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C. P. E. Bach, Haydn, and the art of mixed feelings

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Abstract – Postscript (2012) – References

Wir haben aus jenen weinerlichen Zeiten, wo jedes Herz eine Herzwassersucht haben sollte, ganze nasse Bände, wonin wie vor schlechtem Wetter Phöbus in einem fort Wasser zieht, uns aber damit nur desto mehr austrocknet. Woran nun liegts? Daran, daß der Schriftsteller sein Mitleiden und nicht das fremde Leiden darstellt und durch jenes dieses malen wollte, anstatt umgekehrt.1

1. Tearful times

‘Empfindsamkeit’ is one of the terms applied to that annoying gap in schoolbook periodization, the decades between baroque and classical. It is not a label stuck on the phenomenon by some willful act of historiography; more fashion than period, the Empfindsamkeit was selfconscious and created its own label, a newly coined derivative. This precludes such confusions as we have with the scope of ‘classical’, ‘romantic’ and ‘galant’. Even after the phenomenon had passed, the name predominantly kept period connotations; unlike the near-contemporary ‘sentimental’, which has passed into everyday use, with a mostly pejorative sense. Thus, the use of ‘Empfindsamkeit’ (signifying a moral-emotional attitude) as a period characterization is contemporary; at the latest in 1778 those times were spoken of as “das [jetzige] Zeitalter der Empfindsamkeit”.2 The often quoted first known instance of the adjective ‘empfindsam’ occurs in a context which neatly describes its defining characteristics:


‘Empfindsamkeit’ is thus: a quality ‘of the heart’; especially, a high susceptibility for pity or compassion; and though it makes one suffer, there is ‘true pleasure’ in this. The stress on pity is common in this period. Once the empfindsam taste is past, and

1 Jean Paul Richter: Vorschule der Ästhetik, Kleine Nachschule zur ästhetischen Vorschule, XI. Programm, § 15. URL = http://gutenberg.spiegel.de/?id=5&xid=1335&kapitel=1.#gb_found
2 Sauder (1974) p. 229
such eagerness for shared suffering has become suspect, Johann Heinrich Campe
shifts the scope by defining ‘empfindsam’ as “Fähig und geneigt zu sanften
angenehmen Empfindungen, Fertigkeit besitzend, an theilnehmenden
Gemüthsbewegungen Vergnügen zu empfinden”.4

Similar sentiments were associated in France with ‘sensibilité’. Louis de Jaucourt
defines the concept in the Encyclopédie as “disposition tendre & délicate de l'ame, qui
la rend facile à être émue, à être touchée,” and applauds it as the fount of virtue:

La sensibilité d’ame, dit très-bien l’auteur des moeurs, donne une sorte de sagacité sur les
chooses honnêtes, & va plus loin que la pénétration de l'esprit seul. [...] Les ames sensibles ont
plus d'existence que les autres: les biens & les maux se multiplient à leur égard. La réflexion
peut faire l'homme de probité; mais la sensibilité fait l'homme vertueux. La sensibilité est la
mere de l'humanité, de la générosité; elle sert le mérite, secourt l'esprit, & entraîne la
persuasion à sa suite. 5

And under Pleurs (Métaphys.) we are reminded that tears do not dishonor a man:
great legendary and historical heros have shed tears, and “la sensibilité dont elles
procident est une vertu.” Going beyond self-centered sensitivity, sensibilité-
Empfindsamkeit was thus linked with an openness to intimacy often described as
tenderness. While this seems to have been inherent in empfindsam, an entry by
D'Alembert on tendresse in one of the appendices to the Encyclopédie shows a shift
in the conception of sensibilité, barring out the compassionate aspect.6

Though the newly coined ‘empfindsam’ (and to a lesser extent ‘sentimental’) were
relatively unambiguous terms, ‘Empfindung’ and the verb ‘empfinden’ are variable in
their applications, relating to the equally ambiguous words ‘sensation’, ‘sentiment’,
impression and ‘feeling’, thus ranging over the physiological as well as psychological.
Symptomatic of the fusion or confusion of these areas is the idea of a ‘moral sense’
which makes us behave according to principles of morality – a view that in fact
models the mind on the image of the body. The cult of sensibility as virtue was
supported by the ideas of what is known as ‘British moral sense philosophy’, launched
in the early 18th Century by Lord Shaftesbury, modified by Francis Hutcheson and
David Hume, and strongly influential on German thinkers. The most stable element
in this complex of ideas is the supposition that the human capacity for goodness is
seated in something like intuition, and implies a common (uniform) and basically
good nature of man; this intuition is either a ‘moral sense’, or a faculty of
benevolence’ or ‘sympathy’. Because of man’s place in the order of things, virtue and
self-interest coincide: to be virtuous implies to be happy. For Shaftesbury, a neo-
Platonist, this order of things was cosmic harmony; Hutcheson and Hume replaced
the cosmic by a social perspective.7

4 Wörterbuch der deutschen Sprache, 1807, quoted after Sauder (1974) p. 6
5 Text publ. by Projet ARTFL, URL = http://portail.atilf.fr/encyclopedie/. For very similar statements by German
authors, see Sauder (1990) p. 41, 43.
6 Baasner (1988) p. 320
Zalta (ed.), URL = <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2006/entries/shaftesbury/>; Alexander Broadie,
In retrospect the weakness of such an optimistic line of reasoning may appear obvious. The doctrine, in its several forms, rested upon a psychology, or an attempt to rationalize the irrational, for which only two ways were open – by pure reason, attempting to construct an image on the basis of words, definitions, and logic; and by informal observation, primarily introspective - which is a maze of blind allies and mirror galleries. On the other hand, one cannot deny that intuitive sympathy, or empathy, is not only a necessity for ‘the good life’ but for any kind of social life, while ‘altruism’ is a key concept in modern ethology. ‘Inner senses’ may be a literalized metaphor, but exactly by their being modelled on the physical senses it is potentially open toward empirical approaches. The weakness is of these concepts is their lack of psychological, anthropological, and sociological context. Without an account of what is universal human nature, an appeal to intuitions may easily slip into the subjective, and the happy fusion of moral virtue and pleasure can hardly stand the reproach of hedonism – as this was largely a philosophy of fireside and dinner-table, rather than stable and shed.

In aesthetics, ‘moral sense’ has its counterpart in ‘taste’ or Geschmack. Though in the theory of musical performance and composition it often had the meaning of ‘style’ or ‘manner’, in aesthetic theory Geschmack was not the norm of an individual or group, but a universal sense of beauty. The processes which relate our inner worlds with the outer world by sensation, perception, and cognition were necessarily obscure – but this obscurity was often glossed over. Significantly, when Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten in his Aesthetica (1750) introduces the term ‘aesthetics’ (using the Greek equivalent of ‘Empfindung’, ‘aisthesis’), he grandly disposes of any finer discriminations of general psychology. The definition of his first paragraph lumps together: “theory of the liberal arts, discipline of lower cognition, the art of thinking beautifully, art of intuitive thought”. Even by its omissions, aesthetics, as an attempt to rationalize our responses to the arts, contributed to a widening of awareness of the non-rational aspects of mental activity. On the positive side Baumgarten, in spite of his rationalist bias, contributed to a more psychologically oriented view of the appreciation of the arts, by shifting attention from a perceived ‘perfection’ in the object to a ‘perfection’ in the process of ‘sensible cognition’ (cognitio sensitiva), defined as “the complex of representations which are beneath the threshold of distinctness”. Thus logical cognition, which is distinct (deutlich), discrete, is distinguished from aesthetic cognition, which is clear (klar) and confused (verworren), according to the terminology then current – roughly corresponding, in modern and non-technical terms, to ‘conscious’ versus ‘subconscious’ or ‘intuitive’.

