Readings, one of Fitch's main sources for Lyotard: 'Lyotard's critique of 'textualism' [in early Derrida] stands more as a corrective to misunderstandings of the impact of deconstruction' (Readings 1991: 5). Rodolphe Gasché suggests that the transformation of Lyotard's notion of the figural which take place throughout *Discourse, Figure* 'is the result of a deconstructive operation' of reversal and reinscription (Gasché 1994: 29) and that 'the space of inscription of reflexivity that Lyotard calls the *figural* corresponds to what for Derrida is the text' (Ibid.: 35). According to Derrida's translator Geoffrey Bennington, 'Lyotard's criticisms of Derrida ... are in general based on a misunderstanding ... of the status of Derrida's term 'text'' (Bennington 1994: 108). Bennington also outlines a thorough critique of Peter Dews's reading of Lyotard and Derrida on which Fitch's work is premised (Ibid.: 99–116).

references to Claus-Steffen Mahnkopf and Max Paddison, this is to no avail – she has already decisively dismissed the referenced text by Mahnkopf (Ibid.: 57), and Paddison's text contains no comment on Ferneyhough beyond a reference to another text by Paddison himself (cf. Paddison 2001). The relationship between deconstruction and the dialectic remains unresolved – indeed, it is not even raised – in Fitch's dissertation. However, in a later essay on the concept of the figure, Fitch does recognize that conceptualizing Ferneyhough's figure and gesture as a dialectic 'poses a problem' for her argument (Fitch 2009: 169). Such reflections do not resurface in her 2013 monograph on the composer (Fitch 2013).

Technically, the terms gesture and figure are connected to the idea of parametric composition. Separating sonic qualities as different parameters has been common practice since the fifties, and parametric composition can be seen as a post-serial practice that broadens the scope of material beyond the basic parameters of pitch, rhythm, dynamics and timbre. This can also include matters of instrumental practice, and Ferneyhough says that 'I myself treat anything as a parametric variable that (a) can be quantified sufficiently consistently as to permit stepwise modulation and (b) is a clear enough component of its parent gestalt to ensure its adequate perception in later contexts' (CW: 387). Importantly, Toop notes that in Ferneyhough's work since 1980 'parameters almost always interact as part of an organic unity, with a clear processual intent' (Toop 1994: 164). That is, after 1980, parameters are often developed figurally on the basis of an already existing musical, gestural, entity.

Accordingly, Ferneyhough characterizes the change of his work that occurred around 1980 in terms of a change of approach to parameters:

Whereas, in earlier pieces, the sonic events were resultants of independent parametric modulation, my more recent efforts [i.e. after 1979] have been concentrated on precisely the opposite, i.e. the definition and deployment of linear-polyphonic sound-qualities such as initially arise from fully composed-out events. This has the advantage of being able to exploit the ambiguity inherent in the object/effect dichotomy; parametric lines of force can be clearly perceived as infecting, damaging, or reconstituting their carrier vehicles. (CW: 387)

This description corresponds to the shift from the kind of delicate overlaying observed in *Unity Capsule* to processes based on relative degrees of fixity and dissolvence according to the terms gesture and figure. The affinity to Derrida's description of his own terminology in *Positions* is striking:

First, because these are not atoms, but rather focal points of economic condensation, sites of passage necessary for a very large number of marks, slightly more effervescent crucibles. Further, their effects do not simply turn back on themselves by means of an auto-affection without opening. Rather they spread out in a chain over the practical and theoretical entirety of a text, and each time in a different way. (*Pos*: 40)

The figural liquidation of parameters in Ferneyhough is similarly not atomist, and the parameters never return to themselves in order to form a self-sufficient structure, 'by means of an auto-affection without opening'. Rather, as I will show, Ferneyhough's work exposes a radical contingency through conceiving composition in terms of parameters.

Choosing a work for solo instrument to explore this problematic seems particularly apt. In his works for solo instrument, the seemingly greater expressive limitations seem to push this contingency to the limit:

With solo instruments we have a ... situation in which the issue is not so much defining a continuous identity in the mass but rather one of constantly thrusting at the performer the *non*-identity of the work, those centrifugal tendencies which are only provisionally held in check by the multiplicity of compositional devices which serve to define the [processual strata]. The more these are explicitly rendered by the notation, the more a 'separation of powers' is imaginable, an exploding outward from tentatively common trajectories. (*CW*: 384)

Indeed one should take out the inverted commas around the suggestion of a 'separation of powers' by means of notation; certainly in the present context this should be understood literally as a separation of the different strands inherent in the network of powers that permeate any musical practice. These powers are indeed capillary; they permeate the performer body. Their dissociation in the notation finds a correlate in a solicitation (in the sense that Derrida uses this term as a form of 'putting in motion', disjuncting and displacing (*WD*: 4–5; see also the translator's introduction: xviii) or 'shaking' of the apparatus and the subject of practice, and thus opens up a space – indeed a form of spacing – of reassessment for the subject. This opening corresponds to the decapitation of the 'o' discussed in Chapter 4 as an opening towards the other which also suggests a questioning of the authority inherent in the practice. A separation of powers indeed.

To conclude this discussion of Ferneyhough and deconstruction, I would stress that Ferneyhough's music should not be seen as a representation of deconstruction but rather as enacting a process of deconstruction, the result of which is the work as sound. A deconstructive work would necessarily

have to be radically idiomatic – it would have to address its own conditions through a meticulous internal questioning and setting-apart of the musical *écriture*, both as notation and in the writing of the work as well as in the enactment of this process by means of its own resources.

6.2 Ferneyhough and Benjamin

6.2.1 Ferneyhough and Benjamin I: *Kurze Schatten (II)*

If Derrida and Deleuze were vital for the explication of the terms gesture and figure as well as the recognition of parametric thinking as a deconstructive manipulation of lines of force in the early eighties, it was Walter Benjamin's *Ursprung des deutschen Trauerspiels* that suggested to Ferneyhough the importance of explicitly articulating his notion of parametric composition in these terms: 'In fact, it was via Benjamin that I came across this whole world of subcutaneous significance' (*CW*: 246). Indeed, the encounter with Benjamin, which on chronological evidence must pre-date the publication of Deleuze's book on Bacon,¹¹⁵ not only provided a theoretical context for Ferneyhough's profound preoccupation with the late Renaissance *emblema* (more on which below) and modernist fragmentation. The notions of thought-images (*Denkbilder*), constellations and aura, as well as Benjamin's philosophy of history and time provided the composer with material stimulus reflected in many works from the piano solo *Lemma-Icon-Epigram* to the opera *Shadowtime* (2004) and beyond.

The guitar solo *Kurze Schatten II* was also written as an explicit response to Benjamin. The title refers to a short thought-image entitled *Kurze Schatten*, from a cycle of texts also called *Kurze Schatten*, which describes how shadows shorten and withdraw to the feet of objects as the sun rises to its zenith at midday, leaving objects clearly exposed to light and sharply outlined by the shadows. In the text, Benjamin compares this moment of illumination to how the faculty of knowledge grasps things.

¹¹⁵ Deleuze's book was published in 1981, *Lemma-Icon-Epigram* was composed in 1980–81.

Kurze Schatten

*Wenn es gegen Mittag geht, sind die Schatten nurnoch die schwarzen, scharfen Ränder am Fuß der Dinge, und in bereitschaft, lautlos, unversehens, in ihren Bau, in ihr Geheimnis sich zurückzuziehen. Dann ist, in ihrer bedrängten, geduckten Fülle, die Stund Zarathustras gekommen, des Denkers im 'Lebensmittag', im 'Sommergarten'. Denn die Erkenntnis umreißt wie die Sonne auf der Höhe ihrer Bahn die Dinge am strengsten.*¹¹⁶ (Benjamin 1991: 428)

Ferneyhough's reading of the text highlights the image of how 'everything becomes just itself' (*CW*: 137), which sparked the conception of 'a piece in which process gradually merges into the object in such a way that both ... become "themselves"' (*Ibid.*). The result is a work for guitar solo consisting of seven short movements; the number of movements as well as their relative brevity and individual expressive focus is suggested by Benjamin's cycle of thought-images, which consists of seven short and extremely compressed texts. In fact, Benjamin published two cycles of thought-images under the title *Kurze Schatten*, the former (published in the *Neue Schweizer Rundschau* in 1929) consisting of eight texts, and the latter (published in the *Kölnische Zeitung* in 1933) consisting of seven (McFarland 2013: 167). Interestingly, both cycles of texts end with the eponymously titled text *Kurze Schatten*. Apparently Ferneyhough refers to the latter cycle since the guitar work is in seven movements. The piece is organized in three pairs of movements that alternate between slow and fast tempi, and ends with a fantasia-like movement. This pattern was intentionally modelled on the baroque suite (*CW*: 138). The process of the gradual disclosure of the full identity of the object is mirrored in the transformation of the resonance of the instrument from the eccentric towards the normal in the course of the work. At the outset, the tuning of strings ①, ②, ⑤ and ⑥ is changed, and between each pair of strings one string is retuned to its normal pitch leaving only the second string de-tuned for the last movement. Normal tuning as well as the initial tuning of *Kurze Schatten II* is given in Figure 6.1.

The process of retuning the strings alters the resonance of the instrument and reduces the number of quartertones available. However, it is important to note that the identity of the object of knowledge is not actually absolute

¹¹⁶ 'Short Shadows. Toward noon, shadows are no more than the sharp, black edges at the feet of things, prepared to retreat silently, unnoticed, into their burrow, into their secret. Then, in its compressed, cowering fullness, comes the hour of Zarathustra – the thinker in 'the noon of life', in 'the summer garden'. For it is knowledge that outlines objects like the sun at its zenith, most sharply.' (Benjamin 2005: 702)

in Benjamin's text, it is still marked by its shadowy outline. This is also the case in the Ferneyhough, where in the last movement ② is still tuned to B-flat, something which



Figure 6.1: Normal tuning, *Kurze Schatten II* scordatura

is highlighted by the last line of this movement being written solely for this string. In fact, the very last note of the work is an octave harmonic on ②, notated as B-natural but sounding B-flat.¹¹⁷ Already from this rudimentary description of the work one can see how such a basic element of the practice of the instrument as its tuning is a defining feature both of its conception and formal outline.

I would like to stress that this initial sign of the radically idiomatic suggests the problematization of identity that will be central to my understanding of the work. One might claim that Ferneyhough's suggestion to let process and object merge into one seems overly literal and even a somewhat naïve distortion of Benjamin's text. In the text the complexity of this pair emerging as one, the temporal process of becoming and the timeless object, is furthered by a reference to Nietzsche. In Benjamin, the moment of illumination is 'the hour of Zarathustra – the thinker in "the noon of life", in "the summer garden"'. This is a reference not to Nietzsche's *Zarathustra*, but to the poem *Aus hohen Bergen* from the end of *Jenseits von Gute und Böse*. In Nietzsche's poem, which deals with the relationship between individual identity and social relations, the hour of Zarathustra is the moment when, after refusing his former friends, the protagonist of the poem is visited by the figure of Zarathustra, the moment when the one in his mountainous solitude becomes two ('*Um Mittag war's, da wurde Eins zu Zwei ...*'). In McFarland's reading, in the poem the hour of Zarathustra 'names a unique hiatus of non-identity at the juncture of past and future effecting a volatile duplication' (McFarland 2013: 171). Transferred to Benjamin's text, McFarland claims that 'in Benjamin's thought-image, the hour of Zarathustra continues to be inherently non-identical, caught in the immanent tension between determinate knowledge and the secret shadows at the edges of the things it knows'

117 One could certainly make an argument for seeing this end of the work as an homage to Benjamin: in German, the B-flat is termed *B* (in opposition to the B-natural, which is termed *H*) which could represent the name of the philosopher.

(Ibid.). What Benjamin's text suggests then, is that whatever our faculty of knowledge can grasp, it can grasp only because of a distinct outline which is drawn by knowledge itself. And importantly, the two are mutually interdependent like the two sides of a coin. One sees in this a clear relationship to Ferneyhough's intention of merging into one a process which draws the outline of an object and the actual object it outlines. It is telling that the title *Kurze Schatten* in both Benjamin and Ferneyhough actually highlights the shadows, the conditions of grasping the object from which the object can emerge. Now, the object and its coming into being – is this not the antagonism between becoming and structure, the critique of the sign addressed by Derrida, a relationship where the two parties 'are neither absolutely separate nor simply separable' (Derrida 1981: 177)? If so, this non-identical relationship is clearly at odds with Ferneyhough's description of the object in Benjamin being 'just itself' and 'a quintessential monad'. Now, a composer's description of private interests and conceptualizations should perhaps not be met with academic standards of scrutiny. However, I would like to stress the importance of not simply accepting a composer's words as valid truth claims about a given work. However, one can get the feeling that the unclear relationship between identity and non-identity, between homogeneity and heterogeneity, in Ferneyhough's description is partly determined by the informal context in which the description was given.¹¹⁸ Be that as it may, there is a problematization of identity at work within the background to the work that will only become more pressed with the following analysis.

The question of identity was also addressed in other works from the same period. In fact, the question of the relationship between a processual becoming and the identity of an object was one of Ferneyhough's central concerns in the years following the *Second String Quartet*. In the quartet, one of the central issues addressed was 'to get into the real interstices of linguistic formulability. What is the space in which a work really exists?' (CW: 275) That is, when does a piece cross the limit separating its coming into being and its actual existence as a single entity? Analogously, the opening of *Lemma-Icon-Epigram* is described as a 'whirlwind of the not yet-become: the idea of processes, not material, forming the thematic content of the work' (Ibid.: 264.).

118 The text printed as *Kurze Schatten II* in the *Collected Writings* (pp. 139–52) is a transcript of an impromptu work presentation given at Darmstadt in 1990.

6.2.2 Ferneyhough and Benjamin II: The emblematic thought-image

Like *Kurze Schatten II*, *Lemma–Icon–Epigram* refers explicitly to Benjamin's interest in the emblematic form in the *Ursprung des deutschen Trauerspiels* (*CW*: 263–4). The Renaissance *emblema* had a tripartite form consisting of a heading or title, often (at least in Alciato¹¹⁹) in the form of a proverb (*superscriptio*),¹²⁰ a picture, and an epigrammatic text. A kind of intellectual riddle, the emblem often deals with moral or religious issues, and is densely packed with iconic symbolism and learned allusions. The concept of the piano work elaborates an analogue tripartite form whose sections are named after the parts of the emblem. The logic of the emblem, which involves an image and its codification, is also found in much baroque poetry; there was a whole genre of emblematic poetry which included vivid imagery and a codification of this image.¹²¹ For Benjamin, the emblematic form suggests a format that transcends mere symbolism, where the possible meanings inherent in the elements brought together affect each other reciprocally, a form which opens up layers of meaning rather than suggesting one fixed interpretation. The constellation, which brings together modernist fragmentation and the emblematic play with signs, was to be Benjamin's signature, cultivated most explicitly in his own emblems, the thought-images (*Denkbilder*).¹²² The fragmentary thinking expressed in the thought-images was to play a decisive role for Adorno, who has commented that their function in Benjamin is 'to strike sparks through a kind of intellectual short-circuiting that casts a sudden light on the familiar and perhaps sets it on fire' (Adorno quoted in Richter 2007: 13).¹²³ '[Benjamin's thought-images] do not want to stop

119 There is a fine annotated edition of Alciato available online from Memorial University of Newfoundland (www.mun.ca/alciato/index.html).

120 Ferneyhough's 1981 piece for solo piccolo *Superscriptio* was composed around the same time as *Lemma–Icon–Epigram* and likewise refers to the emblem by way of its title. The piece was to end up as the superscription of the *Carceri d'Invenzione* cycle (1981–86), where it suggests an extreme polarity of automatic composition in the cycle. Both Toop (1995) and Pätzold (2002: 23–142) have provided detailed analyses of the work.

121 In his study of the emblem, Peter Maurice Daly employs the term word-emblem for 'a verbal image that has qualities associated with emblems' (Daly 1998: 74). For a discussion of emblematic poetry, see Daly 1998, in particular pp. 121–43.

122 In the *Ursprung*, Benjamin employed the more Kantian term *Sinnbild* for emblem (cf. Benjamin 1974).

123 One notes the proximity of term *Denkbilder* and Adorno's term *Klangfigur* more than implied in Richter's text.

conceptual thought so much as to shock through their enigmatic form and thereby get thought moving, because thought in its traditional conceptual form seems rigid, conventional, and outmoded.' (Ibid. 12) According to Gerhard Richter, the thought-image involves a form of textual self-consciousness that one sees paralleled in Ferneyhough: 'as a radicalized form of *textual* materialism – concerned with the materiality of language – [the thought-image] ceaselessly engages the moment of critical inscription rather than mere *description*' (Richter 2007: 22). That is, writing itself becomes explicitly discursive and constructs its object as it raises its own scaffold, it takes the form of a discursive (meta-)practice. Certainly, there is a strong affinity between Richter's description of the thought-image, Benjamin's own thought-image of short shadows and Foucault's interlacing of language and truth described in discussed in Chapter 2. There is also a clear proximity between Richter's description of Benjamin and Ferneyhough's concern in the years around 1980 as outlined above. The analysis that follows will deal explicitly with this moment of critical inscription from the perspective of the practice.

6.2.3 Ferneyhough and Benjamin III: Becoming-forms (emblemata)

As already suggested, many features of Ferneyhough's guitar work mark a literal reference to Benjamin's (second) text cycle. The image of the sun rising to the zenith suggested the employment of a scordatura which moves stepwise from the eccentric towards the normal. This will be discussed in depth below. Even if this is not supposed to be an *Entstehungsgesichte* of *Kurze Schatten II*, for a work that supposedly targets the question of becoming, its own process of becoming is nonetheless quite interesting and worth considering in some detail.

Prompted by Magnus Andersson, Ferneyhough began work on the piece in 1983. The sketches for the first three movements are not marked with *Kurze Schatten II* but rather *Emblems I* and *III* for the first and third movement sketches, and *Emblems: Variation I* for the sketches for the second movement (Sketch material held at the Paul Sacher Stiftung). These three movements were premiered under the title *Emblems* in 1984 by Italian guitarist Vincenzo

Saldarelli.¹²⁴ Saldarelli and Ferneyhough had first met at the Venice Biennale in 1976 where Saldarelli took part in a performance of Ferneyhough's orchestral work *Firecycle Beta*. Coincidentally, as related to Toop, Ferneyhough spent time during the Biennale working on a piano piece also related to the tripartite structure of the *emblema* which he had just come across (*CW*: 265).¹²⁵ Among the sketches held at the Paul Sacher Stiftung one finds what seems to be a programme note for this piece, entitled *Emblemata*, which actually describes it as being composed in the summer of 1975 rather than 1976. Despite the piece being described in the programme note as existing, Ferneyhough in the 1983 interview only comments that he abandoned it but still has the sketches somewhere (*Ibid.*). Whether it was actually finished or not or withdrawn is thus unclear. Be that as it may, what is interesting is that the project explicitly refers to the Renaissance *Emblemum* (*sic*) and interweaves three three-part structures. Whereas *Lemma* and the 1984 guitar triptych are based on a single three-part structure, the earlier piano piece is composed of three complete emblem-structures. The basic insight into what the emblematic structure had to offer was already in place – the note states that the three modes of discourse united in the emblem (i.e. 'a direct statement, a hieroglyphic-like illustration and an explanatory verse' (quoted from the page headed "*Emblemata*" for piano solo) seemed 'to offer a broad field of scope for their employment in the construction of a musical structure whose principal function would reside in the systematic display of several different and contrasting facts of the same underlying material' (*Ibid.*). One notes the reference to the 'hieroglyphic' image; a reference to the hieroglyphic is also made in the famous quotation from Charles Baudelaire at the head of *Lemma*: '*Tout est hieroglyphique*'¹²⁶ (Ferneyhough 1981: 1). This quotation, from Baudelaire's great essay on Victor Hugo (Baudelaire 1976), suggests the image of an interminable chain of signs to be interpreted that was rehearsed in Chapter 4. In the text on Hugo, Baudelaire writes of the

124 I am gratefully indebted to Saldarelli for this and the following information. Saldarelli was later to give the Italian premiere of *Kurze Schatten II*, in November 1990, some nine months after Magnus Andersson premiered the piece (*CW*: 514).

125 Thus Ferneyhough's discovery of the emblem coincides with a growing academic interest in Germany in the emblem since the years around 1970 (see Davy 1998: 42–58. Davy's book was originally published in 1978.).

126 'All is hieroglyphic'. Baudelaire was a favourite poet of Benjamin, representing the fragmentary and transitory urban life of Paris in the nineteenth century, most explicitly targeted in the essays on Baudelaire (cf. Benjamin 2006) and the *Passagenwerk* (*The Arcades Project* (Benjamin 1999)).

poet as a translator and decipherer ('Now, what is a poet if not a translator, a decipherer?'¹²⁷ (Baudelaire 1976: 133, my translation.)), suggesting that the metaphors and similes of great poets refer to a set of universal analogies with which they decipher the world. Emblematic analogy and the hieroglyph as a visual sign to be interpreted form the epistemological basis of Benjamin's *Ursprung* as well as much of his later work; and one can clearly see the relationship with the possibilities Ferneyhough recognized in the emblem for a 'systematic display of several different and contrasting facts of the same underlying material' (material should here be understood in the widest possible sense).¹²⁸ That is, as a form of translation or deciphering from one medium to another – as an exploration of identity and multiplicity – Benjaminian emblematic analogy and the theory of correspondences seems to have provided Ferneyhough with a theoretical framework which corresponded with his own trajectory as a composer.¹²⁹ In this context one should also mention Ferneyhough's early engagement with Antonin Artaud. Artaud, after witnessing a performance of Balinese theatre, suggested a kind of hieroglyphic theatre where the performing body would supersede the traditional theatre oriented towards the representation of textual content. The influence of Artaud is perhaps most deeply felt in *Time and Motion Study II* and Artaud seems to have been eclipsed by Benjamin in the years around 1980. Interestingly, the reference to Artaud suggests a connection to Derrida. In *La parole sufflée* (WD: 212–45), Derrida conceptualizes Artaud's theatre as a writing of the body, a notion of the body which resurfaces with Ferneyhough's radically idiomatic works in the seventies.¹³⁰

To come back to the 1984 guitar piece, the point to make is that there is a strong conceptual link between the final version of *Kurze Schatten II* and the

127 'Or, qu'est-ce qu'un poète, si ce n'est un traducteur, un déchiffreur?'