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8 'Intuitive thought': analogon rationis, rendered by Schweizer as 'Der Vernunft analoges Denken'. Baumgarten (1750) p. 2, 3.
This emphasis on the process of aesthetic appreciation changed views of our pleasure in the perception of the non-beautiful and the painful in works of art. Holding on to a division of sensations as being basically pleasant or unpleasant, Moses Mendelssohn put our paradoxical delight in tragedy in the category of ‘vermischte Empfindungen’. Pity was the exemplary ‘mixed emotion’, in which “bittere Tropfen” were added to “die honigsüße Schale des Vergnügens”. In words similar to those quoted above, he exclaims in the Briefe über die Empfindungen (1755):

Welche Wollust muß sich also aus der Quelle des Mitleidens über uns ergießen! Und wie bedaurenswürdig sind diejenigen, deren Herz für dieses himmlische Gefühl verschlossen ist? 10

In his Rhapsodie (1761) Mendelssohn brought more sophistication to the concept by distinguishing the object of pity (in the world) from the object of pleasure (in the mind). Thus, the pleasure involved is a feeling about a feeling. Translating the basic idea into modern terminology, such conflicting emotions do not exist in the same ‘frame’; because they are hierarchically differentiated, they are not really in conflict. 11 Displeasure is directed at the suffering imagined, pleasure at the imagining. An interesting corollary, stated by Mendelssohn, is that the mind will actively seek to please itself by providing stimulation to the imagination. His concept of aesthetics emphatically involves both the mentally-intuitive and the physical:


Der gütige Schöpfer hat nicht umsonst mit diesem dunklen Gefühl einen Reitz verbunden, nicht umsonst in jede Schönheit die Fähigkeit gelegt, dieses Gefühl zu beleben. Die Vernunft allein kann kein Wesen beglücken, das nicht lauter Vernunft ist. Wir sollen fühlen, genießen, und glücklich seyn. 12

To feel compassion is generally considered a virtue. Few people nowadays would say they have pleasure in feeling compassion; fewer still that they seek it out (though the reality may be that many do). Stress on the pleasure of pity outside the context of fiction aestheticizes morality – it makes one an observer rather than a participant, and to the extent that one participates, one becomes an observer to one’s own soul.

### 1.1 Beauties of Sterne

The gist of the teachings of the moral sense philosophers seeped into the ordinary Sunday sermon. One British parson who mollified his congregations by an appeal to benevolence or the “friendly softness” that “God interwove [...] in our nature”, contributed through a novel greatly to the dissemination of the word ‘empfindsam’ in

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10 Mendelssohn (1974) p. 90
11 The concept of ‘framing’ used here and below is derived from Erving Goffman’s Frame Analysis (1974).
12 Briefe, Mendelssohn (1974) p. 34, 35
Germany. Yoricks empfindsame Reise was the German version (1769) of Laurence Sterne’s Sentimental Journey through Italy and France, by Mr. Yorick (1768). This, his second and last novel, was designed “to teach us to love the world and our fellow creatures better than we do - so it runs most upon those gentler passions and affections, which aid so much to it.” Sentimental pity may appear to the modern reader the more dubious component in a strange, ironical mixture of sentimentality and eroticism. Some contemporary readers took offence; many apparently chose to separate the innuendo from the pathetic and touching, downplaying the first or ignoring it. Many read selectively – choosing the ‘best bits’ supplied by magazines or a compilation like Beauties of Sterne.

Sentimentality is not a practicable attitude in real life. As overt emotionality, it can only be cultivated with a certain amount of art. Sterne’s sentimental posturing is intensely self-observant, which makes it impossible just to have a feeling – it is always an object of contemplation. Such distancing is necessarily ironic, though the irony never denies its direct object. Part of this self-observation is (in line with Mendelssohn’s remark) a constant protocol of the physical sensations concomitant with emotion. Having finished his first dinner on French shores, the sentimental traveler Yorick feels a surge of generosity, physically manifesting itself as a “suffusion” upon his cheek “more warm and friendly to man, than what Burgundy […] could have produced.”

When man is at peace with man, how much lighter than a feather is the heaviest of metals in his hand! he pulls out his purse, and holding it airily and uncompress’d, looks round him, as if he sought for an object to share it with—In doing this, I felt every vessel in my frame dilate—the arteries beat all cheerily together, and every power which sustained life, perform’d it with so little friction, that ’twould have confounded the most physical precieuse in France: with all her materialism, she could scarce have called me a machine—

I’m confident, said I to myself, I should have overset her creed.

The attack of generosity is suddenly abated by the sight of a mendicant monk, before amorous feelings toward an unknown lady traveler cause a new release of goodwill, appeasing the narrator’s anti-papist sentiments. To modern readers, the figure of Yorick, whose ‘benevolence’ is class-bound, whimsical, and largely dependent on erotic stimulation, is likely to appear a symptom of moral-social paradox and rupture, caused by the irrealism of sentimentalist ethics; a paradox which is largely conscious, and can only be sustained by irony. Self-conscious sensitivity implies an ‘other self’ which is not subject to this sensitivity. In sorrow and pain, this is a way to cope. Sterne, a sufferer from consumption since his student days, was ‘called upon’ by death several times (depicted in the famous caricature by Thomas Patch). It would

13 Sermon: The case of Elijah… Cash (1986a) p. 215 and Sterne (1790) p. 276; Letter to Mrs. James, Cash (1986b) p. 316
14 The free German translation by J. J. C. Bode emphasized the ‘Rührseligkeit’ of the original. On this and Sterne’s influence in Germany, see Michelsen (1962) p. 68 and passim.
15 Sterne (1768) p. 28; see also Mullan (1988) p. 16, 190-191.
16 On fiction of the later Empfindsamkeit as implicit criticism of philosophy, see Mullan (1988) and Hansen (1990).
seem that for this author, ironic sentimentality was the alternative to living his life as a tragedy. His more sympathetic and intelligent readers may have constructed a context which took into account both the work and the author’s life and character, continuing the play with fictional identity that Sterne had put in motion when he identified with his characters. Goethe’s verdict on Sterne as a moralist author comes close to beatification: “Yorik-Sterne war der schönste Geist, der je gewirkt hat; wer ihn liest, fühlt sich sogleich frei und schön; sein Humor ist unachahmlich, und nicht jeder Humor befreit die Seele.” Through his instigation, the Empfindsamkeit has become “die große Epoche reinerer Menschenkenntnis, edler Duldung, zarter Liebe.”