128 One should note the importance of analogy in Foucault's *Les mots et les choses*, a book with which Ferneyhough was familiar, as is evidenced from the interview with Zivkovic (1982). Benjaminian and Foucauldian analogy have been brought together by Giorgio Agamben, explored most thoroughly in *The Signature of all Things* (Agamben 2009a). One could certainly envisage exploring Ferneyhough's aesthetic position along the lines of the Foucauldian/Benjaminian ideas explored in Agamben's work.

129 Most of Ferneyhough's works from the seventies were written with direct reference to extra-musical stimuli. Suffice it to mention *Sieben Sterne* (Flammarion), the *Time and Motion Studies*, *Transit* and *La Terre est un Homme* (Matta). In fact, Ferneyhough was later to write one of the parts of *Shadowtime* (i.e. *The Doctrine of Similarity*) on Benjamin's text *Lehre vom Ähnlichen* (Benjamin 1977), another central text on analogy.

130 On Derrida and the writing of the body, see Irwin 2010.

emblematic logic of translation explored in the piano piece(s). This is particularly evident in the circular structures that appear in many of the movements, ideal for a 'systematic display of several different and contrasting facts of the same underlying material' (I will return to this below). Chaigne views the existence of this score as proof that Ferneyhough had initially envisaged a guitar piece in three parts (Chaigne 2008: 186–8). However, even if the first three movements were performed as a whole, the seven-movement structure must already have been in place at the time: the tunings employed are those of the final version and they are intrinsically bound up with the seven-movement structure.¹³¹ What seems to be the important aspect of the emblematic for Ferneyhough is not necessarily the tripartite structure as such but a structure that invites translation from one medium to another. In the *Kurze Schatten II*, translation is found on a general level in the relationship to Benjamin, but also permeating the whole fabric of the musical writing to the point of this becoming pervasively disjointed – 'out of joint', or 'ungefügt' as Derrida would say after Shakespeare and Heidegger respectively in the *Spectres of Marx* – within a generalized economy of the sign that will be explored in relation to Derrida. This solicitation or displacement of representation relates to the 'separation of powers' discussed above. Therefore, it would be wrong to understand Ferneyhough as reviving the idea of programme music even if most of his work refer to external stimuli; these stimuli are not represented in the works (although one can find instances of this as well) but should rather be viewed in terms of a more general economy of the sign suggested by the logic of the emblem.

By February 1984 Ferneyhough had begun work on what was to become the fourth movement (see note 131). Apparently Ferneyhough got stuck working out left hand fingering patterns (handgrips) for this movement and work on it did not pick up until 1986. By this time, it seems the project had taken on the title *Kurze Schatten II* – a sketch for the fifth movement dated January 1986 is headed 'Kurze Schatten II No. 5'. After another hiatus, the work was finished in 1989.¹³²

131 Two A3-size sketches on graph paper dated 20 February 1984 held at the Paul Sacher Stiftung are marked 'Emblems 4' which indicates that this was at least the working title for the guitar project.

132 According to the Peters Edition homepage (www.edition-peters.com). Strangely, the *Collected Writings* lists the dates of composition as 1985–88 (*CW*: 514).

Although the piece is always performed in its integral form, I have devoted space to a discussion of the initial premiere of the first three movements because I think this shows how the work bears affinities with Ferneyhough's central concerns in this period, which have not been covered in the existing literature. However, the seven movements of the work suggest several other readings than the three-part 1984 version and the final version of the work. One of these is suggested by Ferneyhough himself, but later abandoned. A note found among the sketches at the Paul Sacher Stiftung suggests that, in performance, the three pairs of movements can be separated by other works if the last movement is the final item of the concert. Such a performance would certainly underscore the fragmented character of the work, and could potentially affect the listening experience of the other works in the concert to a larger extent than an integral performance. The parcelling of the seven movement form opens up for a questioning of the concept of the integral multi-movement form as such and how it is approached by performers – itself a radically idiomatic question.

Now, an integral performance of the work could itself be read differently than Ferneyhough's three-pairs-and-fantasia structure. For instance, the three slow and fast movements are strongly interconnected by way of their respective character. Whereas the slow movements are somewhat ephemeral and contemplative, and give a relative importance to timbre and diverse playing techniques (in particular the fifth movement), the fast movements are more concretely focused on pitch-based material and expose a relative clarity of directional energy. Another reading could reveal other connections: in movements 1 and 6, harmonics play a very important, though diametrically opposed, role; movements 2 and 5 are both based on variational and expanding pitch patterns; and movements 3 and 4 are both based on the relative proportional relationship of long and short. Thus one could read the three pairs as a kind of arch before the concluding fantasia. Another, symmetrical, arch could reach its apex (or bottom) with the fourth movement – this movement is clearly the weightiest in terms of its internal complexity of parametric levels.¹³³ In such a reading, the relative fragmentation and introductory character of movement 1 would be mirrored in the exhaustiveness of movement 7, the pace and energy of movement 2 would mirror similar

133 'The coincidence of structural and textural density with extreme technical demands makes this perhaps the "weightiest" movement of the set, and it is located in central position for that reason' (*CW*: 148).

qualities in movement 6 (both movements also target the dislocation of pitch through being explicitly based on pitch material), and the dark mood of the empty bars of movement 3 would be mirrored in the relative obscurity of the material and timbral diversity of movement 5.¹³⁴ One finds analogue relationships of superimposed forms in several of the movements of the work, particularly in the first movement to be discussed below. I hope the plausibility of these possible readings will be confirmed by the analysis that follows. At present they should suggest how the formal structure of the work is permeated by different trajectories that suggest a variety of formal patterns like a kind of palimpsest. The idea of the object both exploring its own finality and becoming does not result in a closed structure – it is more akin to the Deleuzian rhizome¹³⁵ or its urban counterpart found in Benjamin's Parsisian passages. This is in fact already suggested in Benjamin's text where the shadows are 'prepared to retreat into their burrows, into their secret'.

6.2.4 Ferneyhough and Benjamin IV: Shadows/resonance

The related images of the sun and shadows seems to have played a vital role in Ferneyhough's thinking in the years after the *Second String Quartet*. Not only was this image suggestive of the transformation of tuning and resonance in *Kurze Schatten II*, it also played an important part in the conception of the second section of *Lemma-Icon-Epigram*.¹³⁶ This section of the work, which corresponds to the pictorial image of the emblem, is based on seven chords. These chords are imagined as objects dispersed in a 'spatio-temporal framework'. 'Then there is the sun passing over them; the shadows thrown by the sun (the speed at which the sun moves playing a great role here, of course) are of different lengths, different intensities, impinging in different ways on different objects, themselves also moving upon the space defined by this space' (*CW*: 264–5). The image relates a space, objects, the radiant sun, the shadows thrown by the objects as well as temporality invoked by the movement of the sun and the objects. The music in the

134 Such an arch could certainly be read along the lines of Maurice Blanchot's understanding of the myth of Orpheus; indeed, the large scale outline of *Shadowtime* is modelled on such an Orphic wandering pattern in seven parts.

135 A favourite figure of Deleuze and Guattari taken up by Ferneyhough, the rhizome is a network that allows immediate access from one point to any other. See Deleuze and Guattari 1986; also Deleuze and Guattari 1987 (in particular pp. 3–25).

136 See Toop 1990 for an analysis of the work.

The image shows a musical score for two staves: piano (left) and violin (right). The tempo is marked 'sub molto meno mosso' and the mood is 'giusto'. The piano part begins with a forte dynamic (f) and the instruction 'tutta la forza'. The violin part features several long, sustained chords with durations of 5.4, 5.5, and 7.6 seconds, indicated by brackets above the notes. The piano part has measures numbered 4, 8, and 12. The violin part has measures numbered 2 and 10. There are markings for 'sim.' (sostenuto) and 'retake silently'. The score includes first and second endings, marked '1. ed. 3.' and '2. ed. 3.'. The piano part ends with a forte dynamic (f) and a first ending marked '1. ed. 3.'.

Example 6.1: *Lemma-Icon-Epigram*, bars 88–91

Icon-section is composed of chords of varying duration; the shadows cast by the objects being rendered as the resonance of the chords (see Example 6.1). The image of the sun and various objects is used to define a wide range of parameters: ‘the duration of these chords, the type of inversion used, and so on, how many of these different types of treatment are superimposed, what type of textural treatment of each of these chordal units is, all this is very strictly controlled by this unifying visual concept’ (Ibid.: 265).

Thus there is in this movement a conceptual correlation between the image of shadows and resonance. This conceptual trope is carried over into *Kurze Schatten II*.

Two other works written around the same time also loosely refer to images of sun and shadow – the *Second String Quartet* and the ensemble piece *Carceri d’Invenzione I* (1981). Toop mentions in conversation with the composer that the latter work at an early stage bore the title *City of the Sun* (CW: 291).¹³⁷ However, nothing more is mentioned of the relationship between the image of the sun and the *Carceri d’Invenzione* cycle. In the former work an initial dialectic is set up between full and empty bars, the latter taking on a shadowy, spectral and indistinct character. The work commences with a solo for the first violin, and the rest of the quartet enters one by one within the first 42 bars of the work. Certain bars of the opening section (bars 1–56) are ‘empty’ – initially they are silent, but with the entrance of the viola at bar 29 these bars are filled with what Ferneyhough describes as silence coloured

¹³⁷ See also Pätzold 2002: 7.

The image shows a musical score for three string instruments: Violin I (Vln I), Violin II (Vln II), and Viola (Vla). The score covers bars 39 to 41. It is written in a complex, multi-measure rest system with various performance markings. Key markings include dynamics like *pp*, *f*, *ppp*, *mf*, *sfz*, and *fff*; articulations like *col leg*, *tratt*, *trém. rapido*, *sul pont*, *ord.*, *sub. trem.*, *gliss.*, *non cresc.*, *molto*, *sf*, *vibr. ord.*; and other instructions like *56 flessibile*, *marc. in pp*, *quasi sempre*, *sempre*, *ombroso*, *N.V.*, and *gliss. sempre*. The notation includes slurs, accents, and various rhythmic values.

Example 6.2: *Second String Quartet*, bars 39–41

with ‘impoverished sounds’ (*CW*: 122): soft single notes, slight glissandi, harmonics (see Example 6.2).

These sounds, whose passivity is all the more striking because of the ferocious activity of the surrounding material, could certainly be characterized with reference to the metaphor of the shadow: as shadows at the feet of the objects they outline.

In *Kurze Schatten II* the resonance of the instrument is transformed in the course of the work. Interestingly, the image of the reverberating strings of a guitar comes up in a 1986 discussion of the *Carceri d’Invenzione* cycle in order to characterize the conceptual focus that unites the diverse movements of the cycle: ‘It’s the idea of knocking on the body of a guitar, for instance, while you put certain fingers down on the strings, and producing a particular resonance. If you knock on a different part of the body [of the instrument] you produce a completely different resonance, but it’s still the same instrument’ (*CW*: 292). The basic concept that unite the different movements of the cycle are seen as different timbres of the same sound,¹³⁸ a *sound-figure* which also forms the point of departure of the third movement of *Kurze Schatten II*. In this sound-figure, a deliberate association is made between resonance and reflection, the single work is seen as a reflective space resonating a general idea from a certain point of view. Image has by analogy become sound which becomes another analogous image. Now, this sound-figure is certainly applicable to *Kurze Schatten II* as well, the seven

¹³⁸ One notes how this image is related to the one governing the *Icon* section of *Lemma-Icon-Epigram*.

movements of the guitar work resonating different timbres of the same basic image suggested by Benjamin's text. This metaphoric concretization of resonance and reverberation, related not only simply to reflection as a shadow but even to reflection as a thought process, seems in fact to have been part of the concept of *Kurze Schatten II* from an early stage: On the first page of the score to the 1984 *Emblems* one finds a quote from the *Erkenntniskritische Vorrede* to Benjamin's *Ursprung*: 'Die Ideen verhalten sich zu den Dingen wie die Sternbilder zu den Sternen' (Copy of score headed *Emblems* held at the Paul Sacher Stiftung).¹³⁹

Ferneyhough had related the form of *Kurze Schatten II* to the baroque suite and the English string consort fantasia. The use of scordatura is perhaps an even more profound link to this period. Besides the use of scordatura in the violin repertoire of the Baroque era, the cello repertoire of the Bologna school should also be mentioned. Now, the use of scordatura in the baroque period was not only a means of exploring the possibilities of the instruments; it was also deeply linked to the speculative, if not to say hermetic and emblematic, aspects of musical thinking of the period. The most famous example of this is the *Mystery Sonatas* of Heinrich Biber, where different scordatura tunings are required in all but the first of the 15 sonatas.¹⁴⁰ Each tuning is devised to fulfil an emblematic function in relation to the 15 mysteries of the Rosary processions. Notable is *Sonata XI* (on the Resurrection of Christ) where the second and third strings are crossed at the bridge and nut to facilitate the tuning G3–G4–D4–D5. Though not related to symbolism, as in Biber, the scordatura in Ferneyhough also has an emblematic function. The use of scordatura is not uncommon in the contemporary guitar repertoire, and has seen a rise in popularity after *Kurze Schatten II*. One should however note the work *Surrounded* by Swedish composer Sven-David Sandström of 1972, which like *Kurze Schatten II* employs quartertone scordatura. Sandström had worked with Magnus Andersson on the commission of his second guitar solo *Away From*, in 1980, so one can presume Andersson was familiar with the earlier piece when he approached Ferneyhough for the commission of *Kurze Schatten II*. Thus it seems safe to say that *Surrounded* must have been within Ferneyhough's sphere of reference when he devised the tuning for *Kurze Schatten II*.

139 'Ideas are to objects as constellations are to stars' (Benjamin 1998: 34). The original quote from Benjamin is found in Benjamin 1974: 214.

140 The concluding *Passaglia* [sic] is also in standard tuning.

Having discussed various aspects of the background to *Kurze Schatten II* in some detail, it seems appropriate to turn more concretely to the notion of the radically idiomatic and how this is manifested in the work. The guiding question of the analysis will be the relationship between the idiomatic and identity, or how the identity of the instrument is deconstructed within the framework of the radically idiomatic. The analysis will be partial, and a wealth of potential structural complexities will only be suggested at the expense of practical matters. Nonetheless, other aspects will necessarily also be prominent in the following discussions, as it is very often impossible to see the elements of the practice outside of a larger structural context. They are always part of a parametric bundle or sheaf. I will let my initial question of the function of the practice guide the following analytic discussion, the plan of which is as follows: 1) a discussion of the concept of resonance and how this permeates the entire work. This relates also to the structural use of natural harmonics in movements 1 and 6; 2) a discussion of the subversion of pitch through the combination of scordatura and performer choice, targeted most explicitly in movements 2 and 6; and 3) an analysis of the employment of left hand fingering as a structural determinant in movement 4. Movements 3 and 5 will not be discussed as they do not offer any substantial empirical evidence not accessible in the other movements.

If Benjamin's image of an object outlined by the shortest possible shadows triggered a musical response in Ferneyhough, in the following I will let it represent the idealized conception of music for which the practice is merely a necessary evil better left with a shadowy existence at the margins of musical discourse proper. As stated in Chapter 2, I will initially act on a principle of reversal and focus on establishing new series of data in order to shed light – a dim light, certainly – on what goes on in the rhizomatic burrows of the practice and how the margins of the musical work take on a central and discursive function in *Kurze Schatten II*. However, in the course of the analysis it will become clear that the principle of reversal can only be a point of departure: the practice is bound up with other parameters to such an extent that a singular focus on the practice and the performative would be as much a falsification as its complete ignorance. In fact, it is the impossibility of a strict demarcation of parameters which carries the deconstructive impetus of the work.

6.3 Analysis I: Scordatura and the transformation of resonance

As mentioned, throughout the course of the work certain strings are retuned from the eccentric towards the normal between each pair of movements. The effect of the scordatura on the timbre and resonance of the instrument is perhaps greater than one could expect, and its presence is felt throughout. The reader should note that because of the scordatura many pitches are only available in a single octave in a given fingerboard position, whereas in normal tuning most pitches are available in two or three octaves within a single position. This fact is very important, as Ferneyhough's guitar writing is marked by a very strong adherence to the principle of position playing. This does not imply that there is not a lot of skipping about on the fingerboard in this work (far from it, as the discussion of movement 4 will show), but rather that pitches are (almost) always assigned a particular position. Thus as the scordatura changes after every second movement, so too do the available pitch combinations in a given position. In the above discussion, I have established an understanding of resonance as representing a space for reflection on the one hand and a sign of identity on the other. The resonance is heard not only as a sympathetic ringing of the open strings triggered by certain pitches, but also because of the Bartók pizzicati of movements 1 and 7 and the percussive sounds employed in movement 3. Both Bartók pizzicati and striking the body of the instrument result in all strings vibrating, creating a more general and complex resonance than that effected in sympathetic ringing.

Like Benjamin's thought-images, the movements of *Kurze Schatten II* are each guided by one single musical process or characteristic. Additionally, they are characterized by a strict delineation of their articulatory discursive conditions in the form of types of figurations and types of sounds employed in a given piece. The focus of movements 1 and 6 is guided by the use of natural harmonics. Natural harmonics play a highly important role in the work as a whole as they are the sound of the overtones of the open strings. As the scordatura changes in the course of the work, so too do the pitches available as natural harmonics towards the traditional set of pitches common among several strings (i.e. D, E, F-sharp, G, A, B-natural). This transformation is brought to fore by the use of natural harmonics. The function of natural harmonics is however very different in the two movements: In the former, natural harmonics serve to occupy certain strings in order to restrict the strings available for other kinds of material, and in the latter natural harmonics are the result of a structural determination of left hand pressure.

6.3.1 Movement 1

The importance of natural harmonics is immediately felt from the beginning of the first movement, where they take on a very specific structural function. The form of the first movement is quite straightforward in its presentation of a single process and the reversal of the same process from the middle of the movement. Two opposing layers of material take part in this process. The first is a two-part textural layer of natural harmonics, and the second layer juxtaposes six different types of gestural material – pizzicati, melodic lines, chords and so on. Simply put, in the first half of the movement, the gestural activity increases as the number of harmonics is gradually reduced. The second half of the movement, from the reintroduction of harmonics in bar 13 until the end, presents a reversal of this process. Example 6.3 shows the opening page of the score.

In principle, the overarching process itself is very simple; what is more complex is the relationship between the two layers of activity. The activity and the notation of the harmonic layer condition the activity of the other material, because as long as a string is occupied by a harmonic it cannot be employed for the other layer of material. It should be noted that it is the notated duration that specifies what strings are occupied by harmonics – in many cases the actual sound of a harmonic has died out long before the string in question is available for gestural activity. Because of the pitch layout of the guitar fingerboard and the quartertone scordatura, the occupation of strings by the harmonics influences the formation of the various gestures quite heavily – for instance, small intervals are often available only by way of long leaps across the fingerboard, and the number of possible chord voicings becomes highly restricted. Another result of the microtonal scordatura is that some pitches are available only on one string in a given context. Moreover, the contexts change as the harmonics change, resulting in a kaleidoscopic rearrangement of the pitches available and the possibilities for gestural activity.

Of course, a similar phenomenon occurs in any work for guitar where natural harmonics are supposed to be sustained across other types of material, such as Elliott Carter's *Changes* (written in 1981). In this piece harmonics are chosen for their pitch content and their use is a reference to the ringing changes to which the title of the piece alludes (Carter 1983). In the Carter,

Kurze Schatten II

1

Scordatura

$\text{♩} = 44 \text{ ca.}$

BRIAN FERNEYHOUGH

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19-20

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973-974

975-976

977-978

979-980

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983-984

985-986

987-988

989-990

991-992

993-994

995-996

997-998

999-1000

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Example 6.3: Kurze Schatten II, mvt. 1, bars 1-6

harmonics are not used in order to govern a structural process as they are in *Kurze Schatten II*.

Since the two strata of natural harmonics restrict the possibilities for figural activity, I would like to discuss how these were determined. Interestingly, these are closely connected with the formal, metric and rhythmic proportions of the movement – they are part of the subcutaneous processes lurking in the shadowy burrows of the work. French composer Jean-Paul Chaigne has discussed the compositional procedures involved in this movement in some detail on the background of the sketch material available at the Paul Sacher Stiftung (Chaigne 2008: 68–90).¹⁴¹ I will briefly summarize the main points of the arithmetic procedure employed. It should be noted that here, as in many other works, Ferneyhough's point of departure is determining metric and rhythmic proportions. In this movement, these are calculated as mixed fractions consisting of an integer plus a proper fraction which are translated to metric values related to the basic value of one quaver. The format of mixed fractions is very important – it is retained throughout the various arithmetic procedures.

The numerator 5 of the first metric designation $5/8$ governs the number of parts (Ferneyhough calls them 'levels' in the sketches) in the whole movement – there are five parts. The number of bars in each part – 5, 3, 4, 4, and 4 respectively – are determined by the metres of the first part, rounded off to whole numbers. The metres were arrived at by adding the metric values of consecutive bars and dividing the result by two.¹⁴² This process can necessarily only begin after bar two: $(5 + 3) \div 2 = 4$; $(3 + 4) \div 2 = 3 \frac{1}{2}$; $(4 + 3 \frac{1}{2}) \div 2 = 3 \frac{3}{4}$. Expressed in metric terms: $5/8, 3/8, 4/8, 7/16, 15/32$ (see Example 6.3). However, this method only holds good for the first part, and Chaigne gives no explanation of the method used to work out the metres of the consecutive parts. The values of the remaining parts are:

Part 2:	3	5	$5 \frac{1}{2}$	
Part 3:	4	$6 \frac{1}{2}$	$6 \frac{1}{4}$	$6 \frac{3}{4}$
Part 4:	$3 \frac{1}{2}$	6	$9 \frac{1}{2}$	$4 \frac{1}{4}$
Part 5:	$3 \frac{3}{4}$	$2 \frac{1}{2}$	$3 \frac{1}{2}$	$2 \frac{1}{8}$

¹⁴¹ Though highly informative, Chaigne's thesis is methodologically weak as he does not explain how he has reached his conclusions. These must come from either an impressive form of deductive logic or originate in Ferneyhough himself or related sources.

¹⁴² An analogue method was used around the same time in *Carceri d'Invenzione I*; see Pätzold 2002: 213–14.

The first bar of each part is identical to the values of the metre of first part. As for the rest of the values, one can only speculate at the methods used to derive them. Ferneyhough has often used various kinds of simple filtering processes like adding or subtracting a fixed value from and already given value (I will come back to this when discussing pitch below),¹⁴³ but I have not been able to detect the procedure used. A strict determination of such generative procedures is however not decisive for my argument.

The metric proportions were used to generate the rhythmic proportions for the two layers of harmonics. For the lower layer (middle stave of the score; this is the top layer of the sketch), rhythmic proportions for each bar were derived at by adding the metric proportion numerator of this bar with that of the next.

Bar 1: $5 + 3 = 8$. This gives a rhythmic proportion of 8:5.

Bar 2: $3 + 4 = 7$. This gives a rhythmic proportion of 7:3.

Bar 3: $4 + 3\frac{1}{2} = 7\frac{1}{2}$. This gives a rhythmic proportion of 15:8.

Bar 4: $3\frac{1}{2} + 3\frac{3}{4} = 7\frac{1}{4}$. This gives a rhythmic proportion of 29:28.

And so on. With the exception of the last two bars, this method is employed strictly in this layer. For the rhythmic proportions of the top layer of harmonics a related method was used. The value of a given bar was determined by adding the values of this bar to those of the consecutive bar (i.e. the value of the other layer) and subtracting the value of the next bar. This gives the following result:

Bar 1: $5 + 3 - 4 = 4$. This gives a rhythmic proportion of 4:5 (or 8:10).

Bar 2: $3 + 4 - 3\frac{1}{2} = 3\frac{1}{2}$. This gives a rhythmic proportion of 7:3.

Bar 3: $4 + 3\frac{1}{2} - 3\frac{3}{4} = 3\frac{3}{4}$. This gives a rhythmic proportion of 15:8.

Bar 4: $3\frac{1}{2} + 3\frac{3}{4} - 3$ (bar 6) = $4\frac{1}{4}$. This gives a rhythmic proportion of 17:14.

And so on. This procedure results in similar proportions for the two layers for the first bars, and Ferneyhough has adjusted the result of bars 2 and 3 to 8:3 and 13:8 (seemingly transferring $\frac{1}{2}$ from bar 3 to bar 2) in order to avoid coincidental patterns. In the third and fourth parts all values of this layer have been moved one bar 'to the left': the values used in bars 9–16 are actually those for bars 10–17 (the value of bar 9 is simply cut). Why is this? Chaigne gives no explanation (in fact, Chaigne only discusses the first part of

¹⁴³ For a discussion of analogue filtering methods used in *Lemma–Icon–Epigram* see Toop 1990: 57–61; Pätzold's comprehensive analysis of *Superscriptio* gives many examples of related methods (2002: 26–42; in particular pp. 33–7).

the piece – the part where things mostly add up); I will present a hypothesis below, but only after explaining the determination of actual attacks of the harmonics. The values for the last four bars do not correspond to the initial method – presumably ad hoc adjustments have been used due of the lack of values at the end of the piece.

Chaigne has explained the method for determining points of attack for the harmonics. For the lower layer, the values used to determine the number of attacks from the rhythmic proportions that should pass between each harmonic attack were the numerators of the metric values of the whole piece (regardless of metric value but expressed in whole numbers):

5 3 4 7 15 3 6 11 4 13 25 28 7 6 19 17 15 5 7 33

Using these numbers, one can simply determine the points of attack by counting the number of rhythmic units of the expressed ratios between each harmonic. A similar procedure was used to generate the upper part. The same set of values were used, but between each number was inserted the values of natural numbers starting with 2:

5 **2** 3 **3** 4 **4** 7 **5** 15 **6** 3 **7** 6 **8** 11 **9** 4 **10** 13 **11** 25 **12** etc.

The result is shown in the sketch reproduced in Figure 6.2.

The procedure seems pretty simple – one level of information is derived from the previous one. But things may not be so simple. Why does this result in

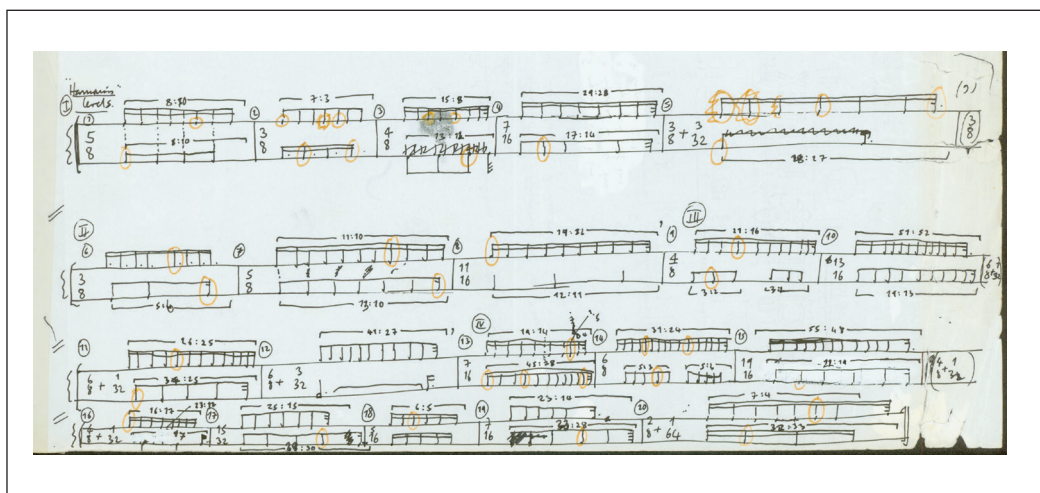


Figure 6.2: Sketch of harmonics. Note that the lower level of the sketch is the upper stave of the score.

a gradual decrease in the number of harmonics towards bar 12, but with a massive re-entry of harmonics in bar 13? My hypothesis is that Ferneyhough worked out the rhythmic proportions of each layer as well as the number of values between each attack at the same time layer by layer. Thus he could combine the strictness of his own rules as well as arrive at the formal pattern on which the rationale of this movement is based. An interesting point is of course how the rhythmic proportions are expressed: all integers are expressed in even durations throughout a given bar, but mixed fraction subdivisions are expressed with a mixed set of rhythmic values according to the values of the mixed fractions. For instance, in bars 3 and 4 of the top level of the sketch, the proportions $7\frac{1}{2}$ (15:8) and $7\frac{1}{4}$ (29:28) are expressed as seven semiquavers plus one demisemiquaver and seven semiquavers plus one hemidemisemiquaver respectively. Similarly, in the lower layer, in bar 4, $4\frac{1}{4}$ (17:14) is expressed as four crotchets plus one demisemiquaver, and in bar 8, 3 (12:11) is expressed as three crotchets. Now, what about the values of bars 9–16, which are actually those of bars 10–17? It could of course be an error on Ferneyhough's part, but I think this is rather the result of Ferneyhough working his numbers in order to avoid harmonics in bar 12 – had he followed his procedure strictly he would have had two attacks in this bar and the whole formal pattern would have failed. And the formal pattern seems to pre-exist the actual work on the movement: an interesting sketch (see Figure 6.3; Paul Sacher Stiftung, sketch in red ink) shows material that bears a striking relationship to bars 12 and 13, even if the details are different.

Many details indicate that this sketch predates the rhythmic/metric sketch reproduced in Figure 6.2. For instance, it suggests that normal sounds could also be part of the harmonic systems and indicates that there should be three types of gestural material whereas in the finished piece there are four. Also, the metric pattern does not correspond to any relationships observable in the finished piece. Additionally, the natural harmonics of the second bar indicate that Ferneyhough was using another scordatura at this point – in fact, the pitch material of this sketch is not compatible with any kind of tuning and the notation is inconsistent regarding the use of quartertones, suggesting that the scordatura was not fixed at the time this sketch was composed. Nonetheless, many details are already in place in this sketch: not only is the fast descending flurry of the sketch retained in bar 12 of the finished piece, the chord at the beginning of the second bar is found in bar 13. This sketch is therefore a striking indication that Ferneyhough must have had

Emblems I

2 systems of harmonics (or sound sounds or some further instances)
 one line of main material divided into 3 types (a) static chords
 (b) rapid groups
 (c) complex liquid variations.

divide bar up into asymmetrical groups of notes to contain irregular densities of elements.

1
2
3
4
5
6

little groups begin in bar 13
 to build sudden points, perhaps slightly delayed or advanced by set values (17)

later fill in rests, omit notes.

Figure 6.3: Sketch in red ink, mvt. 1

a very clear image of what he wanted to happen at this point of the piece; indeed, it could be envisaged as the gesture which inaugurates the parametric skeletal figurations on which the piece actually hangs, a non-present origin of the musical material (cf. Derrida: 'the economic character of *différance* in no way implies that the deferred presence can always be found again' (MP: 20)).

What is now in place is the general skeleton of the piece, its structural scaffold. Above, I mentioned the presence of superimposed forms, and this movement provides an interesting example of that. Although great care is taken to develop the metric structure of the piece, this structure is not clearly 'represented' in the finished piece, where the process related to the balancing of harmonics and other materials is much more clearly felt. Although there is a slight hiatus between the second and third parts of the piece, the transitions between the first and second sections and between the fourth and fifth sections is not articulated at all in the gestural material. Therefore, it is the onset of harmonics at bar 13 (see Example 6.4 below)

after the gestural frenzy of bar 12 which is the obvious formal focus in the exposition of the form. This suggests a kind of arch at odds with the structured proportions of the metric patterning, one formal process grafted onto another. In Fitch's dissertation, one of the main tenors of her argument is the relationship in technique between Ferneyhough and the painter Francis Bacon, highlighting how the latter uses various kinds of material to wipe over a drying canvas. This connection is deliberately established on Ferneyhough's part, when he describes his procedures for filtering material or formal structures as structures being "wiped over" (in the Baconian sense)' (*CW*: 251). I would suggest understanding this superimposition of form in terms of the double gesture of deconstruction, the one grafting itself onto the other, the resulting formal pattern bearing witness to two different processes that are separate but not simply separable in the manner described by Derrida.

In fact, this superposition of forms provides a striking counter-example to Ferneyhough's works from the seventies and exemplifies the turn towards the subcutaneous around 1980. Two earlier works were subject to substantial reworking, namely *Time and Motion Study I* (1971–77) and *Funerailles I and II* (1969–80). In the former, the existing version of the work entailed a complete recomposition based on the fragments for an early solo bass clarinet piece. In the case of the latter, the second version is an extensive revision of the earlier version, a kind of double expanding the textures of the original without interfering with its formal outline. In *Kurze Schatten II* however, this kind of reworking, wiping over, is carried out *within* the movements themselves in the way the structures and parameters are set off and interfere with each other as chains of signs of which the metric/rhythmic procedures outlined above provides an example. Further examples will be discussed below: the question of pitch in movements 2 and 4 and the use of harmonics again in movement 6.

One further point should be made regarding the form of the first movement and the question of proportions. The arch suggested above unfolds, naturally, in two parts. Now, the first part of this arch (bars 1–12) consists of $56 \frac{1}{4}$ quaver units, and the second part (bars 13–20) consists of $35 \frac{1}{8}$ quaver units. The proportional relationship of the two is $56,25 \div 35,125 = 1,6$ – the proportional ratio of the classical golden section. This suggests an engagement with the Fibonacci series, something that provides a clue regarding the development of the actual material of the harmonics. The Fibonacci series

is a sequence of numbers in which each is the sum of the previous two: 1, 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13 etc. The reference to the Fibonacci series would not be without precedent in Ferneyhough's work, which is no surprise with a composer so engaged with proportions. At least in both *Time and Motion Study I* and the *Second String Quartet*, the Fibonacci series is deliberately used for multiple purposes (for the former, see *CW*: 113; for the latter, see Melchiorre (1984) and in particular Albert (2015)).

Although I have not been able to detect the procedure used to generate the harmonics, there is a striking relation between the strings occupied by harmonics in the first part of the piece and the numbers of Fibonacci series. In fact, in the first section, the strings used for harmonics in the top layer corresponds to the first five numbers of the sequence: 1, 1, 2, 3, 5 (see Example 6.3 above). The strings used in the lower layer seem to be a transposition of the series by adding the value 3 to every element. This holds good at least for the first four harmonics, which are found on ④, ④, ⑤ and ⑥. What happens after this is difficult to determinate. However, there is a tendency in this movement that the upper layer is focused towards the higher strings, and the lower layer towards the lower strings.

Regarding the determination of the harmonics employed the method used is not clear. Nonetheless, one should note that only the first five overtones are used on each string. There is no indication that string numbers and overtone numbers were not elaborated separately and there are no clear patterns either in terms of overtone numbers or sounding pitch (the sketches clearly show that harmonics were worked out at sounding pitch). There is nevertheless a tendency to favour the lower overtones, as well as descending intervals when there are consecutive harmonics on the same string (this also occurs across the two layers). This can be seen in bar 1 in the lower layer and bar 2 in the upper layer (see Example 6.3). Interestingly, with the reintroduction of harmonics in bar 13, the harmonic material resembles that of the opening bars to such an extent that it makes sense to describe this event as a kind of reprise. Also, the occurrence of string repetitions is notable and suggests a relationship to the values of the first section (see Example 6.4, next page).

The A–F-sharp–D sequence on ④ (bars 13–15) in the lower layer mirror the F-sharp–D of the opening bar. Similarly, the descending E–B on ① in the lower layer of bar 14 mirrors the descending B–E of bars 2–3. Regarding the Fibonacci series, it should be noted that the ratios expressed by

Example 6.4: *Kurze Schatten II*, mvt. 1, bars 13–16

neighbouring numbers in the series correspond to the ratios of the overtones. It certainly seems apt that a piece whose main concern is related to harmonics should in some way be related to the proportions of the overtone series. If this is in fact the case, one should note the importance of the number 5 in this movement. It could be that this *fifth* number of the Fibonacci series also serves as the background of the metric numerator 5 of the first bar, from which a network of related procedures is spun. One could also speculate about whether the metric numerator 3 from the second bar is also taken from the series, it being the number prior to 5 of the series.

The main point of this somewhat elaborate discussion is that the harmonics condition the gestural material on the lower staff of the score, and that they are determined structurally regardless of their sentient function. In the present context, the rhythms and string numbers are what is most

interesting, as these parameters directly affect the pitch material available for the other materials. So even if the arithmetic procedures outlined above seem somewhat abstract, it is important to note that within the context of the radically idiomatic the abstract turns concrete as the instrumental practice reveals itself as a discursive practice when the instrumental practice and discursive surface of the work no longer are strictly identical. The basic procedure used to generate the number of parts of the movement, the metric structures, and the density of activity, directly affect the durations of the harmonics, thus directly condition the practical possibilities for gestural activity on the surface – formal arithmetic procedures actually condition the continually changing layout of the fingerboard and thus what pitches are available at a given moment. That is, the network of parameters forms a chain of signs, one signifier grafting itself onto the other, reminiscent not only of post-structuralist semiology but also of Boris de Schloezer's characterization of musical form in his book on Bach: 'The work of music ... appears to us as a hierarchy of (organic as well as constructed) systems where one is nested into the other, each giving form with respect to what it embraces and material with respect to that which is embraced' (Schloezer 2009: 68–9; my translation).¹⁴⁴ One notes the combination of structuralist and phenomenological thought in this formulation. However, in Ferneyhough one finds only displaced and crumbled hierarchies.

What then about the gestural material? Again, certain basic facts can be determined very simply. There are four basic types of gestures: single notes or points (also pizzicati and Bartók pizzicati), chords, rapid figures and melodic figurations. The rhythmic structure of the gestures is determined on the basis of the metric proportions (See Chaigne 2008: 79–80). The proportions of subdivisions for each bar is determined by reading the metric proportions backwards, so that the proportion of one bar becomes the rhythmic subdivision of the metre of another bar. This can be observed by comparing the proportions listed for the fifth section with the excerpt of the score given in Example 6.3. The relations are listed schematically thus:

144 'L'œuvre musical ... nous apparaît ainsi comme une hiérarchie de systèmes (organiques et aussi composés) imbriqués les uns dans les autres, chacun d'eux étant forme à l'égard de ceux qu'il étirent et matière à l'égard de ceux qui l'étreignent.'

Bar number	duration	subdivision	ratio
1	5 (5/8)	2 $\frac{1}{8}$	17:10
2	3 (3/8)	3 $\frac{1}{2}$	7:6
3	4 (4/8)	2 $\frac{1}{2}$	5:4
4	3 $\frac{1}{2}$ (7/16)	3 $\frac{1}{4}$	15:14
5	3 $\frac{3}{4}$ (15/16)	4 $\frac{1}{4}$	17:15

One sees that the rhythmic ratio for bar 1 given in the score is 11:10 rather than 17:10 as it should be according the procedure employed. According to Chaigne, this adjustment is made in order to facilitate the execution of the bar (Ibid.: 79), an unconvincing argument due to the relative simplicity of the actual material presented in this bar. It seems more likely to be the result of an error on Ferneyhough's part. In relation to the use of the Fibonacci series in the *Second String Quartet*, Albert discusses a misreading of the number '7' as '1' evidenced in the sketches to that work (Albert 2015: 58). Thus, the proportion 11:10 rather than 17:10 enters the score. After determining the rhythmic proportions, the duration of each figure, its precise placement was determined as well as what type of gesture to be used at a given instant. Chaigne gives no rationale for these procedures, but presumably Ferneyhough used related methods to generate these parameters as well. What one should note about this level is the recourse to a previously determined structure whose possible characteristics are effaced in their operationalization. Even if one parametric level takes a previously generated parametric structure as its point of departure, the previous level is never 'expressed' or represented in its redeployment, the previous structural level is never simply *present* in the new level except in the form of a silenced palimpsest-like trace. It is important not to lose sight of the totality of these de-constructive operations; with random numbers everything would change.

The deconstructive tendency is also carried over into the elaboration of pitch structures on the lower stave. Against the structural backdrop which determines what strings are available at a given moment and therefore what pitches are available in a given moment in a given register, the gestures are worked out on the basis of a very simple set of pitches. The basic pitch material is evident in the sketches, and is spelled out almost in full in the first figure of bar 2 (see Example 6.3). It has already been determined that this event should be a rapid (linear) figure, and $\textcircled{4}$ is occupied by a harmonic. The

pitch structure from which all the material on the lower stave is derived is given in Figure 6.4.

One can see that the figure from bar two is directly based on this sequence, though the last two notes are omitted in the musical figure in the score. When pondering the foreground materials of this piece it is interesting to pursue contrafactual paths in order to understand how the actual material was determined, because often few other possibilities are actually available. Since this actual figure should be linear it means that intervals should be as close as possible, and thus one could imagine this figure an octave lower on ⑥ and ⑤ or an octave higher on ② and ①. However, both these options would be at 'extreme' registers, and I think the middle register is chosen to enhance the introductory character. Now, since ④ is occupied, the F-sharp needs to be on ⑤. One could of course imagine it on ⑥ at XIV, but Ferneyhough did not set out to explore the upper range of the fingerboard in this movement, and the left hand rarely ventures above XII. Therefore: F-sharp, middle range, fifth string. As for the G-sharp, one could imagine it on ③. However, then one would crash straight into one of the idiosyncrasies of Ferneyhough's guitar writing – its dependency on fingerboard positions. I have shown how positions played an important role in *colloid*, and this principle is no less important in *Kurze Schatten II* where a great deal of consideration goes into left-hand lateral movements (I will return to this in detail in the discussion of the fourth movement below). Playing the G-sharp on ③, one could play the rest of the figure on ③ as well, but the one would have to shift position for the A if the C should be on ③. One could also stay in I and play the C on ②. The latter option risks losing the linear character, and would rather end up like a kind of arpeggio since all the notes would be on different strings. As for the latter option, it would demand a very quick shift from the F-sharp to the G-sharp, followed by yet another shift, something which would disturb the linearity of this category of material. In fact, great care seems to be taken with the rapid figures in order to facilitate position shifts using open strings in order to avoid disrupting the linear flow of the given figure.¹⁴⁵ Thus: G-sharp on ⑤. Now, since the B-natural cannot be on ④



Figure 6.4: *Kurze Schatten II*, mvt. 1 – basic seven-note pitch sequence

¹⁴⁵ Counter-examples can of course always be found, and the rapid figure of bar 3 is a notable one as it includes no open strings. However, in this particular figure the fingering is left to the discretion of the performer as long as all notes are found on ③ or ④. Commenting on this passage, guitarist Diego Castro seems to have misinterpreted the string assignment

because of the harmonic on the lower layer it has to be on ②, if not the left hand would either have to climb high on the fingerboard or shift rapidly in order to finger it on ③ (I have already argued against this). The result is the actual phrase as given in the score.

One parameter which has not been part of this discussion is that of aural pitch structures. A thorough discussion of various strategies of pitch subversion is to follow below, but for now it suffices to mention that only the last two notes of the phrase, those on ③, sound as notated. The actual sounding pitches of the phrase are shown in Figure 6.5.



Figure 6.5: *Kurze Schatten II*, mvt. 1, bar 2 – sounding pitches

Figure 6.6: *Kurze Schatten II*, mvt. 1, permutations of basic pitch sequence

Although the basic shape of the notated figure is retained, its internal interval structure is altered quite drastically. This is most evident in that the notated minor third G-sharp–B-natural turns into a narrow quartertone step. This alteration opens up a whole set of methodological questions regarding pitch to which I will return below.