1.2 The empfindsam manner

Haydn’s ‘wit’ and ‘humor’ have been compared to that of Sterne both by contemporaries and in recent times. Apart from being entertained by his wit, one correspondent at least was morally uplifted by Haydn’s music in a similar manner as by works of Sterne – presumably sermons:

Ich kann Ihnen nicht genug sagen, welch eine reine Behaglichkeit und welch ein Wohlseyn aus Haydn’s Werken zu mir übergeht. Es ist mir ungefähr so dabey zu Muthe, als wenn ich in Yoricks Schriften lese, wonach ich allemal einen besonderen Willen habe etwas Gutes zu tun.

Less complacent, Jean Paul, an ardent admirer of Sterne, mentions Haydn directly after Sterne as an example of “vernichtender Humor”: a humour which defeats pomposity or the sublime (das Erhabene) through the caprice, “welche ganze Tonreihen durch eine fremde vernichtet und zwischen Pianissimo und Fortissimo, Presto und Andante wechselnd stürmt”. Though ‘wit’ is always considered an element of the style of Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach, it seems a comparison with the works of Sterne has not been made, while on the other hand his influence on Haydn has often been accepted. As to the familiarity of these composers with works of Sterne, we can only confirm that Sterne’s translator J. J. C. Bode was a Hamburg acquaintance of Bach, and that Haydn was in possession of a 1798 Viennese edition of the Sentimental Journey in English.

Introducing the reader to Haydn’s house on the occasion of a visit in 1806, showing his library, his instruments, and comparing his parrot to Yorick’s starling, biographer Albert Christoph Dies excuses himself for reminding of the Age of Sensibility:

18 See Bonds (1991), Irving (1985). On Haydn’s wit and humor in general, the most comprehensive study is Wheelock (1992).
19 AMZ 3 nr. 8 (19 November 1800), p. 130, quoted after Bonds (1991) p. 61
20 Jean Paul Richter: Vorschule der Ästhetik, § 33 (see note 1).
21 Hörwarthner (1997) p. 419. Also represented in Haydn’s library were Adam Smith (A theory of the moral sentiments, ed. 1793), Shaftesbury (Characteristics of men, manners, opinions, times, ed. 1790), Burke (A philosophical enquiry into the origin of our ideas of the sublime and beautiful, ed. 1792) and Mendelssohn by his theistic Morgenstunden oder Vorlesungen über das Daseyn Gottes (ed. 1792).
Die Zeiten der empfindsamen Reisen, und auch alles dessen, was zu dem empfindelnden wesen gehört, sind vorbey; sie wurden durch riesenartigen Auftritte verdrängt, die gewiß auf unsere Denkungsart mächtig, vielleicht so mächtig wirkten, daß wir vor lauter Kraft- und Überspannungsgefühl bald anfangen werden, vielleicht längst angefangen haben, uns unserer Empfindsamkeit zu schämen.  

The international decline of the Age of Sensibility and Empfindsamkeit is traceable since the late 1760’s by the changing context of the words ‘sentimental’ and ‘sentimentality’, and in Germany by the creation of a new derivative for what were perceived as exaggerated, overstrained attitudes: ‘Empfindelei’ (dated 1778). According to Gerhard Sauder’s overview, the German Empfindsamkeit lasted from about 1740 till 1790, with two characteristic ‘waves’. The first (1740-50) predates the term (chronologically it embraces Bach’s first two printed sonata collections, the Preußische of 1742, and the Württembergische of 1744). The second phase (1770-1790) saw the dissemination of works by Sterne, and overlapped with Sturm und Drang. Bach continued writing works for keyboard throughout the decades, and Haydn’s keyboard sonatas of the late 1760’s are considered to show a remarkable stylistic change, which possibly bears a relation to Bach and Empfindsamkeit.

Sauder calls the Empfindsamkeit a ‘Tendenz’. As a trend or a ‘movement’, it embraces certain attitudes and ideas that were widespread but far from universal. Though there seems to be little doubt that Empfindsamkeit as a concept has a place in music history, the nature of the phenomenon is a matter of dispute, as can be seen in the major reference works. The MGG (Wolfgang Hirschmann) criticizes the New Grove (Daniel Heartz/Bruce Alan Brown) for pinpointing the musical Empfindsamkeit as “a musical aesthetic associated with north Germany during the middle of the 18th century and embodied in what was called the ‘Empfindsamer Stil’.” The opinion of Hirschmann echoes that expressed by Georgia J. Cowart:

[...we should realize that Empfindsamkeit, like sentiment and taste, refers more properly to the listener than to the music, to a quality that makes the cultivated person sensitive to all forms of music and the fine arts, and that it should thus contribute more to the history of musical aesthetics than to the history of musical style.]

Remarkable is the opinion that aesthetics is a matter just of listener attitudes, and should be kept apart from issues of style. Hearing Palestrina romantically may be part of romanticism, but not an important factor in music history unless linked to the creation of new music which is different in an identifiably ‘romantic’ way. Of course, there is such music, and it would be surprising if there were no music embodying empfindsam aesthetics. In order to identify such music, there has to be a chronological coincidence and aesthetic coherence with the wider cultural phenomenon. Such music, no doubt, there is, though its identification is not very well established. Bach is the paradigmatic figure, but beyond him the perspective becomes

22 Dies (1810) p. 90, 91
23 Sauder (1974) p. 6
somewhat hazy; often included are the Bach pupil J. G. Müthel, his Berlin colleagues G. F. Benda and C. H. Graun, the Berlin Oden writers, all part of the North German 'scene'.

No doubt the musical Empfindsamkeit is of limited scope. Because of this limitation, there is no empfindsam musical ‘period’, and even the idea of an empfindsam style must be subject to restrictions; for while the works by Bach may be generally classified as ‘galant’, Empfindsamkeit seems to be expressed only in a subset. The neat stylistic-chronological divide proposed by Ernst Bücken in 1928 does not hold: there was no “Umwandlung der galanten zur neuen expressiven Musik.” In order to be related to the literary movement, which is characterized by a moral-emotional attitude, it would seem that musical Empfindsamkeit should be defined at least in part by a specific expressive character. An expressive character or Ausdrucksqualität, even if realized in certain consistent musical features, does not constitute a style in the grander sense, which allows of a wide spectrum of expression. Associated with certain specific structural features, it may be considered a ‘manner’ – an artist may handle several ‘manners’, even within one work. To quote Charles Rosen, “[...] it is a gross and common error to define a style by specifically expressive characteristics, isolating the ‘elegant’ painting of the sixteenth century as Mannerist, calling the classical style Apollonian, the Romantic enthusiastic or morbid. Just in so far as a style is a way of using a language, musical, pictorial, or literary, is it capable of the widest range of expression, and a work by Mozart may be as morbid, as elegant, or as turbulent in its own terms as one by Chopin or Wagner.” This, I think, should be modified: in certain periods artistic expressions are found for aspects of the human psyche which were unarticulated before, and sometimes after – and maybe the most interesting aspect of empfindsam music is that it has brought to light just such an uncharted ‘niche’ of our inner lives.