I would also like to show how the pitch material is deconstructed even before it reaches the filter of the scordatura. Bar 12 provides a fine example. In this bar the figural writing comes to the fore inhibited by harmonics, and the generative process is evidenced in the sketches. The basic seven-note sequence forms the backbone of the (notated) pitch material, though not in such a clear form as in the previous example. The existing sketch for this bar does not show the material in its final

form. Though the sequence of pitches is almost identical to the material in the score, the actual figurations in the sketch are written out in continuous rhythms in phrases that are not as fragmented as the final version. The pitch

above the staff when he writes that only the first note should be on ④ (Castro 2014: 53–4). Were this actually the case, ④ would be indicated with a separate box as in the rapid figure that stretches from bar 5 to bar 6 (see Example 6.3 above). This latter figure actually provides two shifts with open strings (the first one being the low open ④, the second one being the penultimate note of bar 5, the G (one of the very few notes in the whole movement without a string indication!)).

material was generated by combining the basic sequence with itself in such a way that the combined sequences interlock to form a new sequence of 14 pitches. The basic sequence undergoes two different kinds of permutation. The first presents the basic sequence in its inverted retrograde form (IR), a simple procedure with clear historic precedence.

The second permutation

presents the basic sequence passing through an interval filter where the interval steps of the original are all subtracted by 1: the original interval sequence is 2 3 2 3 8 3, and the new sequence is 1 2 1 2 7 2 (I call this latter permutation O-1 ('Original'-1); see Figure 6.6). This kind of filter is a favourite device of Ferneyhough's in this period, and analogue procedures are used in *Lemma-Icon-Epigram* as well as in the *Carceri* cycle (see Toop 1990: 56–61 and Pätzold 2002 respectively; also Cavallotti 2002: 140–46).

However, the identity of the two forms of the basic sequence are hardly recognizable in their combined form. One should note that both forms take the G-sharp of the basic sequence as their initial note, thus suggesting a hint at the possibility of a unifying pitch structure. However, such a unity is disseminated in the practical realization of the material as the initial G-sharp found in bar 2 sounds three quartertones higher and the initial note of the material in bar 12 is a G (the initial note of IR). The two forms are 'zipped' together, interlocking so that any recognizable traits or traces of the original in the permutations are effaced (see Figure 6.7).

In the sketch, the inverted retrograde is notated with upward stems. As Figure 6.7 shows, the two forms are combined three times. In the first and third combination, the O-1 is introduced into the IR after the first note, but



Figure 6.7: *Kurze Schatten II*, mvt. 1, bar 12 – transcription of sketch

The image shows a musical score for four staves. The top staff is a treble clef with a 6/8 time signature. The second staff is a bass clef with a 6/8 time signature. The third and fourth staves are also in 6/8 time. The score includes various dynamics such as *fff*, *f*, *mf*, *f*, *mp*, *mfz*, *sfz*, and *p*. There are also performance instructions like *pizz.* and *poco rall.* The music features complex rhythmic patterns and pitch material.

Example 6.5: *Kurze Schatten II*, mvt. 1, bar 12

in the second the O-1 is introduced after the second note. This of course ensures that the new sequences are not identical. However, one should also note that in two latter combinations both forms are transposed according to the pitches of the first combination. The first three notes of the first presentation of IR is G–B-flat–D; the second presentation is transposed to B-flat, and the third is transposed to D. The three versions of O-1 expose a similar relationship. Thus is ensured that the three 14-note sequences exhibit no form of identity between them, even if they nonetheless take part in the same structural network of subcutaneous procedures. Again, one observes material worked out according to structuralist principles the structurality of which is disseminated in the practical application of the material.

Example 6.5 shows the application of the pitch material in the score. One notes that certain lacunae occur in the passage from material to score, the material is thus actually only a kind of reservoir of consecutive pitches. And then comes the scordatura which adds a further filtering of the material. From what I can understand, similar procedures underlie the elaboration of pitch in the whole movement. However, it must be remembered that in all bars but bar 12 the determination of the foreground material is always conditioned by questions along the lines of those explored in relation to bar 2 above which refers back to the kaleidoscopic transformation of available pitches whose conditions of possibility are determined by the harmonics and the nexus of rhythmic/metric calculations. One could indeed argue that what I have called the basic pitch material does not have any ordinary

status with regards to the various derivations, it has no structural priority that distinguishes it from what I called the derivations – these could just as well have been the basic material. The priority given to the phrase in bar 2 thus becomes a kind of simulation of origin, more of a kind of historical reference than structural distinction. For again, as with the metric/rhythmic/harmonics nexus discussed above, one finds nothing but a deferral of structurality: structure is continually effaced as the material takes shape, one level grafting itself onto the other in a seemingly endless chain of signifiers which renders my question of where to begin void. 'All gestures here are necessarily equivocal' (*Pos*: 17): any step into the network of structures is as close (or distant) to its illusory centre; with the first step the burrows start to crumble. The questions raised to the analyst when faced with this work are obviously manifold and ontological. In order to undertake a comprehensive analysis of pitch structure in this movement, one would have to follow three clearly distinguishable levels: a generative level (which refers to how things were put together), a notated level (which would delineate what is actually given in the score, its positivity), and a performative level (i.e. an analysis of pitch as implied by the scordatura). In this way, the question of pitch is raised as a conscious problematic, which is no minor challenge given its superior status in the Western tradition, and not least with regards to the music and musicology of the twentieth century. I will not pursue such an analytic project here, but merely point out that the questions raised are also valid for Ferneyhough's other output (at least after 1980), even if the scordatura of *Kurze Schatten II* presses these questions further than in other works. Any analytic format which does not clearly distinguish between and continually question the generative and what, with recourse to the Foucauldian vocabulary elaborated in previous chapters, I would term the positive, falls short of grasping what is accomplished in these works: a subtle but distinctly deconstructive non-identity of the generative and the positive whose operationalization is no small feat. This implied criticism could be levelled against the most profound analytic attempts in the reception like those of Toop and Pätzold, as well as Chaigne, even if the results yielded are substantial. For this reason, I could not, 'simply', write about the performativity of the radically idiomatic, as the radically idiomatic solicits the very foundations of the Western tradition of music. A purely performative, corporeal, or even carnal, discussion of the works would similarly fail to grasp the pervasive questioning that these works imply.

'All gestures here are necessarily equivocal': thus any analytic entrance is equidistant from an implied centre. This analysis was announced as a discussion of harmonics and ended up with sketch-based pitch analysis with positivist overtones. I evoke Derrida here not to excuse myself, but rather to point out the extent to which the various levels of interrogation, or the various parameters, are interrelated. Before continuing a discussion of pitch-related procedures I will return to the question of resonance and natural harmonics, this time as they appear in movement 6. However, as will be immediately apparent in relation to the sixth movement as well, simply distinguishing one level of interrogation would only be a sign of ignorance: the strict determination of harmonics in this movement also effectuates a dissemination of pitch.

6.3.2 Movement 6

When now turning to the topic of harmonics in the sixth movement of *Kurze Schatten II*, it is with the intention of showing how harmonics are used (de-)structurally in this movement, and highlighting the non-present sound of the open strings. One should note that the movement contains only natural harmonics, which, as they do in the first movement, highlight the current state of the instrument's tuning and reverberation. Again, what goes on in the music can be described plainly: The sixth movement is a very fast movement, the forward motion of which is propelled by manipulations of the

The image shows a musical score for two staves of music, likely for a string instrument. The score is annotated with various performance instructions and technical markings. The first staff begins with a dynamic marking of *f* and includes markings for *legato... (A)*, *arm.*, *norm.*, *dim.*, *(p)*, *ppp*, *fff*, *mfz*, *fff*, *sub.*, *mpz*, and *ancora legato*. The second staff includes markings for *norm.*, *arm.*, *fff*, *p*, *sfz*, *sfz*, *p*, *fuggevole*, *(h)*, *p*, *poco*, *mp*, *poco*, *mf*, and *poco*. The score is written in a complex rhythmic style with many accidentals and slurs.

Example 6.6: *Kurze Schatten II*, mvt. 6, bars 20–25

basic tempo by means of rhythmic ratios. The fleeting texture is highly fragmented and abrupt with rapid changes of dynamic and irregular alternation between normal notes and harmonics (see Example 6.6). It is this alteration which is the most interesting aspect of the movement in the present context.

As in the first movement, many details in the sixth movement are determined on the basis of a tightly spun network of simple numerical procedures. Chaigne has described the generative process in detail, but stops short of commenting on what is not expressly given in the sketches (Chaigne 2008: 112–39). That is, his analysis covers only the generation of the rhythmic grid of the piece, and neither pitch nor the relationship between fretted notes and harmonics is commented upon even if he reproduces material in his thesis which address the latter problematic directly (Ibid.: 138–9, Example 25a–b) and the papers held at the Paul Sacher Stiftung include sketches for the pitch material of the piece. Such an analysis would nevertheless make no difference for my own argument regarding the deconstructive operationalization of practical parameters. Nonetheless, I would like to give a brief outline of the processes involved, and in this I am indebted to Chaigne.

Like the first movement, the sixth movement is based on proportional relationships, but here the proportions act as manipulations of a basic tempo in the form of nested rhythms counted in hemisemidemi-quavers. Whether intentional or the result of an error, it is not without a certain irony that this movement, whose basis is the manipulation of tempo, bears no indication of tempo in the score. Unusually, for Ferneyhough, this movement sets out not from the determination of a metric grid, but from a string of consecutive attacks whose duration is not given at the outset (this was also the case with *Time and Motion Study I* (see Fitch 2013: 205)). From a set of 24 proportions given as ratios (5:3, 11:10 and so on), the order of the ratios as well as the number of consecutive repetitions of the same ratio were worked out on the basis of multiple permutations of a simple numerical sequence (1 2 3 4 5 6). The result is that all sounds in the piece are related to some kind of rhythmic ratio. Those that seemingly are not, as in bar 51, are actually notes sustained across a series of silenced attacks (in bar 51, 3×3:2 and 5:4 hemisemidemi-quavers respectively). The basic tempo, which is not given in the score, is therefore not actually present in the music, it is absent, absented, severed, deferred, dissimulated in the ebb and flow of the rhythmic ratios: musical time in the form of deconstructive writing, constituted and dislocated at the same time.

The rhythmic skeleton of the whole piece can be worked out as a transcription of the ordered ratios. Certain attacks were substituted with rests, the number of rests determined by means of further permutations of the same numerical material mentioned above. At last was determined which notes were to be normal sounds, harmonics, chords, or notes (single or multiple) sustained across a set of rests (the rests being 'recharged' with resonance). Interestingly, and as far as I know unprecedented in Ferneyhough's output, bar-lines were added after the rhythms were determined, and function simply to delimit the various rhythmic ratios. This is quite remarkable, in that the bar in Ferneyhough's music usually signifies a musical unit of whatever sense, and is often the first parameter to be determined.

On the basis of the sketch material it seems that the procedures for generating pitches were not unlike those described for the first movement. The sketches document permutations of a basic set of five pitches ordered by increasing intervals, the intervals being 1, 2, 3 and 4 semitones (from C: C-D-flat-C-flat-C-flat-B-flat). This number sequence undergoes simple permutations that lead to interval series like 1-3-3-4, 2-2-3-4, or 1-1-3-4, as well as the traditional permutations of inversion and retrograde. In the sketches, the various forms of these pitch cells are combined with each other analogously to what was observed in movement 1. Often, traces of the cells are clearly visible in the score in the form of ascending or descending figures that combine seconds and thirds; however, the pitch sequences in the score rarely follow those suggested by the sketches for more than a few notes at the time. Again, the pitch material paradoxically shows a clear profile in terms of its interval structure whilst nonetheless exposing no strikingly recognizable features: the material as presented in the score has no clear identity that is carried over from the sketches. In other words, the material is not self-identical, it is not re-presented in the score. And again, this evasion of identity as the presence of material structure can be assessed even before taking into consideration the effect of the scordatura (which, as the reader should note, has changed since the opening of the piece) and the effect of the harmonics that were determined only in relation to the sequence of attacks. This latter element will be discussed presently.

The order of the compositional process is unambiguously clear from the sketches. After the determination of the rhythmic skeleton of the piece, forms of attack or resonance were determined before the pitch material was worked out. Now, it seems pitch was determined with little initial regard for

whether a given pitch was to be fingered normally or as a harmonic, and the qualification of 'initial' is not without importance: what I am suggesting is that whatever short term pitch stability one can find is the result of possibilities suggested locally by the self-effacing permutation of the material. Such a hypothesis of course runs the risk of being refuted on the basis of new evidence or more competent analysis (cf. the consecutive analyses of Boulez' *Le Marteau* discussed in Chapter 5); nonetheless the relationship between notated pitches and harmonic fingerings is decidedly ambiguous. At least four points could be summoned to support my argument:

- 1 Some harmonics are assigned to specific strings, some not. Why is this? Almost any fingering point on a string will result in some kind of harmonic, and there is a spectrum of qualities ranging from the pure and full sounding harmonics found at the lower end of the overtone series to almost muffled sounds by way of complex multiphonics. However, the fingering the same pitch as a harmonic on different strings will yield very different results depending on which string is used. In this movement, there is no *systematic* exploration of fingerings (or the lack thereof) that could result in any kind of clear structure which is expressed in the score as a form of structurality or systematicity. It is not so that the fixed fingerings provide any more *or* less stable approach to the harmonics than those which are left to the performer's discretion. Ferneyhough states that in working with Magnus Andersson, decisions were taken in order to highlight different aspects of the possibilities inherent in the material (*CW*: 150). However, it is not clear whether these decisions resulted in the fingerings given in the score or whether they affected the other pitches that were determined as part of Andersson's interpretation. It makes however no difference to the reading of the score.
- 2 As mentioned, with the 'free' fingerings a vast array of pitch possibilities open up. Even if one could theoretically envisage computing all combinatorial possibilities of strings and pitches to be fingered, it is difficult to imagine that such a procedure could result in the possibility of approximating any kind of stable result with regards to the free fingerings. By what criteria could the performer effectuate such a stability, and could it be recognized as

such in comparison to a different fingering solution? The complications inherent in this point are expanded in the next one:

- 3 Certain pitches do not simply give one harmonic. Many harmonic fingerings result in multiphonics or could even result in several different pitches depending on microscopic left hand inflections. These harmonics are used just as much among the fixed as among the free fingerings.
- 4 All the while, it is also a literal question of the *emphasis* of the performer: the pressure exerted on the string by the left hand can variously result in a clear harmonic or a rather muffled pitched sound, or something in between. The right hand attack plays a decisive role in bringing out these nuances, and for both hands these variables will change from fret to fret and string to string – and instrument to instrument.

Thus I would restate the claim that the relationship between notated pitch and harmonics is decidedly ambiguous. This does not mean that pitches necessarily were chosen for the harmonics with no regard for the resulting sound. I am not making any such claim – indeed one must assume that pitch choice is more or less intentional. However, I would not be surprised if those harmonic fingerings which have been fixed in the score are the result of certain figural possibilities suggested by the concrete material in a given local situation.

My main point is that the bringing together of musical material – pitch – and an element of the practice – harmonics – results in the dissimulation, the de-structuration or deconstruction of the former by the latter. Now this latter parameter is itself inherently bifurcating and heterogeneous, dissimulating structurality through its own predetermined structure. Discursive practice: the sounding surface of the music is conditioned by the possibilities inherent in the practice, which becomes inextricably linked to the musical processes in which it takes part. I also noted an analogue dissimulation of musical time as writing. As in the first movement, one can see how the heterogeneity of musical writing itself is explored, how notation and practice as writing suggests a severance of the presence of a central organizing structure, the centre – the unity of musical time, an Aristotelian category if any – is absented (indeed doubly so through the ironic lack of a proper tempo), only re-presented indirectly through the rhythmic ratios, which are themselves strictly speaking not sentient (and in passing I will

only mention the question of the possibilities of local tempo modifications induced in performance). Lacking any centrally organizing signified tempo, the ratios become indications of a void, of a structurally determined avoidance of structure. Certainly, this could be said of many works of contemporary music, but in *Kurze Schatten II* the question concerning time as notation and/or experience is raised to a sentient problematic by dislocating the elements that go into its constitution.

6.4 Analysis II: The dislocation of pitch

Having dealt with two movements where harmonics take on a (de-)structuring function with regards to the musical material which it simultaneously constitutes and dislocates, I would like to address the question of pitch more directly in relation to movements 2 and 4. Again it will not be a question of discussing the parameter of pitch 'simply'; it simply cannot be discussed on its own, as the subcutaneous network of parameters both practical and abstract reciprocally constitute and dislocate each other. In the former movement a fixed sequence of pitches is dislocated in the collision with the scordatura and the performative dependency of fixed fingerings, and in the latter movement pitch is not the representation of any form of material structure but rather the result of a strict determination of fingerboard handgrips.

6.4.1 Movement 2

As noted above, analyzing pitch structures in *Kurze Schatten II*, one is confronted by a very interesting theoretical, methodological, and indeed ontological question: Which set of pitches should be analyzed? The question concerning pitch in *Kurze Schatten II* is rooted in the microtonal scordatura. Pitch structures in *Kurze Schatten II* are worked out and notated at fingered pitch, and not sounding pitch, the latter being the result of the filtering of the former through the scordatura. Given the established priority of pitch in the theoretical, analytic and practical tradition, the subtle dismantling of this superior musical parameter in *Kurze Schatten II* is of great interest. Although the non-identical relationship between notated and sounding pitch is a major issue in *Kurze Schatten II* as a whole, it is particularly pressed in the

second movement. Before discussing pitch in some detail below I will first explain the rhythmic level of this movement, which presents a bifurcating play of differences analogous to that of pitch.

The second movement is composed of six sections, each consisting of six bars, and each clearly marked in the score with a new indication of tempo. The musical flow of this movement is based on two opposing processes that again bring the question of music as writing to the fore. While the notated tempo decreases with each new section, the notated density increases quite dramatically throughout the movement. The music transforms from a quasi-motivic texture with highly differentiated rhythms towards long chains of rather undifferentiated material towards the end. Although these processes appear to be quite simple, for the reader of the score the effect is that the notation draws attention to its own status and function, the relationship between notation and perception being explicitly problematized as the notation represents a fall in pacing while the actual music is propelled forward with seemingly unhinged energy.

The level of pitch is also, at the outset, quite simple. A sequence of 50 pitches makes up the material for the first section. This material is repeated at the head of each section, and is treated in a relatively free manner with ad hoc pitch repetitions and omissions (this is particularly the case with the first four pitches). The opening bars of the first and sixth sections provide examples of the varied disposition of the pitch material (see Example 6.7). However, as the number of pitches required to fill each section increases along with the increase in rhythmic density, more pitches are added at the tail of the sequence resulting in a series of 119 pitches in section six.

As in the first movement, the music is initially based on certain characteristic types of gestures – chords, linear passages, arpeggios and so on. The music seems to be worked out at notated pitch and with little regard for resulting pitch structures – surface continuity being rather achieved through motivic proximity. In the first movement, fingerings are specified for every note because of the continual reconfiguration of the fingerboard that conditions the different material types. In contrast, in the second movement there is a relative freedom of choice of fingering – *relative* freedom, because in practice there are often few decisions open to choice, the complex interplay of different materials being worked out with a specific fingering in mind even where this is not indicated in the score. The point is that the scordatura and the relative freedom of the performer ultimately leave pitch structures in the hands

The image shows two excerpts of a musical score. Excerpt (a) is for bars 1-4, starting at a tempo of 90. It features complex rhythmic patterns with various time signatures (16/8, 8/8, 4/8) and dynamic markings such as *sf in mf*, *pp*, *poco*, *ppp*, *marc. in p*, and *molto*. Excerpt (b) is for bars 31-32, starting at a tempo of 63.5 *rall.* and marked *con forza*. It includes dynamics like *fff*, *f*, *mf*, *ff*, *f*, *mp*, *ppp*, *p*, and *pp*. Both excerpts show intricate fingering and phrasing markings.

Example 6.7: *Kurze Schatten II*, mvt. 2, (a) bars 1–4 and (b) bars 31–32

of the performer: musical structure is completely dependent on its practical realization. The scordatura and fingering choices function as a filter for the end result, the notation of pitch signifying possibilities of fingering (i.e. a combination of string, fret number, left and right hand finger), which are translated into sounding pitch. Of course, this is part of the play of musical coherence and meaning in this movement. This play of meaning is indeed a conditioned function of the notation – of the music as a form of *writing* – the bifurcation of a stable element where two independent levels that emerge ‘together at once and separately’ (MP: 65), two levels which indicate an undecidable hierarchization. However, the play is staged in the notation on the level of pitch as it is on the level of tempo.

The continual deferral of stable pitch structures is occasionally highlighted in the material as in bar seven, the opening bar of the second section (see Example 6.8). In the example, the pitch B appears four times, the last time as a B-flat. However, only two of these sound as notated: The first B, on ①, sounds a quartertone flat, the second sounds as written, the third (notated in parenthesis which means it should be slurred on ②) results in a B-flat like the last one, which needs to be played on ④

This image shows a single bar of music, bar 7, starting at a tempo of 83. The notation is highly complex, featuring multiple time signatures (16/8, 8/8, 4/8) and dynamic markings such as *ff* and *p*. It includes phrasing markings like 7-6 and 7-4, and circled numbers 1, 2, 3, 4 indicating specific notes or fingerings.

Example 6.8: *Kurze Schatten II*, mvt. 2, bar 7

because the first finger has to fret the E-natural on ⑤. Thus, rather than having three successive B's and a B-flat, there is a B-quarter-flat, B natural, B-flat and B-flat. One could add that the A on ② results in an A-flat, and that the low A open ⑤ – indicated by the 'o' – results in a B-quarter-flat just like the (notated) B on ①. Also, another interesting detail is that the sound of the E on the ⑤ is higher than the F-sharp in the middle of the bar – the E results in an F-quarter-sharp, and the F-sharp results in an F natural. It should be noted that in this particular example all fingerings are clearly implied in the notation. The play indicated here between the written material and the sounding result is present throughout the movement, and indeed in the work as a whole. However, due to one string returning to normal tuning between every other movement, the discrepancy between the notation and result is transformed throughout the work. Nevertheless, the explicit problematization of the relationship between notation and realization – one could also say, between its structure and phenomenology – is established within the work itself, and does not disappear from the process of interpretation even if, in comparison to an earlier work like *Unity Capsule*, it appears to have vanished from the immediate surface of the notation. The play of the signifier is not terminated even if it fades out of view – it is continuously oscillating in the gap between the two slopes of the double gesture, the abstract and concrete levels of the notation.