The reasonable alternative then seems Friedrich Blume’s characterization of Empfindsamkeit as a "Mehrbetonung der sentimental-ausdruckshaften Elemente im galanten Stil." The galant style (more precisely: ‘second galant’), which basically involves a freedom or relaxation of baroque rules of counterpoint and voice leading, and is typically articulated in short phrases, may be considered the basis for a realization of empfindsam expression. On the other hand, such expression may very well transcend galant ideas of the beautiful and becoming in music: the expressive extremes that shape Bach’s freye Fantasien and are present also in many sonatas and rondos cannot be reconciled with the standard galant attributes ‘simple’, ‘natural’ and ‘pleasant’. The tension which exists between galant structural features,
associated aesthetic ideal of ‘pleasantness’, and the more radical manifestations of ‘musicalischer Dichterwut’\textsuperscript{31} is one angle from which one may analyze Bach’s oeuvre.

Heartz offers few defining characteristics of the ‘\textit{empfindsam} style’, and considers it a regional dialect of \textit{galant}. Hirschmann objects that this definition as a regional idiom is incompatible with \textit{Empfindsamkeit-Sensibility} as an international movement:

\begin{quote}
Wenn man die Empfindsamkeit als eine zentrale geistesgeschichtliche, kunst-, literatur- und musikgeschichtliche Strömung der europäischen Aufklärung begreift, dann verbietet es sich, mit dem Begriff bestimmte regional oder zeitlich begrenzte Teilphänomene der Musikgeschichte des 18. Jh. zu bezeichnen.\textsuperscript{32}
\end{quote}

To this, there are at least two obvious objections. First, it is doubtful whether \textit{Empfindsamkeit} was a central part in the Enlightenment – more likely it should be considered largely peripheral; second, the Enlightenment itself is geographically and chronologically defined – otherwise it would be a pure abstraction, not a historical phenomenon. There is no reason why the Enlightenment should not manifest itself in the North of Germany in a particular musical style – \textit{if} indeed \textit{Empfindsamkeit} is essentially tied up with the Enlightenment. On the one hand one may speak of an ‘Aufklärung der Gefühle’, an application of reason to areas of the irrational, but on the other hand the movement channeled some of the irrationalist tendencies which have come to the foreground in \textit{Sturm und Drang} and Romanticism.\textsuperscript{33}

Another conception which I think mistaken is a dependency on contemporary terminology. Though in speaking about \textit{Empfindsamkeit} we are applying a period term, it does not mean that in order to identify a phenomenon as such (a musical style for instance), we need a period credential. This seems the view taken by Darrell Berg, who wonders “ob der von Musikhistorikern so zuversichtlich postulierte empfindsame Stil lediglich eine Konstruktion der Musikwissenschaft des 20. Jahrhunderts ist.”\textsuperscript{34} But any style concept is – must be - of the time in which it is applied, not of the time it is applied to. It can only have (to quote Charles Rosen again) “a purely pragmatic definition.”\textsuperscript{35} The pragmatics is ours; and a concept’s legitimacy is the explanation or elucidation of otherwise incomprehensible or unrelated phenomena.

While there seems to be a sort of overall agreement on what the characteristics of \textit{empfindsam} music are, at least in the field of keyboard music, the substance of this agreement is meagre. On the basis of expressive characteristics, one might suspect it

\begin{footnotes}
\item[31] C. F. Cramer’s term, see n. 38 below.
\item[33] The Enlightenment I take to be a highly diverse mixture of opinions and attitudes – covering approaches as different as rationalism and empiricism - united however in something like the endeavour to explore the limits and strengths of human reason, unaided by religious dogma. Unfortunately, in many German outlines of literary history \textit{Aufklärung} is taken simply to be a chronologically defined period, including – or even paradigmatically represented – by such an un-enlightening work as Klopstocks \textit{Messias}.
\item[34] Berg (1990) p. 94. In what follows, she points out that remarks by J.F. Reichardt seem to imply such a concept. However, his speaking of “empfindsamen Liebeslieder” may mean no more than a character or mood.
\item[35] Rosen (1971) p. 20
\end{footnotes}
to be a slow movement style, as indeed William Newman observes that “in the slow movements [of C. P. E. Bach] one is allowed enough time to digest the variegations of the *empfindsam* style.” 36 Included in his examples is the *Poco Adagio* in F-sharp minor from Bach’s A major Sonata Wq. 55/4 (H. 186), which has some remarkable similarities (as Newman observes) to the *Adagio* in the same key of Mozart’s Concerto KV 488 – at the same time, not mentioned by Newman, this movement seems to project the melody line of Wq. 55/4/i1 back on to the *Probestück* Wq. 63/4:iii (H. 73) in the same key, a *Siciliano* like the Mozart movement. It may be tempting to follow such tracks and hunt for unsuspected affinities between works which are stylistically remote; but ultimately they will lead at best to an a-historical *‘empfindsam* principle’ rather than the identification of a historical phenomenon; at no great profit. Limited to Bach’s keyboard music, Newman does offer a concise inventory of style elements, which has not been improved upon by several more recent studies. Setting off the *empfindsam* from the *galant*, he includes: a more radical fragmentation of melodic lines by rests and unevenness of rhythmic flow; *Seufzer* intensified by greater dissonance and wider intervals; frequency of deceptive cadences and key contrasts; enriched harmonic vocabulary; little use of Alberti and similar chordal bass figures; increased dynamic and articulatory detail; recitative and parlando passages. 37 Generally, the terms used to characterize Bach’s personal manner, such as ‘Pausenwesen’ (Schering 1938), discontinuity, ‘nonconstancy’ (Fox 1988), ‘Punktualisierung’ (Kunze 1990) all refer to related features. Carl Friedrich Cramer in his insightful 1783 review characterized the fourth collection *für Kenner und Liebhaber* as a

> [...] Sammlung von momentanen Einfallen, Gedanken, Capriccio’s, kurz solche freye Ausbrüche der musicalischen Dichterwut [...] Das Neue so vieler oft ganz heterogenen, aber doch immer mit harmonischer Richtigkeit und Kunst zusammengewebter Gedanken, ihr Unerwartetes, und [...] immerdar Überraschendes; die Kühnheit der Modulationen, der Abschweifungen und Wiedereinlenkung, die Unerschöpflichkeit an Gängen und Wendungen, die Mannigfaltigkeit der einzelnen Figuren, aus denen das Ganze zusammengesezt ist, und dann das Brillante im Spiele der Hand [...] 38

While the phenomena listed might be interpreted as manifestations of raging passion (“Dichterwut”), Cramer considers them “unterhaltendste Geistesbeschäftigung”, meaning an intellectual challenge, or ‘wit’. 39 These idiosyncrasies set Bach apart from the galant style. To what extent they can constitute an *empfindsam* manner – related in a meaningful way to the broader movement, and present in works by other composers – remains to be seen.