Thus the undecidable relation of *Ton* and *Tun* is raised in the musical writing even if not immediately on the surface of the notation. Paradoxically, the notation enforces performer decisions which must necessarily sacrifice the notated material, and therefore addresses the question of the decision within the work itself through a simple appeal to an undecidable relation of pitch and fingering, a relation which is itself an effect of writing. In the sacrifice of pitch structure, the question of the decision as such is highlighted simply since any performer has to make decisions in order to perform – execute – the work. The traditional *telos* of fingering is here bypassed since the given pitch structure is unachievable, and the question of the decision as such is raised as pertaining to musical interpretation. In articulating the relation of *Ton* and *Tun* as an undecidable and contingent relation, a suspended hierarchization, the radically idiomatic also questions the musical dichotomy of analysis and performativity as the same questions are addressed to the receptive apparatus. 'All gestures here are necessarily equivocal' – however one approaches these works one must necessarily run

into the solicitation of *Ton* and *Tun* as an undecidable relation. Crucially for the argument elaborated in Chapter 7, according to Critchley, the irreducible alterity of the suspended decision maintained in the deconstructive movement of *différance* is the event which conditions any ethics (Critchley 1999: 61; see also 41). As Hägglund argues, undecidability ‘designates a necessary opening toward the coming of the future’ (Hägglund 2008: 39), it is a ‘promise of change’ (Ibid.: 205). In the present context this means that the suspended hierarchy of *Ton* and *Ton* opens up a transformational space of deconstructive ethics. The separation of powers entailed by the parametric conception of practice as writing is an invitation to reassess the capillary powers which permeates the practice and the related network of apparatuses and discourses as well as the relation of self to self, the question of the subject of practice.

6.4.2 Movement 4 (‘seek to adjust for maximum structural richness’)¹⁴⁶

If the dissemination of pitch structure in the first movement of *Kurze Schatten II* is elaborated on the basis of a continual modification of available strings, and in the second movement stages the interminable play of the signifier, in the fourth movement pitch material is devoid of the possibility of any expressive intent. In this movement, pitch is the result of predetermined handgrips by way of a parametric analysis of the relationship between the left hand and the fingerboard, and in particular a strict adherence to the principle of position playing. Position playing is an important element in guitar technique and helps to orient the player around the fingerboard. The adherence to fingerboard positions is a decisive trait of Ferneyhough’s guitar-writing, also retained in later works like the guitar concerto *Les Froissements des Ailes de Gabriel* (2003) and *Renvoi/Shards* (2010), where the left hand is usually fixed in one position of the fingerboard at any one time with the fingers fixed in one fret each (i.e. without stretches). This is in stark contrast to what one finds in the guitar works of someone like Chris Dench, who has a much more flexible approach to left hand activity. It is also in contrast to what was observed in *colloid* in Chapter 3. Even though Barrett

¹⁴⁶ This quotation is found among the sketches for movement 4 held at the Paul Sacher Stiftung, sketch page marked ®.

Example 6.9: *Kurze Schatten II*, mvt. 4, bars 6–8

Example 6.10: *Kurze Schatten II*, mvt. 4, bars 26–27

Example 6.11: *Kurze Schatten II*, mvt. 4, bars 34–35

shows a similar concern with fingerboard positions, the actual handgrips often involve extensions.

The fourth movement is a kind of scherzo in three parts. The first part, comprising 19 bars in a steady 3/8 metre, is again based on different kinds

of musical gestures as in movements one and two discussed above (see Example 6.9). The second part of the movement is based on the principle of melody and accompaniment (a rare texture in Ferneyhough's work), the soft, slowly moving melody being constructed on the basis of the succession of handgrips given, the remaining pitches of the handgrips being employed in rapid arpeggio figurations that often cover the melody (see Example 6.10).

The last section follows seamlessly from the middle section and sees the music regaining pace, the two-part writing of section two becoming more complex. Full chords supplant the melody, and the function of the accompaniment is dismissed in favour of a more characteristic gestural material. This process is facilitated by the introduction of natural harmonics in the melodic part, which enables the left hand to change position even if a sound is sustained. However, it should be pointed out that this is only a possibility when two consecutive chords have an open string in common on which the harmonic can be played (see Example 6.11).

With regards to the examples from the fourth movement, it should be noted that ⑤, ② and ① are still at scordatura tuning.

As with movements 1 and 6, proportioning is an important element in the determination of various parameters. The basic proportional framework is suggested by the tripartite form, where section 2 and 3 form a sustained process roughly twice the length of section 1. The relation of 1 : 2 is mirrored in the triple metre of the first section, each bar being divided in two parts along the relative proportional scheme of long and short (L/S, or its inversion S/L) according to permutation of four basic models (Paul Sacher Stiftung, sketch for mvt. 4, marked ③). The proportioning of the bars is readily visible in the bars given in Example 6.9 above. The top staff of bar 6 is divided as 13+11 hemidemisemiquavers (L/S). Bar 7 is more complex – it is divided as S/L something which is most clearly apparent in the lower part of the top staff. The short value is a dotted semiquaver (given in parenthesis above the 5:3 subdivision of the value), and the long value is nine demisemiquavers stated in the score as pauses. Now, the space of the long value is filled with material in the upper part in the form of a triplet figure. Bar 8 presents a more straight-forward subdivision, with 2+1 quavers, both of which are typically subdivided as triplets – note the double nested triplets in both staves at the end of the bar, the basic governing value of the movement doubling itself also on this level. The proportions form a basic grid for further rhythmic elaboration.

Typically, the sketches are full of jottings, definitions, tasks and rules that concern the operationalization of a given parameter, and the determination of proportions seems to have caused a great deal of effort. Great care is taken with regards to the segmentation of bars to ensure any form of structural repetition even of the relative proportions of long and short: 'NB No bar proportion to repeat' (Paul Sacher Stiftung, sketch for mvt. 4, marked ®). Also, in determining the 'content' of the proportions, i.e. the distribution of the four rhythmic models and their permutations, a similar care is expressly stated in the sketches: 'NB. a) No two consecutive versions of same system [i.e. proportional models] to have same L/S-direction. b) no two system-number to follow on from each other twice' (Ibid.). So neither the order of the relative proportions nor the distribution of the rhythmic models of which they are filled should expose any form of structurality. Interestingly then, since both these parameters are determined in a rigorously systematic fashion, at such a basic level of the structural network of the movement there is a structurally determined evasion of structurality, a systematic dissimulation of the possibility of any form of representation of the determined material on the surface level.

The proportional segmentation of the bars is maintained in the second and third sections of the movement even if in this latter two-thirds of the movement, the strict 3/8 metre is surrendered and the metre changes from bar to bar (see Examples 6.10 and 6.11). Nevertheless the reference to '3' is not given up, as every bar refers to some kind of tripartite value. But in these sections even the proportional values are segmented and redistributed within the bars. In bar 26 (the first bar of Example 6.10), the melody line on the lower stave is subject to a nesting of five quavers against the given metre of 6/8. Two of the quintuplet quavers (the shorter duration of the L/S pair) are subject to a triplet subdivision, the first and second beats of which are separated by the last of the regular (5:6) quavers. Similarly, the lower stave of bar 34 is also a 6/8 bar nested as a bar of five quavers against six (see Example 6.11). Here, the short value is a mere dotted semiquaver, and the remaining 21 demisemiquavers¹⁴⁷ are nested as three crotchets, two of which are positioned at either end of the bar, and the second between the first and second 'straight' (i.e. 5:6) demisemiquavers (the second of which is silenced as part of a process of elimination (this process is elaborated in the sketches

¹⁴⁷ Note that the indication of the value to be nested as a triplet, a semibreve tied to a demisemiquaver, is an error – it lacks a quaver (the semibreve lacks a dot).

at the Paul Sacher Stiftung, in particular on the sketch for mvmt. 4 marked ③). In the consecutive bar the lower stave is nested as seven quavers against the metre of 5/8. Four of the seven quavers are nested as three crotchets, segmented and distributed among the remaining three (7:5) quavers. The rhythmic interplay between the two parts of the texture is quite staggering; nonetheless the two parts are neatly interwoven and meticulously crafted to fit together.

Now, one might pause to ask: Why all these rules and operations when the result is an evasive structurality? Why this systematic eradication and distortion of an established coherence by grafting a second upon the first? The formulation of rules for composition is nothing new though; rules have been formulated again and again and not least after the emancipation of the dissonance and all of tradition that fell with it. Certainly, if one should characterize the music of the twentieth-century avant-garde it could be by the deliberate formulation of more or less manifest rules for good or proper practice. Few composers have made such meticulous and detailed efforts as Ferneyhough in their definition of their game, though, and a characteristic trait of Ferneyhough's work is the determined effort to avoid the structures and structuring of material on whichever level to be simply represented as meaningful signification at the aural, or even notational, surface: Sketch-based analysis gains access to the generative process, but even more so to the decompositional, de-generative, and ultimately de-constructive, two-handed, stratification which exposes the contingency and transitivity of any possible parameter. The rules stated usually govern the delimitation of a single parameter, or occasionally a sheaf or bundle of parameters, and as such suggest a delimitation of structure(s), of units of signification sent off through the differing and deferring movement of parametric *différance*. Now, in contradistinction to the geneticist conception of analysis, I would propose understanding Ferneyhough's rules in terms of Derrida's concept of closure, already introduced in Chapter 4. The concept of closure is a key feature of Derrida's thinking and runs through the whole of his output. It originates in his early readings of Husserl, and takes on various guises in terminology that refers to the liminal – limit, margin, frame, hymen, and so on. As Critchley points out, the function of the concept of closure in Derrida changes from a basically phenomenological and technical term designating a finite totality (which is nevertheless exceeded on the phenomenological reliance on transcendental experience) in early texts to 'becoming a key

term in a deconstruction of the metaphysics of presence' by the time of the publication of *Writing and Difference* in 1967 (Critchley 1999: 68–9). In its latter, mature, usage, closure, as the delimitation of any structure, becomes a problem of radically opposing what is inside and outside the structural limit:

And if you will, traversing the philosophical discourse from which it is impossible to uproot oneself totally, to attempt a breakthrough towards that which is beyond it, the only chance of reaching it *within language* ... is by *formally* and *thematically* posing the *problem of the relations between belonging and the breakthrough, the problem of closure*. (Derrida, in Critchley's translation, quoted in Critchley 1999: 69)

Although the Heideggerian question of the closure of metaphysics to which this passage relates is not our concern here, the context should nevertheless be borne in mind in order to recognize what is at stake in this term. The problem of closure, of breakthrough and belonging, of transgression and restoration (one should not overlook the importance of Derrida's reading of Bataille in this context), subject and object, nature and culture, madness and reason, presence and absence, the I and the Other, and indeed any other opposition, is not a dialectical relationship to be overcome. For Derrida, the question of closure it is rather a question of a 'dislocation, where two inassemblable ... lines of thought open up' (Ibid.: 75), that is, along the two slopes, or double gesture, of deconstruction. To pose the problem of closure is to recognize the deferring and differentiating economy of *différance*, to traverse the encasing frame of the two slopes rather than opposing them in a violent hierarchization; that is, the problem of closure evokes the necessary violence of any decision discussed above but recognizes the mutually conditioning of the two terms and suspends the undecidable bond rather than fixating a dominant relation. The parametric analysis encountered in Ferneyhough, theorized with the term figure, suggests a recognition of the problem of closure along such lines. To think any parameter in isolation necessarily involves thinking the breakthrough to other parameters, an incision into the encircling of its structure leaving it scarred: 'The closure ... is not a circle surrounding a homogeneous field, a field homogeneous with itself on its inside, whose outside would be homogeneous also. The limit has the form of always different faults, of fissures whose mark or scar is borne by all the texts of philosophy' (*Pos*: 57). Likewise, the strict delimitation of parameters in Ferneyhough exposes how the parameters always already carry within them the trace of the outside on the inside, the outside which marks their condition of possibility. A slice of eternity, the single sound must

necessarily be characterized by a duration, a timbre, a spectrum, an envelope, etc.; if played on an instrument like the guitar, the sound – say a single tone – must necessarily be the reverberation of a string, which must be set in motion, possibly fretted – which finger? which string? which fret? – all parameters conditioned by years of disciplinary training by way of historically and socially maintained technology, ingrained in the brain and nervous system of the person executing the performative action of producing this particular sound. I already discussed parametric contingency in Barrett in Chapter 3. The radically idiomatic practice encompasses and operationalizes the economy of these articulatory relations, the elements whose closure is exposed as scarred, porous and ultimately impossible to demarcate in a wholly rigorous fashion: closure and undecidability run hand in hand. The rules formulated in the sketches target a strictly demarcated parametric operation, only to reveal its own contingency and conditionality as a single element within a generalized economy of parametric operations. The closure imposed by the restricted economy of the rules expose their own outside, with which it forms an undecidable bond. The following comment by Derrida on Hegel's 'powerful writing operation' highlights those fissures or scars mentioned in the quotation above, and seems strangely directed at Ferneyhough: 'Hegel's text must be reexamined, that is, the movement by means of which his text exceeds its meaning, permits itself to be turned away from, to return to, and to repeat itself outside of its self-identity' (*Pos*: 77–8). This logic of repetition outside of itself – the re-reading of one level in a second operation – has been the target of these analyses of *Kurze Schatten II*. I have shown how any parameter always already carries within it the trace of the outside, on multiple levels – with regards to single parameters or larger parametric sheaves like the 'work' and the practice. As if commenting on the exposure of the intertwined relationship of parameters, compositional strategies and practice in Ferneyhough, Critchley writes, 'the trace [of the outside on the inside] constitutes the possibility of an exit beyond the closure' (1999: 75). In Chapter 7 I will follow this trail beyond the bounds of the score towards the conditions of a relation of self to self implied by the perforated radically idiomatic practice as suggested in Chapter 2.

Returning to the fourth movement of *Kurze Schatten II*, the aim is once again to expose the conditionality of pitch and practice, or better, to assess how the relationship between pitch and practice is problematized in this movement. In his Darmstadt talk on *Kurze Schatten II*, Ferneyhough states

that ‘the most significant pre-compositional decision taken with respect to this movement was not to work it out in terms of individual pitches ... but, rather, in terms of left hand finger positions’ (*CW*: 146). That is, the traditional relationship between pitch and practice is turned on its head. The sketch material held at the Paul Sacher Stiftung more than suggests that left hand activity was determined with no initial consideration for the resulting pitch material (Paul Sacher Stiftung, folder marked *Kurze Schatten II*). If one places one finger in consecutive frets and on different strings, one gets a four-note handgrip, or a six-note handgrip if the two open strings are played as well. In the fourth movement of *Kurze Schatten II*, these different elements are treated as separate parameters and combine to form the pitch material of the movement. To determine the handgrips that were to be employed, Ferneyhough worked out a system that designates the following parameters:

- left hand position, from position I to XIV;
- string combination (always including open strings), which determines which strings are used for fretting;
- finger pattern, which determines which finger is assigned to which string;
- the number of strings to be employed for a given handgrip;
- which strings to be used out of the number of strings employed in a given handgrip.

	"Formula"	strings	fingers
6	XI – hh – 1	5 1 3 4	1 2 3 4
7	XIII – ll – 6	3 5 6 1	1 4 2 3
8	V – pp – 3	5 6 1 4	1 3 4 2
9	VI – qq – 5	6 1 4 5	1 4 3 2
10	I – c – 5	1 2 4 6	1 4 3 2

Figure 6.8: *Kurze Schatten II*, mvt. 4 – handgrip table, handgrips 6–10 (transcription of the sketch)

A large Table of the required number of handgrips was worked out that specifies the patterns or values of the various parameters. I replicate the opening of the table in Figure 6.8. The fragment of the Table shows the chords for the latter two thirds of bar 4 and bar 5; the corresponding music is given in Example 6.12.

The column to the left in the table given in Figure 6.8 shows handgrip number. The next column, marked ‘Formula’ specifies three parameters. The first is the left hand position, given in typical Roman numerals. The second parameter, given in the letters of the Latin alphabet, refers to a chart that shows all possible combinations of four out of six strings. Four out of six because the left hand cannot finger more than four strings without using the thumb on the fingerboard, or by the use of a barré. The sketches give evidence that the

Example 6.12: *Kurze Schatten II*, mvt. 4, bars 4–5

use of the latter option was initially planned to be included in the economy of handgrips of this movement but was finally left out. The former option is mentioned by Ferneyhough in his Darmstadt talk but also not used (*CW*: 148). In the string combination chart, the 15 possible string combinations are organized linearly from low to high strings: [1 2 3 4], [1 2 3 5], [1 2 3 6], [1 3 4 5] and so on, each combination also subject to simple rotational permutation along this model: [1 2 3 4] [2 3 4 1] [3 4 1 2] [4 1 2 3] and identified with a single letter or combination of letters (a, b, c; aa, bb, cc and so on). These are the letters referred to in the Table. The final parameter given in the column determines the finger pattern to be used from the six possible combinations of fingers starting with finger 1 (in Ferneyhough's order [1 2 3 4] [1 2 4 3] [1 3 4 2] [1 3 2 4] [1 4 3 2] [1 4 2 3]). The two columns to the right show transcriptions of the string and finger combinations. To determine the actual handgrips, strings and fingers are assigned in the order given in the column. The handgrips were all transcribed onto several large pages of staff paper, and one can easily track these handgrips in the score. For handgrip no. 6, the left hand is in XI and fingers 1 2 3 4 finger strings ⑤, ①, ③, ④, and for no. 7, the left hand is in XIII and fingers 1 4 2 3 finger strings ③, ⑤, ⑥, ①. A transcription of these handgrips along with those of nos. 8–10 are given in Figure 6.9.

Figure 6.9: *Kurze Schatten II*, mvt. 4 – transcription of handgrips 6–10

One should again note that the single practical parameter does not possess any aural correlate – the single elements of the practice are mute, sound only occurring when elements are brought together in an articulatory relation. A finger, string or fingerboard position has no sound in itself, thus relating clearly to the earlier quotation from Foucault regarding the discursive relations being found at the limits of discourse: the elements of the practice themselves are not part of the music strictly speaking, but rather the conditions through which the music can emerge. By extension the notation is analogously deconstructed, any clear distinction between the descriptive and the prescriptive being continually deferred.

Interestingly, a partial copy of a fully worked out hand-written chart (held at the Paul Sacher Stiftung) bears the heading ‘Random string combinations’, suggesting that the parameters were worked out according to specific rules *not* intended to generate a structural coherence in the material. Additionally, no handgrip is used twice. This is not to suggest that the music as such necessarily lacks coherence; rather that whatever coherence found is necessarily to be found at the surface of the music as sound, as it has been formed as practice on the instrument. One can thus clearly see the relationship between the *presence* of the sounding music and the *presencing* function of the practice.¹⁴⁸ The generative procedure arguably does not result in a *structure* at all; it is simply the dissemination of practical elements as a set of discursive relations that condition the aural surface.

The procedure invites comparison to *colloid*. In *colloid* large-scale structures are slowly evaded in the parametric combinatoriality, for instance in the relationship between tessitura, positions and string combinations, between left and right hand string patterns, or between left hand positions and timbre, in a manner that is much more processual and determined linearly as separate trajectories. The bifurcation of parameters extends over the whole of the work and gives it a clear form whose relative constancy (in at least one element at the time) leaves the deconstructive process sentient. In the fourth movement of *Kurze Schatten II*, the micrology practiced with regards to the left hand parameters leaves the discursive formations in the score disjointed, *ungefügt*, in relation to the subcutaneously enacted deconstruction of the discursive conditions.

¹⁴⁸ The allusion to Heidegger’s terms *Anwesenheit* and *anwesende* is intentional, cf. Chapter 2.

However, with the introduction of the melodic element in the second section of the piece, a tendency towards structurality emerges in the form of the relative stability of a foreground element. Pitches, most of which are restricted to the lower middle register, are sifted from the handgrips incising a violent hierarchization into what had been a generalized pitch field, a demarcated closure or rarefication which strictly relegates the remaining pitches of the handgrips to the subordinate role of forming accompanimental figurations (see Example 6.11 above). Interestingly, the often extremely narrow melodic steps are countered by long leaps across the neck as determined by the arbitrary position changes. Likewise, often the player has to make a leap from a low to a high position in order to play a descending line or vice versa, so that the surface materials are at odds with the result of the generative process, producing yet another bifurcation. In this way, a form of phrasing is implied that takes into account the inherent conflict between a legato melodic line and the formalist application of position playing thus explicitly extending the compositional decisions into the domain of musical interpretation. Thus, the disjunct though interdependent relationship of the practice and what in this section emerges from the practice as a musical material with a defined profile, is brought forth as a distinct problematic. (In fact, one could question whether the designation of the pitches that result from the handgrips in the first section as ‘material’ is at all suitable.) This disjunction is underscored by the slower rate of position changes in this section, which lets the left hand linger on a single position for a more extended duration. In order to avoid a decreased ‘harmonic pulse’ due to the slower rate of position changes, a new rule is envisaged, the strict formulation of which is only hinted at in the sketches: ‘Perhaps allow fingers to move from a given string to another (open) string if their original string is no longer in use. (Aids figural flexibility!) (mainly for use in pt. II?)’ (Paul Sacher Stiftung, sketch page with written-out handgrips nos. 47–78, marked ②). The last comment is circled in another pen than the one used to notate the actual rule, presumably at a later date than the formulation of the rule. This rule expands the pitch choice of the composer after the pitches from the initial handgrip has been used, and opens up the given position as a restricted field to be explored both from the perspective of pitch as well as the practice. Interestingly, since certain fingers will be fixed to sustain the melodic line the relative left hand flexibility initiated by this rule can certainly be sensed by the performer – whereas in the previous section the hand skips about continuously with all fingers fretting simultaneously, in the second section the fingers operate

more individually even if one finger is fixed at a given moment. The rule affects the handgrip as whole, and not simply the accompanimental figures. Its application, which is rather liberal, can be seen in Example 6.11 above. The bars make use of handgrips nos. 84–88, given in Figure 6.10.

	"Formula"	strings	fingers
84	VII – p – 4	2 3 4 5	1 3 4 2
85	X – u – 3	3 1 2 5	1 3 4 2

Figure 6.10: *Kurze Schatten II*, mvt. 4 – handgrips 84–85, also in transcription

At the beginning of bar 26, handgrip 84 is already in place at VIII since the end of the previous bar where the fourth finger G-sharp on ⑤ is the last melodic note of the bar. 3 has already fretted its B-natural in the previous bar and is allowed to move to ⑤ as the melody moves to ③. 1 is also allowed to move and takes over the melodic movement with the F-natural on ⑤. The small rising pizzicato figure in the accompaniment (B-natural on ④, F-natural on ③, B-flat on ②) comprises two pitches from the initial handgrip as well as 4 on ②. After this figure, 2 is allowed to move from its B-natural on ④, and moves to ⑥ in order to finger the D-flat in the melody. At this point the notation is slightly ambiguous, and it is unclear whether the B in the accompaniment should be on ④ as the preceding B-natural or on ② as the B-natural immediately following. Although Ferneyhough is careful to mark naturals, in *Kurze Schatten II* he avoids them for pitches repeated at the same fret. This suggests that the B is a repetition of the preceding B-natural on ④; however, this means that two strings (④ and ⑥) are fretted in the same position (IX) simultaneously forcing the hand to contract in order to sustain the melody note for its full duration, something that does not happen elsewhere in the movement. In order to achieve this, one would have to skip directly to the D-flat on ⑥ from the F-natural on ⑤, a kind of action which is carefully avoided in the whole work. It could also be that the B should be an open ② as the next one, in which case it lacks both a natural as well as an indication of string. It could even be that it lacks a flat and should be fingered with 1 on ④ (which would produce a sounding note enharmonic with the succeeding notated B-natural on ②). Be that as it may, the question of locating this B suffices to exemplify the odd misprint that confronts

the reader of this score now and again with ambiguities that are difficult to settle. After the melody moves to D-natural on ④ the left hand moves to X for handgrip 85 whose initial note is the C-sharp on ④. This produces another ambiguous situation with two notes indicated on ④ – is there some kind of filter at work where one note cancels the notated duration of the other? This kind of procedure is employed in the contemporaneous pieces *Mnemosyne* (1986) for bass-flute and tape and *Triticco per G.S.* (1989) for solo contrabass as well as in the solo violin part in *Terrain* (1992), where the performer has to juggle two or three separately notated strands of activity. Ferneyhough terms it 'interference form', and it is discussed in both Feller (1994: 99–105) and Fitch (2004: 458–9; 2013: 66–79) without these authors however noting predecessors to this procedure. In the context of *Kurze Schatten II* mention should be made of Clementi's *Fantasia per Liuto* (1978) and *Dodici Variazioni* (1980) or Sylvano Busotti's *Ultima RARA (pop song)* (1969) to name but three works based on 'interference form' that would have been well known to the two guitarists with whom Ferneyhough worked on *Kurze Schatten II* (the example of Clementi was discussed in Chapter 5). At the end of the bar, the melody takes over the G-natural on ⑤ from the accompaniment (1 stays in place), 4 is allowed to abandon its C-sharp on ④ to fret E-flat on ⑥ and 3, whose high E-natural on ① seems filtered out, frets D-natural on ④. Thus one can observe how, finger by finger, the pitch material in a given position gradually transforms, the left hand activity vaguely reminiscent of those 'fixed-finger' exercises which forms an important part of every classical guitarist's training. What is interesting with this particular rule is that it erodes the content of the handgrips (one should recall the procedure of 'wiping over, in the Baconian sense' quoted above), which already possess no inherent structural intent, and disseminate them just at the moment when they are imbued with a kind of structural pull effected by the configuration of the melody. In this manner a wider choice of pitch is made available at each position, although only within the strict limitations imposed by the determined positions and the possibilities of finger combinatoriality.

In the last section of the piece the rate of position changes resumes its initial pace. In comparison to the two handgrips used within the six quavers of bar 26, the 11 quavers of bars 34–35 sees the left hand change its handgrip 11 times. Nonetheless, the sustained sounds of the melody are continued by employing natural harmonics so that sounds ring on even if the left hand is very active along the fingerboard. The systematic introduction of harmonics

of course also relates to the overall trajectory of the work, as the harmonics highlight the sonority of the open strings at this point of the large scale process. The harmonics are always related to the determined positions of the left hand, and therefore not only facilitate an extremely complex texture but also serve as an imprint of the trajectory of the left hand. As in the first movement, it seems that natural harmonics block out their strings for a determined duration, thus effecting another kind of erosion of the succeeding handgrips in the sense that the pitch which should have been on the string where there is a harmonic is suppressed in favour of the harmonic. Also, as in the other movements, rhythms were worked out separately from the handgrip material and therefore provides a grid with which the different pitches from the handgrips are made to stand out. The duration of the harmonics and the effect they produce on the succeeding handgrips is therefore to a certain extent beyond the control of the composer. Again one can observe how pitch choice is completely conditioned by the practice, whose telos is nevertheless to produce sound; an undecidable double bind continuously traversed on multiple levels by different means.

It is tempting to suggest that what one hears is sound of the body working its way around the instrument. However, such a reading would be an over-simplification of the matter at hand, and the decision to employ fixed handgrips should be seen as strategic: neither employed as a plain generative method nor simply to bypass the question of pitch, the strict determination of practical parameters opens up a space where the mutually conditioning relation between pitch and practice is explored as an undecidable relation. The micrological closure of mute elements like finger patterns or positions only reveal their contingency, exposes the trace of the *outré-clôture* at the inside of the demarcated structure, the margin itself exposed as a scar, the general economy of the practice solicited, shaken, 'put in motion' by the movement of *différance*. As with Barrett and Hübler, the deconstructive effects of writing, of dissemination, of *différance* pervades every detail of the score: 'All gestures are here necessarily equivocal'.

6.5 **Articulating the surface: some general comments on the right hand (the hinge)**

To the extent that they have dealt with practical matters, the analyses in this chapter have been directed towards unveiling processes affecting the left hand or the properties of the instrument. A few general remarks on the right hand should complement the analyses in order to suggest that the right hand is as deeply embedded in the structure of the work as the left, even if its properties are not explicitly exploited structurally like those of the left hand. The contingency and heterogeneity of right hand articulation has already been explored at great length in the analysis of *colloid* in Chapter 3. In comparison to the large scale structuring of the properties of the right hand found in *colloid* – in particular related to dynamics and timbre – the approach to the right hand in *Kurze Schatten II* is always locally determined, taking part in the detailed sculpting of the fragmented material surface. In this sense, the right hand serves as a hinge between the subcutaneous processes which determine the activity of the left hand and the aural surface projected to the listener. Nonetheless right hand technique is distinctly deconstructed in the endless reconfiguration of its elements, which articulate the wealth of nuances of dynamics and colour of the musical surface; the interminable accumulation of combinatorial parametric possibilities evades any possible centre of gravity for the practice, the possibility of the occasionally prescribed ‘normal’ timbre ever achieving any functional normalcy being structurally deferred. This is evidenced in the minute annotations of timbre, dynamics or other kinds of articulation (stresses, dots and so on), but just as much in various prescriptions that effectively distort the normal right hand position and the control of timbre. These include specifications regarding whether the attack should be done with flesh or nail of the finger as well as various forms of damping either with the right hand palm or even single right hand fingers on the bridge (see Example 6.11). The employment of these latter techniques is likely to affect either the rhythm or timbre of the given passage. Interestingly, though the notation is highly specific in comparison to most other composers, many of effects produced by the contingency of the parameters are *not* specified, and not even possible to specify (because such a specification could nevertheless never be sufficiently precise or exhaustive); still it is on these effects the perception of the work hinges, they are part of the conditions of the work. Though only assessable in performance they must therefore nevertheless precede the work.

6.6 Into the underworld

I have sought, through detailed analysis, to establish a relationship between *Kurze Schatten II* and Derridean deconstruction, seeing this musical work as an enactment of the double writing practiced by Derrida. I have shown that this work exposes a decidedly radically idiomatic approach to composition, that is, elements of the instrumental practice are singled out and treated as musical material. In this way the function of the practice in the work is raised as a conscious problematic – indeed, the work is constituted on the traversing of the void between the score and its realization, between musical structure and instrumental practice, pursuing an undecidable double path where any hierarchization of the two slopes necessarily will imply an act of violence towards the work.

Drawing upon the available sketches for the work, I have shown how the meticulous grafting of one structure upon the other cannot simply be seen as a generative process where the structural function of one level is furthered, consolidated or represented on the next level. In contradistinction to this view, typical of the reception, I have rather sought to expose how the meticulous parametric structuring – adjusted to achieve maximum structural richness in a form of ‘structuralist frenzy’ (*WD*: 5) – turns its own terms against itself in a dislocation of structure. Composition becomes indistinguishable from de-composition, the work being constructed with a necessary violence against its own materials, which also includes the instrumental practice. The strict definition of parameters, their structural closure, exposes the contingency and interdependency of the parameters, deferring any possibility of structure conceived as simply present and identical to itself to be expressed or represented as such to the reader, performer or listener. The general economy that governs the structural parameters, notational signs, or elements of practice is solicited in Derrida’s sense, shaken, the traditional relationship between the different levels becoming disjointed – *ungefügt* – deconstructed.

It is important to recognize the extent to which this holds for all levels of the work, from the most minute annotations to its general conception. In closing this chapter, I would like to offer a counter-reading of the relation to Benjamin by way of one (really two) last detour(s) into the score in order to shed light on one of the many strange passages that permeate and haunt this work.

Following the general plan of the scordatura towards normal tuning, in the seventh and last movement only the second string, the B-string, remains detuned, to B-flat, or *B* in its German homonymous translation. The movement bears many similarities to other movements of the work: the strict definition of a limited set of types of material, and different parametric layers like metre or tempo are worked out separately in cyclic processes. One striking feature of this movement is the many fermatas that disrupt the musical flow. The fermatas afford the movement with a special kind of pensive character, which along with the many harmonics and resonance that sustain across the fermatas is reminiscent of both the first and third movements. In a wholly traditional manner, the movement seems to sum up the preceding movements in the form of an exposure of its own terms as a self-revelation, the musical object exposing its self-identity as the sun is about to reach its zenith. As if to enhance the effect of the sharpening focus, the last line of the movement is written for the B(-flat)-string only (see Example 6.13).

The musical score for Example 6.13 shows a single line of music for the B(-flat) string. It begins with a glissando from bar 33 to 32, marked with 'arm. nat.' and 'gliss.'. The music then moves through various dynamics and articulations, including 'tasto', 'arm. nat.', and 'gliss.'. The piece concludes with a 'Fine' marking at bar 36. The score is annotated with numerous performance instructions and dynamic markings, such as '(ff)', 'mp', 'sfz', 'f', 'sfz', 'mp', 'p', 'sfz', 'mf', and 'p'. There are also slurs and ligados indicated with parentheses and slurs.

Example 6.13: *Kurze Schatten II*, mvt. 7, bars 33–35

In the example, one can observe how the music circles around the pitches B and B-flat, from the muted glissando at the beginning of the first line to the violent B-flat–A–B-natural figure at the end of the line. Also, the material is strikingly ambiguous, shadowy, ghostly – most techniques used imply multiple sounds. This goes for the left hand articulations, both *ligados* (i.e. left hand slurs, notated with pitches in parentheses), left hand finger-percussion which lets the string vibrate on either side of the finger (notated with black square note-heads, same technique which was notated with x's in *colloid* and *Reißwerck*), as well as the glissandi which are always accompanied by a ghostly counter-glissando on the reverse side of the left hand finger. Also, the many Bartók pizzicati set the open strings in vibration, as do the

glissandi and left hand finger-percussion. In addition to the expressive effect produced, this of course also serves to highlight the resonance of the instrument which, finally, is relieved of quarter-tones. As the work draws to a close, the penultimate figure before the final harmonic is played on the reverse side of the left hand fingers (notated with piked note heads, beautifully mirrored in the spiccato and marcato signs above the pikes) producing another kind of ghostly timbre. The notated pitches A-sharp–A–B-natural–C-natural result in the sounding pitches C-natural –C-sharp–B-natural–A-sharp, the sound a transposed inversion of the notation. Then, finally, comes the last note of the work, the octave harmonic of ②, a notated B-natural that results in a B-flat. Thus one can see that the non-identity of pitch produced by the scordatura, and which was the primary target of the analysis of the second movement, forms an essential part of the work all the way to the end (At this point I will allow myself to add an extended and non-academic, speculative, parenthesis in order to circle back to the very first bar of the first movement where the non-identity of pitch, an effect of musical writing as well as of a wholly traditional conception of instrumental practice, is encountered in the very opening pitches of the work. To take the second note first, the notated F-sharp on ⑤ results (as was noted above) in a G quarter-sharp (one notes that the succeeding F-sharp, also on ⑤, is damped and therefore not simply a repetition of the first but the inauguration – or becoming-form – of the movement of *différance*), thus opening up the undecidable space between notation and realization. Now, the preceding F-sharp, the very first note of the work, a high harmonic on ④ producing the natural third of the D-string, is interestingly notated unconventionally *at* sounding pitch. Unconventionally, because harmonics are traditionally fingered in lower positions and it is usually this lower node which is notated. Though the notation of harmonics at sounding pitch (that is, as if the guitar were at normal tuning) seems significant pursuing this fact is superfluous at this point. What is more interesting is the fact – for which I will not forward any empirical proof (however, one could for instance envisage sending out a survey to seasoned performers of the work) except for evoking the instrumental tradition – that it is unlikely that any guitarist would actually finger this harmonic at the node notated because of the difficulties of orientation in the area above the fingerboard (it is telling that Wilhelm Bruck, in his helpful pedagogical notes on Lachenmann's *Salut* suggests attaching threads of different colours on the top of the instrument in the area between the fingerboard and bridge in order to ease orientation in this area (Bruck 1992); this

has become common practice with performers of this work). Rather, a traditional practice would suggest fingering it at either of the F-sharps at IV or XVI, or simply, following the traditional virtue of economical movements, at IX, in order to be in the same fret as the succeeding F-sharp on $\text{C}\text{\textcircled{1}}$ and thus avoid a potentially disturbing position change at the very beginning of such a challenging work. Now – and now this tortuously hermetic parenthesis is approaching its closure – this would then also be an F-sharp which is not an F-sharp, an F-sharp not identical with itself. It would in fact be – a fingered B. Thus, the effects of practice as writing, of the movement of the signs and gestures of practice as chains of signifiers is always already in place at the *head* of the work, a head as *telos* or origin therefore severely shaken, or even, as is suggested by the analysis of *Reißwerck*, beheaded, its beheading inaugurating the performance of the work. Thus a relationship is established between the first and last notes of the piece – two harmonics, two B's that are not B's – creating a passage that runs through the whole fabric of the work. *Est ma fin mon commencement?* This question can only be answered along two slopes: yes and no. Yes: it seems only apt and tasteful that a long and complex work marks its closure with a reference to its opening. No: the closure suggested by this mysterious passage marks a provisional and strategic phantasmagoria of completion, fullness and self-presence, any such presence being meticulously dissimulated within the subcutaneous burrows of the work. A work created of just such ambiguously double, undecidable, passages. A *Passagen-Werk*, a work of undecidable closure. The work of music, no matter how abstract or removed from the performing body must necessarily be conditioned by a musical practice. But the practice as (arche-) writing necessarily precedes both performer and composer. The parenthetical aside is hereby closed.) – as I wanted to repeat, the non-identity and dislocation of pitch permeates the work all the way to its very end – in a sense it has the last word as the musical object comes to close itself up in a relationship identical to itself as it now reputedly stands completed, self-present, and supposedly fully exposed by the piercing light of the sun beyond Plato's cave. Certainly, on the basis of the preceding analysis, such a reading would be questionable if not untenable. As I have demonstrated, every level of structuring of the work is also a form of dislocation of structure conforming to the deferring and differentiating movement of *différance* and the undecidability inherent in the logic of closure, and this must be the case with the relation of the work to the text of Benjamin as well. It is a grave mistake to misconstrue the empirical beginning of the work for its origin. Its

beginning is simply the mark of the biographical closure of the composer subject beyond which the work transcends. Although the imagery of Benjamin's text must have harmonized well with Ferneyhough's conceptualization of resonance, the work, at least in the present reading, seems actually to perform a gesture completely counter to the one described in Benjamin's text, or indeed to perform two gestures in one movement. The sustained effort to evade self-presence thematizes the marginal and articulatory conditions of the work, and this evasion is achieved through an incessant bifurcation at every structural juncture, the most obvious of which is the targeting of practical parameters, effecting a double and undecidable opening between the notation and its realization. This suggests the figure of eversion: the subcutaneous structures, the conditions, outline, or margins of the work enfolding themselves around the work rather than retreating into its shadowy burrows. Thus, complementing the image of the all-encompassing sun revealing the full identity, truth and essence of the aesthetic object I would like to posit the figure of Orpheus as he sees his beloved Euridice retreating into the shadows of the underworld.¹⁴⁹ The work could be said to emerge at the hour of the zenith; if anything the shadowy conditions of the work are ever more strongly assessed and grow increasingly dominant through the course of the work, the fullness of presence outside the burrows or cave being no more than a consoling phantasm, a spectral trace or ghostly presence. A shadow-work – a music of the margins. In this reading, Ferneyhough could be said to be following the spirit rather than the letter of Benjamin's text, even if this entails a deconstruction of the understanding of these terms: rather than simply and literally following the trajectory described by Benjamin's thought-image, what permeates the work is the heterogeneous format of emblematic thinking, a thinking of movable relations, of chains of signifiers and not the stubborn essence of a fixed meaning. In short: a transposition of representation by analogy. As Derrida writes of analogy: 'As soon as one admits that all the terms in an analogical relation already are caught up, one by one, in a metaphorical relation, *everything begins to function no longer as a sun, but as a star*, as a punctual source of truth or properness remaining invisible or *nocturnal*' (MP: 243–4, italics added). Perhaps it is not so surprising then, that Ferneyhough quotes Benjamin's *Ursprung* at the head of an early copy of the first movement of *Emblems* found among the sketches at the Paul Sacher Stiftung: '*Die Ideen*

149 The reference to Maurice Blanchot is intentional.

*verhalten sich zu den Dingen wie die Sternbilder zu den Sternen.*¹⁵⁰ Just as the constellations only come into being when the stars are viewed as a particular articulatory outline, so ideas are formed when things are brought together within a particular framework – ideas then as a discursive formation, a strict closure of the arche-writing that ensures a momentarily stable context of interpretation. The proximity of Foucault and Derrida in this formulation should be apparent, and will be discussed in Chapter 7. The proximity to the conception of a discursive practice, the practice that frames the musical work as sound should be obvious. Indeed, in Benjamin's *Kurze Schatten* text(s), the shadows that mark the outline of the object play just as important a part as the object itself. So also in Ferneyhough, and indeed also in the works of Barrett and Hübler considered here: The enframing and presencing (cf. the discussion of Heidegger's *Ge-stell* in Chapter 2) margins of the work mark its conditions of possibility.

What then to make of the function of the performer of this – or these – work(s)? I have already suggested that the practice as writing converges with a deconstructive corporeality, a writing of the body. In Chapter 2 I claimed that instrumental practice should be understood as an apparatus in Foucault's sense, as a technology of the self permeated by power and knowledge. If, as I have argued, the radically idiomatic works under consideration here are seen as enacting a deconstruction of instrumental practice along two slopes, one guided by musical structures and the other according to the possibilities and conditions inherent in the relation between the instrument and the performer body, what are the consequences to be drawn with regards to the conditions of the performer's identity, his possible relation of self to self, when the 'inner essence' of the instrument is always already dislocated, different, deferred? In Chapter 7 I will outline some of these consequences, bringing together Foucault and Derrida, not so much as to depict a performer subjectivity represented by these works as to understand how they address the performer as a practitioner of deconstruction, as a navigator in the space of undecidability.

150 See note 139.

7 Closing Remarks / The Opening

Taking the concept of the radically idiomatic and a strategic reversal of analytic priorities as my point of departure, I have analyzed three works for guitar, two of which have been explicitly described according to a logic of deconstruction. What has been said about the undecidability of *Ton* and *Tun*, of solicitation, closure and *différance* in relation to *Reißwerck* and *Kurze Schatten II* could just as well apply to *colloid*; the absence of an explicit reference to Derrida in Chapter 3 was a didactic choice made with the aim of suspending the understanding of the radically idiomatic. Certainly, the incessant bifurcation and agonistic heterogeneous relation of practical parameters noted in *colloid* also exposed the contingent and conditional nature of musical parameters similar to that found in the other works. Indeed the differentiating bifurcation of *colloid* is spelled out in its form as a double reading: the first part was understood as a reference to a somewhat traditional writing, and the second part was where the different elements of the practice become disjointed one-by-one in what I termed a sedimentation of practice. The form of *colloid* amounts to deconstructive spacing.

The interrogation of the works was prompted by these two initial questions posed in Chapter 1:

- What is the position and structural function occupied by instrumental practice in the solo guitar works of Brian Ferneyhough, Richard Barrett and Klaus K. Hübler?

- How can this position and function be said to carry out a critique of the instrumental tradition viewed as a means of subjectivation?

The first question has been answered by the analyses. I have shown how various aspects of the instrumental practice have been used or treated as musical material in the works, and that this structural function is thoroughly entangled with the general deconstructive economy of the works. Thus the works could also be said to carry out a deconstruction of the instrumental practice; this answers the first part of the second question. Having defined instrumental practice, in Chapter 2, as an apparatus, a means of subjectivation in Foucault's sense, the second part of the second question could be affirmed quite simply: the works deconstruct the conditions of performer subjectivity. However, such an affirmation only poses ever more questions, and the rest of this dissertation will be devoted to illuminating this formulation.