36 Newman (1972) p. 427
39 See also Schleuning (1973) p. 190.
1.3 Mixed feelings

The characteristics listed may be summarized under two general principles: what Arnold Schering has called the *redende Prinzip*, and Bach’s much discussed whimsicality, *Laune* or wit. ‘Sentimental’ elements in Bach’s works have received less attention, mostly as a special feature of such extraordinary works as *Abschied von meinem Silbermannischen Clavier* and *Bachs Empfindungen*. Sentimentality and ‘wit’ are not merely co-present, but often in the works themselves confronted with each other or mixed, in a way that invites comparison to Sterne’s sentimental irony.

Some of Bach’s themes come close to being ‘sentimental’ in a modern, trivial sense. In the Rondo in E-flat major Wq. 61/1 (H. 288) from the sixth *Kenner und Liebhaber* collection (Example 1), the sequential repetitiousness and predictability of the melodic outline may sound self-indulgent. A check is put on this by the fortissimo-octaves – which are nothing but the severed head of the theme, which thus continues in persistent melodic transformations, carrying as it were its head loose on its shoulders. Where sentimentality is overt, it seems mixed with an irony that could be regarded a special, limiting case of *vermischte Empfindung*: the feeling is not just observed, it is kept in check by a second inner ‘voice’.

**Example 1:** C. P. E. Bach, Rondo Wq. 61/1 (H. 288) (1786), mm 1-16

There are a few instances where the tearful aspect of sensibility is almost literally represented. A *Quintschrittsequenz* may serve many purposes; undorned by chromaticism it is a bland device that keeps many late baroque pieces going. As such it is at work in the first movement (*Presto*) of the Sonata in B-flat major Wq. 51/2 (H. 151), a highly effective and humorous imitation of a bravura aria, preceded by a short, slow and *erhaben* orchestral introduction. In the second movement (*Adagio mesto e sostenuto*), after a tense two measure build-up, which as a series of sixth chords inverts the recurring opening motive of this movement, the following downward sequence exploits the easy flow of the sequence in as faithful an image of a good cry.

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40 A similar procedure is followed in the the *Adagio* of the fantasia-like Sonata in G minor Wq. 65/17 (H 47), m. 8, where a simple element – a dotted figure – is lifted out of the sentimental theme and stressed as a ‘signal’, changing texture and expression.

C. P. E. Bach, Haydn, and the art of mixed feelings © Lodewijk Muns 2008 – p. 11
as one could wish for (mm 18-23, Example 2). Descending sixth chords in minor are a recurrent opening motive in the works of Bach, expressing melancholy (notably in *Abschied ...* Wq. 66 (H. 272)) – as they do in much later works such as Chopin’s Prélude op. 45.

**Example 2:** C. P. E. Bach, Sonata Wq. 51/2:ii (H. 151) (1760), mm 19-24

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**1.4 Affinity?**

That there are similarities between the keyboard works of Bach and Haydn has been perceived since their own days. What most generally might invite comparison is the limited presence of Italianizing elements in the mature keyboard works of Haydn, setting him somewhat apart from the Austrian tradition. More positively, it is the manifestations of discontinuity, wit or humor in their work which has led to remarks on a shared ‘mentality’. In spite of this association, the term ‘empfindsam’ seems rarely to have been applied to aspects of Haydn’s work, though it might be more obvious and better motivated than the much abused ‘Sturm und Drang’. That, apart from similarity or affinity (which, in sentimental terms, might have ‘come from the heart’), there has been an influence of the elder on the younger has long been assumed, with support from biographical reports since the 1780s. Ironically, this started with something like a hoax, when a reviewer in the *European Magazine and London Review* of October 1784, on the basis of some “strange passages”, concocted

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41 Overview and evaluation of sources for the Bach-Haydn connection in Leisinger (1994) and Brown (1986). On a late indirect contact through Eszterháza musicians performing in Hamburg, see Suchalla (1994) 1099-1103. An influence of Haydn on certain late works of Bach is often assumed, see e.g. Schleuning (1973) p. 251.

42 But then, *The Sentimental Symphonies* does not look good on a CD cover. The notion of a musical *Sturm und Drang* has been adequately dealt with by Schleuning (2004).
the story that the sonatas Hob. 21-32\textsuperscript{43} (published as op. 13 and 14) had been “expressly composed in order to ridicule Bach of Hamburg,” an act of revenge for supposed negative publicity by Bach. The European review was translated in C. F. Cramer’s Magazin der Musik with critical notes by the editor and a refutation by Bach.\textsuperscript{44} The reviewer may have drawn on the strong tradition of invective in the German North against Italian Ohrengekützel. Bach’s keyboard style is built on a melodic, continuo type bass; the Italian sense of harmony and rhythm, typified by the percussive Alberti bass, which provides as it were motion without movement, seems to have produced in him feelings of revulsion.\textsuperscript{45} Where he wants an agitatedly busy rhythm with slow harmonic progression, he prefers the sometimes tedious baroque practice of repeated bass notes (one of its worst manifestations being Wq. 65/16 (H. 46), while it is used with great effect in Wq. 50/3 (H. 138)). It is maybe significant that dance music has little place in his oeuvre.

Musicologists in the early 20th Century were sometimes quick in deciding on ‘influence’; the comparisons by Hermann Abert and Ernst Fritz Schmid\textsuperscript{46} were neither very interesting nor convincing, but helped to establish a tradition which almost automatically translated ‘similarity’ into ‘influence’. Bettina Wackernagel has cast doubt on these assumptions by attacking Abert’s arguments; A. Peter Brown went further in castigating earlier generations for “an unusual enthusiasm to find interactions among great men,” for being “plagued by errors of both judgment and fact,” for “regional chauvinism among non-Austrian German scholars” and a lack of analysis.\textsuperscript{47} Reviewing biographical and bibliographical data, he declares himself an agnostic, allowing for an influence of the Versuch on changes in notation and the application of the principle of ‘varied reprise’. More recently, however, Ulrich Leisinger, on the basis of extensive research, has come to far more positive conclusions. The bibliographical evidence makes it possible or even likely that Haydn encountered the Preußische or Württembergische Sonaten around 1750. Examining the works, he finds parallels of surface detail and structure that seem to exceed the coincidental. In the presence of such more specific correspondences, a similarity of less defined features acquires more weight, including the typical interruptions of structural continuity and “auskomponierten quasi-improvisatorischen Ausbrüche.”\textsuperscript{48}

The notion of influence remains scientifically problematic. In few cases, we will be able to establish proof of influence – the criteria are not even clear. Where a composer unmistakably follows a model, we have a case of imitation, not influence. On the other hand, it is not clear what we know when we know that composer A has

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{43} Reference to Haydn sonatas by Hoboken number, abbreviated (Hob. = Hob. XVI).
  \item \textsuperscript{44} Suchalla (1994) p. 1099-1103
  \item \textsuperscript{45} Cf. the Versuch, Vol. I Einleitung §§ 9-10 and the lengthy footnote.
  \item \textsuperscript{46} Abert (1920, 1921), Schmid (1931)
  \item \textsuperscript{47} Brown (1986) 213
  \item \textsuperscript{48} Leisinger (1994) p. 310. Substantial similarity concerns the sonatas Hob. 18, 29, 30, and 44, and Bach’s Reprisen-Sonaten Wq. 50 and Probestücke Wq. 63. On the other hand, as against Brown, the Fantasie Wq. 61.6 is not considered a source for Haydn’s Capriccio Hob. XVII:4. Reference to Leisinger’s research is surprisingly absent from Bernard Harrison’s more recent study (1997), and even from his article on Bach in Jones (2002).
\end{itemize}
influenced composer B; it does not necessarily contribute to our understanding of the music. Haydn, in any case, was too much a master of his own development, and (in contrast to Bach, and untroubled by the stilistic North-South divide) too much open to the possibilities offered by any style or material, to leave clear marks of influence. On the other hand, contrary to a common musicological prejudice, the perception of a shared ‘mentality’ or “Übereinstimmung im Ausdruckswillen” is not beyond analysis, and such analysis may help us understand why some pieces are in interesting ways similar to or different from others.

2. What sonatas want

The too often (and once more!) quoted “Sonate, que me veux tu?” may have been meant as a rhetorical question; it can - and should - be answered. In fact, it is a question any intelligent listener and musician will ask any sonata attacking his or her ears, though it is not necessarily answered in words. Its reputation as a stopper may in part be explained by the very trivial consideration that while we speak about language in language, not only are we unable to paraphrase a work of music, it is hard even to make the most superficial reference to parts and passages without musical notation, technical terms or clumsy circumscriptions. The vagueness of music in speech tends to be attributed to the music itself.

In the face of the musical evidence, it is hard to think of a more profound reason for the persistent denigration of instrumental music by most aestheticians throughout the 18th Century. As formulated in J. G. Sulzer’s lexicon, article Instrumentalmusik: this is either useless ‘Geräusch’ or practicing for ‘real’ music, that is, applied music. The shift in musical aesthetics however runs through the lexicon. The article Sonate is a forceful apology for the sonata’s legitimate demands (with the obligatory jibe to Italians and Italianizers):

Die Möglichkeit, Charakter und Ausdruck in Sonaten zu bringen, beweisen eine Menge leichter und schwerer Klaviersonaten unseres Hamburger Bachs. Die mehresten derselben sind so sprechend, dass man nicht Töne, sondern eine verständliche Sprache zu vernehmen glaubt, die unsere Einbildung und Empfindungen in Bewegung setzt und unterhält. Es gehört unstreitig viel Genie, Wissenschaft und eine besonders leicht sängliche und harrende Empfindbarkeit dazu, solche Sonaten zu machen. Sie verlangen aber auch einen gefühlvollen Vortrag, den kein Deutsch-Italiener zu treffen im Stande ist, der aber oft von Kindern getroffen wird, die bei Zeiten an solche Sonaten gewöhnt werden.

The idea that music is a means of exciting and communicating feeling is repeated over and over throughout the period. How it does this, is a question unhinging the existing philosophical frameworks. Since vocal music and dance music were considered to be emotionally meaningful, it seems that with little effort one might imagine that the same or similar music without a text sung or a dance performed

49 Leisinger (1994) p. 269
50 Allgemeine Theorie der schönen Künste (1771), URL = http://www.textlog.de/sulzer_kuenste.html. On the authorship of the entries on music, see the article on Sulzer by Hartmut Grimm in MGG. The changed evaluation of instrumental music is no doubt due to J. A. P. Schulz.
would not cease to be meaningful, because at the very least it would evoke song and
dance in the listener’s mind. This step was only partially made – by those who like
Mattheson interpreted music as ‘Klangsprache’, but the concept is by no means clear.
The reason for the failure to allow instrumental music its ‘emancipation’ in theory
(while it was emancipated in practice) must probably be sought in the fact that a
defense as indicated involved psychological notions insufficiently clarified at the time.
The theory of musical expression therefore held on for a long time to a rather sterile
schematism of passions or affects – an account that seemed thoroughly
unsatisfactory to the romantic generations. Projecting the meaning of instrumental
music (turned ‘absolute’) into the ‘metaphysical’, which in literary imagination is
rather close to the ‘supernatural’, would thus provide an escape from such
unanswerable questions – thereby turning the world of the mind *(Welt des Geistes)*
into a world of spirits *(Geisterwelt)*.

When Arnold Schering in 1938 attempted a reappraisal of the works of C. P. E. Bach,
the main and (with retardation) most influential issue was what he called the
‘redende Prinzip’. Just like a singer, according to Schering, an instrumentalist must
sing and therefore produce phrases which have grammar and syntax. The upshot of
this is twofold: the possibility of associating music (like speech) with the imagination
(thus interpreting a meaning of some kind), and a connection with rhetoric *(Redekunst)*.51 I think this line of reasoning involves two mistakes. The first is the
contention that where Bach speaks of ‘singing’ he refers to the linguistic element in
vocal music. Context shows that he refers to tone formation and the way tones are
connected.52 Second, that instrumental music should ‘speak’ is amply documented in
North German aesthetics – the quotation above may stand for many. But as is well
known, ‘Rede’, like ‘speech’, has a double meaning, referring both to the capacity of
speaking (Schering refers to it as involving grammar and syntax), and to the product
of rhetoric *(Redekunst)*.53 That a Bach sonata speaks (in a sense) does not imply that
it belongs to oratory. Moreover, ‘speaking’ is in the music of this period just one mode
among several – music can be expressive by adopting e.g. operatic, gestural or
choreographic manners. Looking at concrete examples, it is hard to maintain that
every piece is ‘in the speaking mode’.

## 2.1 Recitative

Trying to make sense of the *Redende Prinzip*, I see two non-exclusive alternatives.
The first is that music is language-like by its musical syntax – which remains to be
defined. The second is a foreground phenomenon: melody showing speech-like
prosodic features. This seems to be what Schering meant.54 The theory that a *stilo
parlante* derived from recitative was crucial in the formation of Bach’s style (and
played a part in the formation of the classical style) looks attractive, especially in the

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51 Schering (1938) p. 391 (or. p. 15)
52 E.g. Bach (1753) Bd. I p. 119, 122
53 A failure to keep the two concepts apart pervades Bonds (1991b).
54 Schering (1938) p. 394 (or. p. 18)
presence of some remarkable and famous recitative-inserts in the instrumental works, such as the C minor Concerto Wq. 31 (H. 441), in which the entire slow movement is composed as a harpsichord recitative with orchestral interruptions. Still, one must ask: to what extent is Bach’s style truly redend – in a structural sense rather than the metaphorical that ‘it speaks to me’; and second, to what extent does this quality derive from recitative models? Apart from isolated remarks, no investigation into the real scope of a recitative-influence seems to have been undertaken.55