7.1 The radically idiomatic and deconstruction

In Chapter 2 I suggested an analytic format for radically idiomatic works with the intention of understanding the function of instrumental practice along the lines of Foucault's notion of discursive practices. Following this notion, I have seen the work of music as founded in the practice, the sound of a given performance viewed as the result of a limitation of the vast combinatorial possibilities inherent in the practice, the single sound viewed as a node, a local configuration, in a network of more or less explicitly addressed practical parameters. The sound of the works has not been my main focus though; I have stayed just on the limit of having to make sounding performer decisions in order to highlight the particular and contingent status of the practice within the works analyzed. The works have been described as founded on and founding an instrumental practice which is solicited and disjointed in the course of the works and in the compositional technique of the composers. Such a solicitation results in a dislocation of the connections circumscribed in traditional practice according to a transcendental ideal, which ultimately entails an undecidable relation between the 'work' and the 'practice', between the figures of composer and performer, between the *Ton* and the *Tun*.

This *turn* or *opening* towards the practice has been described in terms of Derridean deconstruction rather than as an overturning or revolt. However, the radically idiomatic as such should not simply be identified as deconstructive. I have defined radically idiomatic composition as an approach to composition that incorporates various idiomatic resources as musical material on a structural level in a composition. One can certainly see the possibility of exploiting or indeed fetishizing the practice or the body without taking into account the conditional and contingent relationship with sound and aural structure. To a certain degree, such a critique was directed against Kagel in Chapter 5, and such a risk would have to be taken into account when approaching any composer who engages in this territory (even including those discussed in this dissertation). A single-minded focus on the practice would imply an avant-garde revolt against traditional practice, which would not necessarily displace the system of oppositions as such, but rather confirm it in a gesture of negation: it would retain a hierarchical ordering even if the order of the terms is turned on its head. The logic of contingent alterity shown in the analyses rather traces an intervention into the hierarchy itself and its orderliness which can only be described in terms of deconstruction. As Derrida writes of deconstruction contra overturning:

Deconstruction does not consist in passing from one concept to another, but in overturning and displacing a conceptual order ... it must, by means of a double gesture, a double science, a double writing, practice an overturning of the classical opposition *and* a general *displacement* of the system. It is only on this condition that deconstruction will provide itself the means with which to *intervene* in the field of oppositions that it criticizes. (MP: 329)

This does not necessarily mean that the avant-garde opposition cannot have a critical and strategic potential. However, Derrida is careful to stress that the recognition of a contingent alterity is what separates the deconstructive movement of the double reading from that of a critique; in fact, Derrida explicitly suggests that a critique would be the object of deconstruction:

[D]econstruction is not a critical operation; it takes critique as its object; deconstruction, at one moment or another, always aims at trust confided in the critical, critical-theoretical agency, that is, the deciding agency, the ultimate possibility of the decidable; deconstruction is a deconstruction of critical dogmatics. (Derrida 1995: 54)

If a radically idiomatic composition is not by necessity deconstructive, a deconstructive work would nonetheless have to address its own conditions in some way or other. Thus, while not fitting within my definition of the radically idiomatic, a composer like Lachenmann could certainly be described as

deconstructive.¹⁵¹ Again, the distance from the avant-garde gesture of negation should be noted even if this distance might seem rather slight. The distance is perhaps best measured by the terms destruction and construction.

The movements of deconstruction do not destroy structures from the outside. They are not possible and effective, nor can they take accurate aim, except by inhabiting those structures. Inhabiting them *in a certain way*, because one always inhabits, and all the more when one does not suspect it. Operating necessarily from the inside, borrowing all the strategic and economic resources of subversion from the old structure, borrowing them structurally, that is to say without being able to isolate their elements and atoms, the enterprise of deconstruction always in a certain way falls prey to its own work. (OG: 24)

Deconstruction operates not by negating structures but by inhabiting them in order to facilitate an intervention that exposes structural contingency, disrupts and suspends an existing order in favour of a transformation of meaning. Within the orbit of the radically idiomatic, this intervention is most obviously operationalized in relation to the apparatus of instrumental practice. The structures inhabited are those of the instrumental practice and their corporeal, aural and historical correlates.

7.2 The ordeal of the undecidable: ex-appropriating tradition

Foucault's theory of discursive practices also entails a notion of the subject. Foucault sees the subject as constituted by the practices in which the individual participates; the practice is what Foucault terms an apparatus (*dispositif*), a means of subjectivation, a 'technology of the self'. My claim is that instrumental practice is such an apparatus, such a technology of the self, according to which the musician establishes a (more or less conscious) relation to his own self. Through rigorous and methodical training, an aspiring musician becomes a mature performer, the unformed docile body is disciplined according to certain standards and ideals that connect and codify aesthetic goals with corporeal behaviour. These ideals organize the relationship between the body and the instrument, the instrument functioning as a kind of writing machine that grafts the ideals onto the body: a body of writing.

¹⁵¹ For a thoroughly deconstructive reading of Lachenmann, see Heathcote 2003, in particular pp. 164–8; see also Cavallotti 2002.

As elaborated in Chapter 2, the apparatus of instrumental practice is permeated with power/knowledge relations. These power/knowledge relations work to shape the practice and thus the conditions of the identity of the performer. To the extent that power/knowledge relations govern the most minute inflections of musical articulation they govern all areas of practice: instrumental practice is a network literally permeated by capillary power relations, it is the site of a microphysics of power. This is also the case if the ideals and means are envisaged by the performer subject, whether conceived of as an act of sovereign freedom or not – it is not possible to imagine any kind of musical sound that is not founded in a practice, a practice whose elements must necessarily be iterative and differentiating to be recognizable; any practice must necessarily entail an opening towards alterity. Thus the voluntary submissiveness to one's own ideals also imply an element of power where the inside and outside of the relation to self overlap. The practice therefore facilitates a relation of self to self, a work on one's own body, one's ideals and one's conception of self, all of which implies an externalization of the self, a conception of self as other.

However, as Foucault writes in the first volume of *The History of Sexuality*, 'where there is power, there is resistance' (HS1: 95). I would claim that the deconstruction of instrumental practice offers just such a resistance to the power invested in traditional practice. The general displacement implied by the temporary reconfigurations of the practice in the works analyzed offers a means of intervention into the field of practice and therefore into the conditions of performer identity. To the extent that instrumental practice is an apparatus, the deconstruction of the practice must necessarily also imply a deconstruction of the relations of power/knowledge inherent in the practice as well as of its function as a scaffold for performer subjectivity. Of course, the notion of resistance has been an important topic in the discourse on performance practice surrounding the composers discussed in this dissertation. It has been argued that the locus of potential criticality of the works associated with the composers discussed in this thesis resides in the sheer technical difficulty of their realization, which supposedly traverses the limits of the humanly possible and as such is a site of resistance and transcendence. In a recent article that takes Hübler's *Opus Breve* (1987) for solo cello as its point of departure, cellist Tanja Orning terms this 'the struggle idiom', a term that encapsulates the confrontation between a traditionalist conception of interpretation (*Werktreue*) and the in-built ambiguities of

works by composers like Ferneyhough, Barrett and Hübler (Orning 2015: 313–14). However, for Orning these ambiguities do not arise from aporetic and explicitly auto-immune work structures but from technical demands. Allegedly, ‘the struggle with the material is part of the aesthetic’ (313) and ‘becomes a battle between performance ethics and the work’s aesthetic’ (314). In short, the argument is that as performances of scores as difficult as those of Ferneyhough and Hübler cannot be a one-to-one realization where there is an identity between the notation and the realization according to the ideals associated with the term *Werktreue*, performers must necessarily feel bad about themselves because of their unavoidable failure. Orning argues for a reassessment of the ideals of performance that is in compliance with the challenges inherent in the works themselves and the centrality of the body. It would be futile to argue that the works of Ferneyhough, Hübler and Barrett are not ‘challenging’ or ‘difficult’ even for the most accomplished virtuoso, and there is much to sympathize with in Orning’s reformulation of performance practice. Nonetheless, it seems Orning fails to recognize the more profound ontological questions posed by the radically idiomatic works, not least in her juxtaposition of composers as fundamentally different in their approach to question of the idiomatic as Hübler and Xenakis. This is a failure to recognize the particular form with which the radically idiomatic works address tradition and the performer, the way the deconstructive radically idiomatic works inhabit tradition and feeds on tradition like a parasite. I will elaborate this question below.

Even if one cannot argue against the possibility of a subjective experience of the inherent resistance of technical challenges, a personal struggle with overwhelming difficulties can hardly suffice as a critical concept. Such an experience must necessarily be founded on the individual history of a given performer and not reside in a work of music. As Hägglund paraphrases Laclau on political resistance: ‘even the most immediate *will to be against* ... is a matter of contingent historical mobilization’ (Hägglund 2008: 188). I argue that the works analyzed in this dissertation offer a resistance of another kind altogether in that they explicitly raise the question of the relationship between practice and work structure and the related question of interpretive decisions and the performer subject as deconstructive questions emanating from an undecidable bifurcation. These questions ultimately relate to the question of closure discussed in Chapter 6. With regards to the performer, the crucial point is that they address the performer

through that which is proper to the performer: the practice. I will even claim that they address the performer in a wholly traditional manner; perhaps it would be more precise to say in a hypertraditional manner. They address the performer through the practice, through a meticulous conception of practice which any performer will know from hours of technical studies, from instructional books and rigorous self-observation. The works address this familiar terrain at the most basic level of tuning, fingerings, fingerboard layout, hand positions, various forms of finger pressure and timbral inflections and so on, that is, as a form of writing, not simply as means to achieve a musical end represented by the notation (which is suspended, displaced) but as the structural condition of the sound of the music. One should recognize the generality and retroactive potential inherent in this conception of practice as it offers the possibility of a reassessment of any subject of practice and not simply those individuals who become sucked into the maelstrom of the radically idiomatic deconstruction.

However, as the relations and hierarchies of traditional handiwork are dissolved into local and temporary configurations or nodes, the question of closure is addressed to the performer. In order to perform the pieces the performer must necessarily enact a series of violent decisions with regards to the undecidable structure of the works, decisions that often affect the most delicate aspects of sensibility such as those of touch: just how much left hand weight is needed to bring out a certain harmonic, just what angle of the nail against the string is needed in order to effect a certain timbre? What would be the criteria for these decisions? Are they founded in an idealized sound or in the mute sensibility of touch? The deconstructed practice entails this necessary violence, it is conditioned on it. In fact, with regards to the notion of practice as writing, as a differentiating and deferring arche-writing, any practice demarcates a specific field of operation and is founded on a violent act of closure. It is this very act that reveals the originary violence of *différance*. The violent closure is always already handed down through tradition, through its institutionalized hierarchy of ideals and technology: tradition might be said to be just this always already given limitation of the field of *différance*. This limitation, which corresponds to the Foucauldian rarefaction of discourse, is not only a violent incision in the vast field of practice as writing, it is also inscribed on the docile body of the performer as a relation of power, the inscription of a scar. Thus, if one were to compare the deconstructed practice with traditional practice one could say very schematically

that whereas traditional practice is directed towards covering over any traces of this scarred body with the phantasmagoria of a natural musicality, the deconstructed practice explores the scar itself. The performer of any musical work must necessarily make decisions – this is indeed the central aspect of musical interpretation – and any such decision entails a certain violence. The undecidable structure of the deconstructive radically idiomatic works thus raises the question of the decision as an explicit problematic. The works offer what Derrida calls an ‘experience of aporia’ (*FL*: 244) or ‘the ordeal of the undecidable’ (Ibid: 252–3). I quote at length a passage from *Force of Law* which elaborates question of the decision in relation the aporia of law and the just:

The undecidable is not merely the oscillation between two significations or two contradictory and very determinate rules [i.e. work/practice, or indeed any of the bifurcating dichotomies explored in the analyses] ... The undecidable is not merely the oscillation or the tension between two decisions, [it is] the experience of that which, though heterogeneous, foreign to the order of the calculable and the rule, is still obliged ... to give itself up to the impossible, while taking account of law and rules. (Ibid: 252)

What is at stake in this passage is the question of undecidability and calculation, the latter understood as a decision made on the background of a predetermined set of rules – in musical practice, the rules laid down by tradition (or indeed any other strictly formulated criteria). The question of the undecidable thus becomes a question of the freedom and sovereignty of the subject. Derrida continues:

A decision that didn’t go through the ordeal of the undecidable would not be a free decision, it would only be the programmable application or unfolding of a calculable process. It might be legal; it would not be just. But in the moment of suspense of the undecidable, it is not just either, for only a decision is just. And once the ordeal of the undecidable is past (*if that is possible*), the decision has again followed a rule or given itself a rule, invented it or reinvented, reaffirmed it, it is no longer *presently* just, fully just. There is apparently no moment in which a decision can be called presently and fully just: either it has not yet been made according to a rule, and nothing allows us to call it just, or it has already followed a rule – whether received, confirmed, conserved or reinvented – which in turn is not absolutely guaranteed by anything; and moreover, if it were guaranteed, the decision would be reduced to calculation and we couldn’t call it just. (Ibid: 252-3; italics added)

I believe this passage illuminates the challenges that face the perceptive performer of the deconstructive radically idiomatic works. Certainly, the deconstructed practice and the undecidable relation of discursive surface

and practice of the works appeals to a recognition of the suspense of the decision, to the recognition of the 'moment of suspense of the undecidable'. I would claim that this moment is maintained throughout the works in the sense that the criteria for a decision made in one given instance is not necessarily applicable in other instance even if they are similar in character. Take for instance the question of timbre and right hand position in *colloid*: even with a stable right hand position, a heterogeneous timbre is the inevitable result. This is also true of fingering in *Kurze Schatten II*: criteria for fingerings in the different movements vary, and also from moment to moment in the different movements. And because of the scordatura, fingerings condition the pitch structures. Traditional criteria for interpretation offer only a temporary solace if any: indeed as I have shown the works interminably seek to dissolve the premeditated closure of traditional practice. Certainly, undecidability is here the result of a certain *calculation* on the part of the composers; nonetheless the pervasive and deconstructive heterogeneity of the works and the radically idiomatic practice offer little assurance, and the reconfiguration of practice should be understood in the plural as multiple reconfigurations, multiple, bifurcating and differentiating connections established between the elements of the practice. In this way the ordeal of the undecidable is handed over to the performer. The undecidable is therefore never surpassed or overcome; it is impossible to establish a strict protocol or even criteriology for these works whether related to the articulation of sound or the body that would be applicable beyond local events. Steven Schick recognizes this quality when he describes his experience of Ferneyhough's percussion solo *Bone Alphabet* (1990) 'a kind of prolonged adolescence' (Schick 1994: 152) which will never be pinned down. I return to Derrida and the question of the just:

[T]he ordeal of the undecidable that ... must be gone through by any decision worthy of the name is never past or passed, it is not a surmounted or sublated (*aufgehoben*) moment in the decision. The undecidable remains caught, lodged, at least as a ghost – but an essential ghost – in every event of decision. Its ghostliness deconstructs from within any assurance of presence, any certitude or any criteriology that would assure us of the justice of a decision, in truth of the very event of a decision. (*FL*: 253)

The ordeal of the undecidable and the suspension of (traditional) criteria for configuring the elements of the practice and interpretive decisions – this is what is offered to the performer of the deconstructive radically idiomatic works. It is offered to the performer through a meticulous reconfiguration of

the practice, inhabiting the structures inherited from history, 'operating necessarily from the inside, borrowing all the strategic and economic resources of subversion from the old structure, borrowing them structurally...' (OG: 24). The ordeal of the undecidable is operationalized both in terms of work structure – in the continuous reconfiguration of the means and ends of practice and work structure and the relation to the discursive surface – and in the decisions necessarily taken in order to perform the works, decisions which, since the works are permeated by the logic of the undecidable, cannot be made on behalf of a fixed work structure which could secure the formulation of a proper performance practice. How can such decisions be grounded? What authorial voice can formulate the laws that govern these performer decisions? The composer? Tradition (whatever that may be)? Aesthetic philosophy? My own proper body? Certainly, any law grounding such decisions can only have finite applicability (as is ascertained by the work structure, literally from finger to finger), they would be what Derrida calls a 'law of finitude' (Derrida 1994: 109) for which, in the end, only the performer can be held accountable. In the face of the ordeal of the undecidable, the question of the responsibility of the performer is thus pressed to the limit: as the deconstructive logic that permeates the works opens up a field of undecidable relations (say, those of timbre in *colloid*, weight in *Reißwerck* or pitch in *Kurze Schatten II*) that cannot be determined once and for all (if they could, they would not be undecidable (see Hägglund 2008: 166)), the performer is offered responsibility for the work, for maintaining its presumed completion and eventual living-on. Responsibility for the work, a work which is ultimately unmasterable? Would this not be exactly the same position taken by Orning and criticized above? If a claim for performer responsibility with regards to the possible success of a work in performance seems somewhat of a truism, it might be timely to remind the reader that as these works are deliberately founded on the practice and therefore raise the question of their own realization as an explicit (and conscious) problematic. I would claim that this moment of suspense of the undecidable offers a more thoroughly critical resistance than that of sheer technical difficulty. If, as Lydia Goehr writes, a performance of a work of music meets the ideals of *Werktreue* most satisfactorily when it achieves complete transparency between the work and its interpretation (Goehr 2007: 232), it is difficult not to see the works as deconstructing the concept of interpretation as *Werktreue*: they offer no transparency to be rendered transparent, the undecidable structure offers no totality to be mastered and thus no performance

of these works can ever be incorrupt or inculpable. Nonetheless, in order to pass through the ordeal of the undecidable the performer must be committed to this very concept while giving up on the metaphysical categories that go with it in order to see it becoming disjointed between his fingers in its own reconfiguration. The idea of *Werktreue* is not easily dismissed even if its historical foundations are subject to scrutiny. Not only does it live on in the academy, but the question of art and truth has been the pivotal topos of aesthetics since German Romanticism – the question of truth and art is central to thinkers like Heidegger, Benjamin, Adorno, Derrida, Foucault and Badiou. The work of *Werktreue* is the *work to come*, in analogy with the sense that Derrida uses the term *democracy to come*: as the horizon of our efforts.¹⁵² Similarly, the disjointed practice, reconfigured as a deconstructive process, of the works needs to be approached with the utmost care and sensibility in order for it to expose itself as what it is. It is only this commitment, this habitation of the old structures, which can enable one to experience how the deconstructive radically idiomatic works borrow ‘all the strategic and economic resources of subversion from the old structure’. This would be the ordeal of the undecidable offered to the performer. Thus it is not only the work of music which is at stake in the application of the law of finitude: The ordeal of the undecidable addresses itself as a deconstruction of the apparatus of instrumental practice, that is of the practical and historical coordinates of performer subjectivity.

7.3 The opening (the overture of the o/u)

At this point it is possible to evaluate my second guiding question, concerning the radically idiomatic practice and the possibility of a critique of the instrumental tradition viewed as a means of subjectivation. To the extent that instrumental practice mediates a set of historically formed ideals, methods and pastoral forms of tuition that are necessarily internalized by

¹⁵² This is not the place to fully unpack this notion, the explication of which could organize a whole history of French thinking which would ultimately refer back to Stéphane Mallarmé’s aborted project to write a book of books, *le Livre*, (most comprehensively described in Scherer (1978)). The idea of the book to come was central to Blanchot (2003), whose importance for Derrida (as well as Foucault) cannot be underestimated. On the notion of democracy to come, as well as the related notions of the messianic and the promise, see for instance Derrida 1994 and 2005 (in particular pp. 78–94), as well as Hägglund (2008).

the subject through the inculcatory practice of becoming a practitioner; the practice functions to outline the coordinates of performer subjectivity. To the extent that these coordinates are pervasively disjointed and reassembled, the practice exposed in the works discloses the realization that every element of the practice, from its loftiest ideals to the basest corporeality, is contingent, and that its internal hierarchy could always be wholly otherwise – not simply in theory, but in actual material practice. And the transformative space opened up by the radically idiomatic should not simply be seen as an extension of expressive possibilities (such as one can see throughout music history in the alterations of instruments or changing conceptions of musical material), nor as a ‘change of guards’ (whether it be in terms of Boulezian objectivity against Webernesque pathos, or a historically informed practice against the ‘mainstream’), nor as an avant-garde revolt against bourgeois categories of beauty, but rather as a meticulous consideration of *all* the elements brought into play in composing and performing a work of music. But what is a ‘critique’? Following Derrida (seemingly following Benjamin), the critical is ‘an attitude which permits us to choose (*krinein*), and so to decide and to cut decisively’ (*FL*: 289). However, I have argued that rather than marking a decisive cut, as one could perhaps say of Lachenmann in the late sixties, *Reißwerck*, *colloid* and *Kurze Schatten II* all seem to suspend decision in favour of a logic of the undecidable in the suspense of *Ton* and *Tun*. The works entail a deconstruction of the apparatus in which any decision must pass through the ordeal of the undecidable which only reveals its temporary applicability and finite horizon, rather than the decisive firmness of a critique.

But what about the term ‘radically idiomatic’? Is this notion sustainable at this point? Only if by the term radical – ‘going to the root’ – one means ‘uprooting’: the meticulous and pervasive consideration of the practice exposed in *these* works reveals the contingency of its elements, the incessant movement of *différance* of the practice as writing. The radically idiomatic, as practised in these works, seems to uproot, displace and disjoint itself just as much as it does the instrumental practice and the subject. This should however come as no surprise; indeed, the autoimmunity of deconstruction is signalled already in the *Grammatology*, where Derrida writes that ‘the enterprise of deconstruction always in a certain way falls prey to its own work’ (*OG*: 24). I stress that I am only writing about *these* particular works though, and not necessarily those of say Wieland Hoban or Aaron Cassidy, to name

but two composers who have pursued work along the lines of the radically idiomatic. Whether their work follows a deconstructive trajectory or rather closes off the critical potential inherent in the works discussed here, through a reified instrumentalization of the radically idiomatic practice, or whether it ends up in a completely different position altogether must be left for later consideration.

An affirmative response to my second question would then be that the works deconstruct the apparatus of practice as a means of subjectivation through a meticulous consideration of the practice as writing. Thus the traditional coordinates of performer subjectivity and truth-telling are solicited, unfounded, disjointed in an ultimately undecidable manner. Two transformative consequences can be drawn from this deconstruction of instrumental practice, consequences that open up for further reflection of the ethico-political relations inherent in the practice.

- 1 The ex-appropriation of instrumental practice in the works offers an opening towards the other which is ethical.