Example 3: C. P. E. Bach, Sonata Wq. 55/3:i (H. 245) (1774), mm 1-4

Taking a melodic line like that of the first movement of the Sonata in B minor Wq. 55/3 (H. 245) (Example 3) in the first Kenner und Liebhaber set, which by its fast, segmented line over a few accompanying chords has some characteristics of recitative, it is striking how the (hardly singable) sentence is composed of short, almost exclamatory phrases, the outline of which is ornamental to the basic structure, a simple ascending scalar progression from f\textsuperscript{♯} on the second chord, to d\textsuperscript{♯} in m. 4 (complicated by being broken, on a secondary level, into the ascending fourth F-sharp - B and a faster descending fourth which is doubled in thirds). At the harmonic level, it is famous for its ambiguity of B minor and D major. The melody thus appears to proceed from error (opening with a retrospectively ‘false’ cadence) through conjecture to confirmation. That instrumental recitative or recitative-like melody may derive melodic and rhythmic contours from vocal recitative, while being unsingable and sometimes highly ornamental (and thus far from a plain speech, secco conception of recitative) is already evident in the passage marked ‘Recitativo’ in J. S. Bach’s Fantasia Cromatica BWV 903.56 It thus may be difficult to identify passages that strike someone as ‘recitativic’ by objective criteria.

In spoken language, prosody is influenced by emotion. This aspect is most easily ‘imitated’, as stressed by contemporary writers on aesthetics, like Sulzer/Schulz, who advises the musician to study the tone of voice of people under the influence of various emotions; one may be able to guess the meaning even of sentences not understood.57 Prosody of any level of complication depends however both on syntax and semantics, as they cooperate in shaping the functional relations of phrases. In the absence of semantics, one may wonder to what extent prosody depending on a purely

56 The importance of this work for C. P. E. Bach’s Fantasias is highlighted by Schleuning (1973).
57 Sulzer (1771), article Ausdruck in der Musik (see note 50).
musical ‘syntax’ may make a sentence or period ‘meaningful’. Attempts to set words to music – to music which imitates music set to words – may be interesting musico-linguistic experiments. Daniel Heartz has provided a text for the first passage marked ‘Recitativo’ in the often quoted second movement of the first ‘Prussian’ sonata (Wq. 48/1, H. 24, Example 4). His text consists of operatic, conventional Italian lines:

Indegna! Ah perfida alma! ingrato core, m’abbandoni. Parto, e non ritorno mai. Ahime! io moro!  

Example 4: C. P. E. Bach, Sonata Wq. 48/1:ii (H. 24) (1740), mm 1-11

His intention is just “to convey more of the operatic flavor.” Indeed the recitative is operatic, and the Italian seems to fit well (though ‘alma’ does not do justice to the diminished chord, which requires something stronger than ‘perfida’, which makes sense of the leap of a diminished seventh.) What by the fact of its ‘correct fit’ this seems to prove: given the language, we perceive phrase hierarchy, some aspects of syntax, and even by the harmonic direction of just a few chords a remarkable explicitness of pragmatics (some theorists will call it ‘rhetoric’): exclamation (Indegna! Ah perfida alma!) conclusion (ingrato core, m’abbandoni); announcement (Parto, e non ritorno mai); aside (Ahime! - io moro!). Of course, this is stock recitative in a highly formulaic language. We might explore the margin for alternatives, to see to what extent the music really determines the scope of a possible linguistic interpretation. Carrying the experiment one stage further, then, one may put to the test these German lines:

58 Heartz (2003) p. 404

The point is, of course, not to explain ‘the meaning of the music’; the question is: to what extent does the music direct us to perceive certain types of linguistic structures? An improvement here is the verbal correlative for the enharmonization before the final cadence (‘es sei …’). Instead of directed speech we have here a soliloquy; one may try in the context of the movement what is the better fit. The recitative is prepared in a specific way by an ‘orchestral’ introduction; in this the accusatory exclamations of the Italian text appear too abrupt. The melody of the introduction has cantabile features, but is hardly singable – an oboe part, rather – and assumes a kind of complementary role to the ‘protagonist’ (which becomes especially clear in m. 9, where the minor cadence is contradicted by a continuation in major), though in the final cadence (to be improvised) they may be imagined to join. Every player performing this piece is in the necessity to make some kind of operatic interpretation along these lines.

The poet Heinrich Wilhelm von Gerstenberg attempted to face similar questions by providing two alternative texts to be sung with the Fantasia in C minor Wq. 63/6:iii (H. 75), an experiment often discussed.59 C. F. Cramer first (in 1783) mentioned Gerstenberg’s text as an attempt to clarify to what extent we can experience (‘empfinden’) something concrete with, e.g., a keyboard fantasia, or as he put it, “ob auch bloße Instrumentalmusik, bey der ein Künstler nur dunkle leidenschaftliche Begriffe in seiner Seele liegen gehabt, einer Analyse in hellere bestimmtere fähig seyn sollte?”. The fantasia is of course not a singable work; Cramer refers to it as a “cloud formation”. Gerstenberg’s vocal lines, monologues of Hamlet and Socrates pondering death, consist mostly of snippets of melody extracted from the original, and Cramer has aptly (with some humour, and ambiguity if not implicit criticism) described Gerstenberg’s proceeding as picking up a foot here, an arm or an eye there, comparing the result to the mythical animal tragelaph.60 This chirurgical operation on the original work makes one thing very clear: that the melodic line of free fantasia is recitativic in a very extended way. In fact, characteristic of this and other free fantasias of Bach is the constant ‘growth’ of melody out of broken chords, obliterating in many places any distinction of melody and harmony – an essential ambiguity which may have contributed much to the ‘emancipation’ of instrumental music.

Looking over Gerstenberg’s experiment, the composer may have been reminded of the ‘honest painter’ he mentioned in a letter (1773) to the same poet – a painter who naively wrote “Dies soll ein Vogel seyn” under his picture of a bird. (Had the painter

59 Chrysander (1891), Helm (1972), Schleuning (1973) p. 172-187, 218-225, Lütteken (1998) p. 425-437, Plebuch (2006). In my view, commentators have generally been too respectful towards the poet – remaining silent on his abominable prosody (e.g., “de-er Verwe-esung na-ahe Stu-u-unde”); only Schleuning has made some justified criticism (p. 220-221). An obvious mistake in Chrysander’s score – a missing tie in the phrase quoted on the E-flat on ‘nahe’ – is copied by Helm; Plebuch has the tie, but still misplaces the syllable ‘-he’. 60 Quoted after Chrysander (1891) p. 2-4. Modern readers are more likely to think of Frankenstein’s monster. Plebuch (2006) has a very different interpretation. It seems obvious to me that the tragelaph, described as a stag with the beard of a goat, cannot have been meant as a paradigm of beauty.
written *Dies soll kein Vogel seyn*, he would have immortalized himself!) The letter answers to another proposal of the poet – that Bach attempt a collection of biblical paraphrase sonatas. Bach’s answer seems to express a polite coolness. His positions on aesthetic issues are always formulated succinctly or implicit in practical advice. In the same letter he states that “we should not unnecessarily strive in the distance for what we have close at hand.”\(^{61}\) Resisting a proposal to paraphrase existing text as keyboard music, he holds the view that instrumental music should not compete with vocal music. His *Sanguineus und Melancholicus* trio Wq. 161/1 (H. 79) is an exploration mainly of the pragmatic explicitness of musical sentences – the ‘programme notes’ telling us when a question is asked, an objection made etc. When he incorporated quasi-vocal recitative in his instrumental works, he bought a degree of precision of expression at the cost of emotional authenticity; the more intimate *Herzensergüß* had to find less formulaic expressions, at the risk of being misunderstood.\(^{62}\)