The question of ex-appropriation – ‘that movement of the proper expropriating itself through the very process of appropriation’ (Derrida 2002a: 171) – cannot simply be answered simply; it addresses a whole network of questions concerning self, the signature, the proper, and not least the idiomatic as such, discussed most comprehensively by Derrida in *Signsponge* and *Politics of Friendship*. What is the ‘as such’ of the idiomatic, its proper signature or the property of its signature; or, what is the idiom of the idiom, what is its proper property? I will begin by unpacking these latter questions.

In Chapter 2 I quoted Barrett, Ferneyhough and Hübler regarding their involvement with specific instruments in idiomatic composition, Ferneyhough and Hübler stating that they sought ‘to create a sort of “X-ray” of the instruments inner essence’ and that the instrument should ‘reveal its spirit’ (Barrett however always expressing himself in more soberly materialist terms). Such essentialist claims need to be questioned on the background of the foregoing discussion of deconstruction in their work. In fact, in these claims resound Hegel’s commentary on sounding bodies in the *Aesthetics*:

[H]earing has to do with sound, with the vibration of a body; here there is no process of dissolution, like that required by smell; there is merely a trembling of the object which is left uninjured thereby. This ideal movement in which simple subjectivity, as it were *the soul of the body, is expressed by its sound*, is apprehended by the ear just as theoretically as the eye apprehends

colour or shape; and in this way *the inner side of objects is made apprehensible by the inner life [of mind]*. (Hegel 1975: 622; italics added)

The 'soul of the sounding body' and 'the inner side of the object being made apprehensible' – these formulations resonate in Ferneyhough and Hübler's motivations (even if the philosopher's complex dialectic of body and soul seemingly does not). Nonetheless, my analysis of their works seems to counter these metaphysical intentions; I have found nothing but determined efforts to evade identity and purity through a solicitation of the practice. The immediacy of presence which Hegel claims flows unmediated from the soul of the object to the inner life of the mind, like the unmediated presence of the object fully revealed by the blazing sun, finds no support in the analyses of the works, which rather reveals a process of deconstruction at every possibly juncture. Indeed, the analysis of *colloid* exposed the practice as a sheaf of mute elements that only begin to make sensible sound (that can only begin to produce meaning) when brought together. The 'guitar' is revealed as a material configuration of bits of wood, plastic and metal brought together according to a historical model, the practice exposed as disciplined to approach the instrument according to certain idealized standards. There is nothing which is the sole property of this instrument and which could not be otherwise, nothing which belongs to it and it alone. The instrument is a specific configuration of certain elements which are always open to re-configuration(s): the presumed identity and presence of which the composers speak is necessarily corruptible and contingent; it is an identity with a finite reach that is historically and culturally determined. The sound, the reverberations in the air set in motion by the resonating body of the instrument, is thus nothing but the sound of a cultural and historical configuration of certain actions on specific materials interminably dislocated, deferred, deconstructed.

What remains of the term idiomatic? What is the signature of the instrument – to what does the signature 'guitar' refer? The radically idiomatic approach has laid bare the fact that nothing is the sole property of this instrument and its practice except the essentially corruptible configuration of elements. What is found at the root of the idiomatic, as that which belongs properly to the instrument, is a heap of differentiated and differentiating objects and limbs, mute elements with no inherent value or property, expropriated and solicited – a body and practice of writing, waiting to be

written, a becoming-subject, a body without organs.¹⁵³ As the expropriation of the practice and the body is spelled out within the works themselves as a reconfiguration and negotiation of the practice, the deconstructed work structure cannot be said to appropriate the practice but rather to ex-appropriate it: ‘that movement of the proper expropriating itself through the very process of appropriation’ (Derrida 2002a: 171). Now, to the extent that this ex-appropriation of the practice belongs to the work, one could just as well say that the practice ex-appropriates the properties of the work: they come together simultaneously and dissimilarly. The ex-appropriated signature of the instrument, the signpost at the margin of the work, also marks a non-belonging of the work and practice from both the composer and to the performer. The radically idiomatic thus outlines a space of undecidable ex-appropriation in which both composer and performer take part, a field where the mutual interdependency of the subject and the other is ex-posed. Neither composer nor performer exists outside the context of the work or practice, and none of these four elements – work, practice, performer and composer – belong properly and solely to either one of the other element only but exist in a contingent relation which is ultimately undecidable. In Derrida, the structure of an ex-appropriation is always associated with questions concerning the signature, language and idiom as signs that mark the margins of the subject (cf. Derrida 2002a, Derrida 2002b (*FL*), Derrida 1998). The question of ex-appropriation of/and the idiomatic is therefore an ethico-political question concerning alterity, the relation of the inside and outside, ultimately the relation to the other.¹⁵⁴ This relation is necessarily caught in a double bind of mutual interdependency, where the one necessarily feeds on the other like a parasite.

Evoking Derrida’s reflections on hospitality is instructive at this point. In Derrida, hospitality is always an elaboration of the French word *hôte*, whose double meaning as both host *and* guest. The *hôte* can be both a person who gives hospitality (*‘personne qui donner l’hospitalité’*) and a person to which

153 Artaud’s idea of a body without organs, though popularized by Deleuze in the *Logic of Sense* and in particular *Anti-Oedipus* and *A Thousand Plateaus*, was crucial to Derrida’s early work through the two essays on Artaud published in *Writing and Difference*, *La Parole Soufflée* (DW: 212-245) and *The Theatre of Cruelty and the Closure of Representation* (DW: 292-316). For a comprehensive discussion of Artaud and Derrida, see Irwin 2010.

154 ‘other’ with lower-case ‘o’, since what is at stake here is not the historically determined relation between Anders and, say, Brian or Klaus or Richard; one must recognize the reference to the Lacanian *objet petit a* in Derrida.

one gives hospitality (*'personne à qui on donne l'hospitalité'*), and thus functions as an undecidable in Derrida's thinking (like pharmakon, hymen and other terms revealed to be polysemic): the *hôte* both invites the other and is invited by the other, any strict demarcation of the two being blurred, their closure permeated. This is the case in the following passage from *Adieu to Emmanuel Levinas*, where Derrida writes about an

ex-appropriation that makes of the subject a guest [*hôte*] [or host (A. F.)] and an hostage, someone who is, *before* every invitation, elected, invited, and visited in his home as in the home of the other, who is *in his own home in the home of the other*, in a given *at home*, an at home that is given or, rather, loaned, allotted, advanced before every contract (Derrida 1997: 99).

The visitor who is in his own home in the home of the other – is this not the deconstructed performer? The performer who recognizes himself not as a sovereign and free subject but as contingent with the work and practice at hand into which he has been invited, the phrase 'the work at hand' denoting both the musical work as well as the practical work, the labour done on and with this work, the practice? The figure of the performer could thus be seen as a visitor to the work as well as to the practice and the instrument, neither of which does not, cannot, belong to him entirely but are always already given, pre-existing, not only historically but necessarily, structurally. Touching the instrument, the performer touches not simply a collection of dead matter but also shakes hands with a host of former performers, ghosts who haunt the instrument and necessarily resound at even the most delicate stroke of the strings. The ex-appropriated body of writing is always haunted by ghosts, the ontology of the performer being what Derrida calls an *hauntology* (See Derrida 1994).¹⁵⁵ But must not this also be the case with the figure of the composer? The composer, whose musical writing must, as I have shown, always presuppose and to a certain extent be predetermined by a musical practice to whose invitation it succumbs? Derrida:

it's *as if* the master, *qua* master, were prisoner of his place and his power, of his ipseity, of his subjectivity (his subjectivity is hostage). So it is indeed the master, the one who invites, the inviting host, who becomes the hostage – and who really always has been. And the guest, the invited hostage, becomes the one who invites the one who invites, the master of the host. The guest becomes the host's host. The guest (*hôte*) becomes the host (*hôte*) of the host (*hôte*). (Derrida 2002c: 123–5)

¹⁵⁵ One should note the homonymous relation in French between *hauntologie* and *ontologie*, which gives the term ontology itself a spectral relation to hauntology.

An aporetic and undecidable situation, certainly, which cannot be resolved with recourse to a given code or hierarchy. Such would be the preliminary outline of a deconstruction of the ethics of interpretation or idiomatic composition. There is no idiom proper, no purely present signatory, the signing subject is always haunted by the idiom of the other: "I have only one language; it is not my own." (Derrida 1998: 1). Or as Derrida writes in *The Force of Law*: 'it is always the other who signs first. In other words, last.' (FL: 292). Following from this one could suggest a reformulation of the conception of notation as an invitation, and no doubt Barrett is approaching such a conception when he talks of notation as 'a proposal of a way of making music' (Barrett and Deforce 2001).

The question of ex-appropriation as hospitality of the self leads to the second consequence, which is related to the politics of the decision. As I suggested in Chapter 4, the beheading of the 'o' of *Ton* opened up not only a deconstruction of the practice and the work but also of the power inherent in the composer-performer relationship as well as that within the tradition itself. Indeed, the beheading of the 'o' was seen as a form of parricide, as the execution of an absolute referent which can now be seen in the light of the previous discussion of hosting and the invitation. It is perhaps not surprising that Derrida's most extended reflection on hospitality is elaborated as a reading of *Oedipus Rex* – and it is to the scene of execution that I will return below.

- 2 The deconstruction of the practice exposes the relations of power/knowledge that permeate the practice and offer multiple points of resistance to power.

Since the reconfiguration of the practice as writing in the work is temporary and limited in scope the individual configurations or nodes draw attention to themselves and their singularity and alterity. Thus the solicitation and contingency of the parametric relationships are exposed to the performer differentiating themselves in the most minute fashion as a moment of suspense: not only is the parametric hierarchy suspended in relation to a (traditionally) transcendental ideal, but also within the structure of the practice and the musical work itself. Significantly, Derrida relates this moment of deconstructive suspense, 'without which there is, in fact, no possible deconstruction', to the Husserlian 'period of *epokhe*' (FL: 248), the Husserlian method of phenomenological bracketing whereby the object (idea, feeling, or perception) of inquiry is disconnected from the natural world and

thereby opens up for an experience of how the object presents itself to consciousness whereby it is revealed to the subject as a belief-construct (Cogan 2016). This resonates well with the notion of the deconstructive instrumental practice: the moment of deconstructive suspense draws attention to the contingency of the practice and thus opens up the possibility of a reassessment of its elements and their efficacious teleology. Thus the power/knowledge relations that permeate the practice are suspended and revealed as such, as a microphysics of capillary power and a means of subjectivation on which the performer-subject can act responsibly and without abandoning 'itself to dogmatic slumber and therefore to deny itself' (*FL*: 248–9). The radicality of this formulation needs to be recognized; what Derrida is claiming is that any recourse to a premeditation, to calculation, or traditional doxa is the denial of the subject. Certainly, Derrida is here very close to Foucault's formulation of coercive power in the *Discipline and Punish*. However, one should not read this passage as a celebration of revolt as a confirmation of self; as outlined above, such a gesture would only solidify the metaphysics of presence which the deconstructed practice seeks to evade. The task or challenge posed to the performer at every juncture is to maintain the suspense of the undecidable (as in Schick's 'prolonged adolescence' quoted above), even across the violence of the necessary decision. One must not believe in finalizing the double bind of the undecidable, one must keep the scars of inscription open as spacing. I will only hesitantly evoke the notions of freedom and emancipation at this point. There is no doubt that for Foucault and Derrida, even if the question of freedom and emancipation is at the heart of their thinking, these notions can never be realized in full, can never be anything else than the horizon of political thinking: Both thinkers see the subject as inescapably submerged in socially and historically mediated practices and discourses, and both offer persuasive critiques of the Enlightenment subject. Nonetheless, the experience of deconstructive aporia, the ordeal of the undecidable, the 'anguishing moment of suspense ... opens the interval of spacing in which transformations ... take place.' (*FL*: 249) The moment of suspense is a moment of possible transformation, of self-assertion and of power and politics. Self-assertion as ex-appropriation of the self no doubt; the return of the self as other.

Now, it is precisely in the re-turning of the practice as writing that one finds the means to situate the deconstructive resistance to power. In Foucault, there is no point of contact with power which cannot be turned into a point

of resistance, 'they are inscribed in [power] as an irreducible opposite.' (*HS1*: 96) Certainly, the solicited practice offers multiple points of resistance for the performer subject. As Foucault writes, '[j]ust as the network of power relations ends by forming a dense web that passes through apparatuses and institutions, without being exactly localized in them, so too the swarm of points of resistance traverses social stratifications and individual unities.' (*ibid*) Thus each point of contact between the elements of the heterogeneous instrumental practice as writing (which would include both the deciphering of notation and the geography of the instrument, as well as the performer body) offers multiple points of resistance where the hierarchy, intensity and quality of the elements of which it is formed can be reassessed. The moment of suspense is therefore a moment of possible transformation both of the practice and the relation of self to self. The solicited apparatus of instrumental practice as a means of subjectivation invites the performer to reflect critically, genealogically, deconstructively on the means at hand and their relation to the conception of self, its ex-appropriation suspending any given hierarchization.

This transformation is conditioned on interpretive strategies. In Derrida, the moment of suspense – which in the case of the works considered here expose an undecidable relation within the work structure between the work as sound and the practice as a condition of the discursive surface – is also the moment of a necessarily violent decision. As outlined above, the moment of suspense offers in Derrida the distinction of responsible and calculated action, the latter being the application of a preformed set of conceptions and the former having passed through the ordeal of the undecidable: 'I believe there is no responsibility, no ethico-political decision, that must not pass through the proofs of the incalculable or the undecidable. Otherwise everything would be reducible to calculation, program, causality' (Derrida 1991: 108). One is reminded of the words of Gustav Mahler: '*Tradition ist Schlamperei!*' – an overt (or indeed covert: 'one always inhabits, and all the more when one does not suspect it') reliance on a traditional inheritance would indeed mark the death of the subject.¹⁵⁶

Certainly the moment of suspense, as the moment of the beheading of the *Ton* and the authorial internalization of tradition, suggests an empowerment of the performer. Empowerment not to escape tradition or the points of contact with power (which is impossible), but to displace and relocate the

¹⁵⁶ See de La Grange 1999: 4–5 on the origins of this famous quotation.

given coordinates of performer subjectivity. Again, this would be a matter of hospitality; the 'scene of parricide is regularly to be found wherever there is a question of foreignness and hospitality, as soon as the host, the one receiving, also commands' (Derrida 2002c: 39–41).

One should recognize the extent to which the resistance to power and the transformative potential inherent in the moment of suspense are generalizable. They are not limited to the repertoire discussed herein, but could possibly affect any interpretive decision. What is decisive in the context of this dissertation however is their explicit problematization in the works in question. Thus I have answered the second of my two guiding questions. The works stage their own execution as a deconstruction of the performer subject: I will refrain from determining who hosts or is held hostage on this stage, this scaffold, where the works and its acolytes are executed.

One should however note the extent to which the violence of the responsible decision does not finalize the question of the undecidable or the undecidable relation, that is, of the movement of *différance*. This means that the field of politics, the scar, remains open despite the decisions being taken. The works themselves do keep this field of politics open in their structure; above I mentioned timbre, weight and pitch, but one could give several other examples of undecidable relations offered to the performer where the relation to the other as the work, practice, composer or even the ex-appropriated self (and why not, by extension: the listener, the analyst) remains open. Thus the politicization of the practice is maintained in the works despite any given decisions; the performer should recognize the partiality and temporality of local decisions whose outcome could always be otherwise. 'There is politicization or ethicization because undecidability is not simply a moment to be overcome by the occurrence of the decision. Undecidability continues to inhabit the decision and the latter does not close itself off from the former. The relation to the other does not close itself off ...' (Derrida 1996: 87).

7.4 A lesson of writing

It seems the argument has run its course. I have shown how the works analyzed operationalize the movement of *différance* in the way in which the compositional practice is stratified through the definition of parametric elements. The parametric stratification, which also extends to the practice,

effects an explicit and extended process of reconfiguration of the practice alongside that of the work, a reconfiguration that is provisional and always local and therefore permeated: open. The single sound becomes a mobile node in a network of parametric lines, the practice effectively decentred, its elements dislocated and contingent. The notation addresses the performer at the most basic level of the practice in a manner wholly internal to the didactic tradition of western art music. The parametric analysis of the practice is a field of convergence between the works and traditional teaching, the two overlap at a conception of practice as writing: a writing of the work and the body, an ex-appropriation of self, work and practice. To the extent that instrumental practice is an apparatus, the deconstruction of the practice must necessarily also imply a deconstruction of the relations power/knowledge inherent in the practice as well as of its function as a scaffold for performer subjectivity. Perhaps one could say that the more developed ones sense of touch is the better one is equipped to scrutinize one's tradition. This should not be understood as a reactionary stance: it exposes the autoimmune corruptibility of tradition. The better one has grasped the autoaffection of practice the better one can give in to its immanent hetero-affection.

The questions posed by the deconstructive radically idiomatic works are not limited to these works – indeed they extend into all areas of human experience, into the very heart of our existence. The Derridean questions regarding identity, responsibility and the other, as well as the Foucauldian questions of power, knowledge and discursivity are not the sole property of musicology or musical aesthetics. However, I have shown that musical works can be a powerful tool for thinking through these questions.

The works thus expose the necessity of posing transcendental questions for the performer in order not to be entrapped by the relations of power/knowledge mediated by tradition, and to pose questions regarding the necessarily heterogeneous contingency of the practice, the body, the self and the relation to the other. Such a questioning would entail a necessary messianism which, in remaining open to the fictitiousness of the truth of the work and the self but nevertheless committed to thinking through (also in the sense of thinking by means of) the elements of the practice and their possible interconnections as a form of technique of musical abilities as well as a technique of the self, can enable the traversal of the relations of power and knowledge even if these are ultimately impossible to escape. According to Derrida:

it is endlessly important to renew transcendental questioning. But such questioning must be renewed in taking into account of the possibility of fiction, of accidentality and contingency, thereby ensuring that this new form of transcendental questioning only mimics the phantom of classical transcendental seriousness without renouncing that which, within this phantom, constitutes an essential heritage. (Derrida 1996: 81)

This certainly goes for musicologists as much as for other music practitioners, and it seems apt to make an appeal for a musicology that does not see the work either as a performative act or as abstract structure, but rather locates it between these positions, that considers the double bind within the horizon of the undecidable or even as an undecidable relation – and that can consider this relation as an opening to an ethics or politics of practices not set on fixed identities.

Perhaps (as a final word, and a last word on the idiomatic) it is no accident that the deconstruction of power relations and ex-appropriation of the self is executed in such a powerful way on the guitar. The instrument offers itself, indeed invites, to a conception of practice as writing, both because of the combinatoriality of its heterogeneous ensemble of elements as well as in their special notational correlates aimed at a calculation of practice (roman numerals, arabic numerals, circled numerals, letters, not to forget the orientation towards its topology in the use of tablature). This writing, this matrix of practice, can, as I have shown in numerous examples, produce striking substitutions and metonymical slippages which serves to suspend any clear-cut internal hierarchy; rather they seem fashioned in accordance with Derrida's condition for writing: 'The condition for writing is that there is neither a permanent contact nor an absolute break between strata' (*WD*: 285). Practicing the guitar hosts a stage of interminable process of ex-appropriation and transformation. Derrida's words on Freud's 'mystical writing pad' seems to be written just as much with the guitar in mind: 'At least two hands are needed to make the apparatus function, as well as a system of gestures, a coordination of independent initiatives, an organized multiplicity of origins.' (*WD*: 284). As I have shown, the explicit addressing of elements of the guitar practice only reveals the alterity of musical structures along the alterity inherent in the practice itself, the practice as writing, which infects the musical structures. This much was already acknowledged by Robert De Visée, guitarist to Louis XIV, when he suggested the deconstructive auto-immunity inherent in all idiomatic composition in the preface to his *Livre de guitarre dedié Au Roy*: 'And I pray those who are familiar with composition

and do not know the guitar not be scandalized if they find that I sometimes deviate from rules – it is the instrument that wants to...’ (de Visée 1682, my translation).¹⁵⁷ Indeed, the guitar has always been conceived as a *chitarra spostata*, a dislocated instrument, an instrument of dislocation.¹⁵⁸ The guitar is a contingent writing machine, a prosthesis for a subject beside itself, a *chitarrista spostata*, which invites a meticulous and deconstructive investigation into questions concerning sight and sound, work and performance, self and other, binary categories that ultimately cannot be retained beyond the ordeal of the undecidable spacing which this instrument opens in an exemplary fashion. The guitar conceived as a violent space of politics and ethics, of dislocated subjectivities and finite relations. The guitarist, the exemplary written subject, is a ‘system of relations between strata’ (DW: 285) that inscribe themselves on the body, thus ‘inscribing the possibility of the reference to the other, and thus of radical alterity and heterogeneity, of *différance*, of technicity’ (Derrida 1994: 94) in a self which returns to itself ex-appropriated and dislocated. Such is the lesson of the radically idiomatic instrumental practice, ultimately a lesson of writing of the self as other.

157 ‘Et ie prie ceux qui scaurons bien la composition, et qui ne connoistreront pas la guitarre, de n’estre point scandalirer, s’ils trouvent que ie m’escarte quelque fois des regles, c’est l’Instrument qui le veut ...’

158 The phrase *chitarra spostata* is taken from Antonio Carbonchi’s 1643 collection of works *Le dodici chitarre spostate* (Carbonchi 1643).

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Instrumental practice plays a central role in our notions of musical subjectivity and self-expression. For a musician, instrumental practice provides a means to self-reflection and a framework for our conceptions of self; it is what Foucault called an apparatus, a 'technique of the self'.

But what happens if a composer targets the elements of practice as part of the compositional process, redrawing the outline of musical subjectivity in new and unexpected ways?

Analysing the role of instrumental practice in works for solo guitar by Richard Barrett, Brian Ferneyhough and Klaus K. Hübler, this dissertation argues that these works address instrumental practice not simply as a means of musical realization and expressivity but that they elevate instrumental practice to the level of musical material. This results in a thorough reconfiguration of instrumental practice that in turn provides the performer with an opportunity to rethink questions of musical structure, self and power as a set of contingent relationships.