### 2.2 Who’s speaking?

If sonatas and fantasias come to speak – in monologue, less frequently dialogue – there seem to be two broad consequences for instrumental music as ‘works of art’. First, the work appears less as an object, more as a process; form is not a scheme, but pattern resulting from activity. Second, the work acquires a psychological dimension by the presence of a speaker created in this speech, usually referred to as the ‘aesthetic I’ or ‘intelligibles Ich’.\(^{63}\)

The opposition of object (product) versus process conceptions in literature has been sketched by Northrop Frye.\(^{64}\) Sterne’s writing – especially in his masterwork *Tristram Shandy* – is (in an artful, contrived way) like talking, engaging with an imagined reader:

> Writing, when properly managed (as you may be sure I think mine is) is but a different name for conversation: As no one, who knows what he is about in good company, would venture to talk all; - so no author, who understands the just boundaries of decorum and good breeding, would presume to think all: The truest respect which you can pay to the reader’s understanding, is to halve this matter amicably, and leave him something to imagine, in his turn, as well as yourself.\(^{65}\)

Of course, the one who’s talking is a character created for the job, even if he carries the name of the author. The real life author creates a persona which plays the part of narrator. Typical of ‘process’ literature is the foregrounding of the narrator as a

\(^{61}\) More literally: “as long as we may have the more near-at-hand, we should not without necessity strive for the more distant” – “So lange wir das Nähere haben können, dürfen wir, ohne Noth das Weitere nicht suchen”, Suchalla (1994) p. 337. References to his a-typical ‘programmatic’ *Sanguineus und Melancholicus* trio seem to have touched a sore spot.

\(^{62}\) Dahlhaus (1967) p. 465-6

\(^{63}\) November (2007) speaks of a ‘compositional persona’ (p. 94).

\(^{64}\) Frye (1956) p. 145. In the Age of Sensibility “the sense of literature as process was brought to a peculiarly exquisite perfection by Sterne, and in lesser degree by Richardson and Boswell.”

\(^{65}\) Sterne (1760) p. 127 (Vol. II Ch. 11). See also Michelsen (1962) p. 12.
thinking and speaking or writing person, by intrusions into the story or discourse, restricting or demolishing the idea of a story which ‘tells itself’. A symptom are Sterne’s famous dashes or *Gedankenstriche*, which add to the apparent spontaneity and associative nature of the text. In the background stands the contemporary philosophy of mind, acknowledged by numerous references to John Locke. While ‘association of ideas’ was for Locke still an obstruction to reason, and therefore a form of ‘madness’ instead of a positive principle, it is in a sense a benign madness that reigns in *Tristram Shandy*, both at the level of story telling and in the psyche of the characters – it all starts with an inopportune automated association of Tristram’s mother at the moment of his conception (the association, ironically, referring to an automaton, the family clock).

The character of the literary work as unfolding, in process, may thus depend on an authorial presence in the work. For the process of creating inner-work personas various terminologies are available; I prefer to speak of it in terms of ‘framing’. If sonatas speak, more is happening than performer *P* playing a work for listener *L*; both construct an enclosed *I* which speaks from within the inner frame of the work. In various situations, different hierarchies of personas may be constructed in a recursive pattern. In practice, of course, one does not rationalize this process, and often a major attraction is to do the opposite, to let oneself be confused. Imagining Bach performing his Fantasia Wq. 63/6:iii (H. 75), a ‘frozen improvisation’, we may analyze a triple layering of ‘speaking voices’:

*Bach recreating [Bach creating (Wq. 63/6:iii’s inner voice) at his Silbermann clavichord]*.

If performer *P* plays the same piece, one may either replace the first Bach by *P*, or add an extra frame:

*P* recreating {Bach recreating [Bach creating (Wq. 63/6:iii’s inner voice) at his Silbermann clavichord]}

*P* may be unaware of the historic and stylistic dimensions of the piece, and think he’s simply playing ‘the notes’. When on the other hand C. F. D. Schubart declares that in the act of recreation his “Ichheit wegschwindet“, he describes (as an aesthetic demand on the solo performer) the illusionary fusion of all the frames: the performer with the composer, who speaks directly from his work.

As in a literary work the narrator may come to the foreground by his interrupting the flow of narrative, musical discontinuity may bring the idea of a ‘thinking mind’ to the surface, inhibiting an autonomous musical discourse, an automated grammar, so to speak. Bach’s play with discontinuity has often been described, but insufficiently

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66 On Sterne and Locke see Cash (1955). I am not convinced of the author’s arguments against associationism, especially since his Lockean ‘train of thought’ concept remains vague. It seems Sterne ignored Hume’s concept of association of ideas.

67 Schubart (1806) p. 295
explained, as ‘wit’.68 ‘Psychologizing’ discontinuity cannot be an excuse for mere incoherence – a bad piece doesn’t become good by an ‘aesthetic I thinking that way’. Incoherence on one level must be structurally motivated or balanced on another (as the contrasts in dynamics and shape in Example 3 are ornamental to a simple basic line). This psychologizing adds an element of drama to the music. Like in the more naturalistic traditions of acting an actor’s line is the expression of a thought which most appear to have occurred before the line is spoken, in the performance of Bach’s more capricious and ‘speaking’ works the contrasts should appear to come from a thinking mind. This may add to an understanding why Bach and contemporaries routinely speak of ‘musikalische Gedanken’ instead of themes or phrases – though with a catch. In ‘speaking’ the musical works offer the ‘lines’ – not the ‘thoughts’, though in the absence of a concrete semantic dimension, a separation of one from the other would be futile. It leaves however the possibility that the musical ‘utterance’ is untrue or insincere, or more generally, that the utterance is not a total communication, that something is left at the back of the ‘speaker’s’ mind. Such seems to be the case in Wq. 61/1 quoted above (Example 1), and in many other works that seem to put thematic material between quotes, as one Gedanke in a complex of vermischte Gedanken, some of which may not be expressed. The idea of something not expressed, which seems to speak in the rests, is often suggested by Bach’s ‘discontinuity’. While it is (or should be) a dogma of music analysis to refrain from speculations on ‘composer’s intentions’, by assuming that such intentions are realized in the work, analysis may fail if it doesn’t account for the possibility of an authorial presence in the work, an ‘I’ that does the ‘speaking’. Such an inherent ‘intention’ may manifest itself in the cracks and breaks, where structural integrity seems in doubt. Often, such discontinuity may be interpreted as irony; the concept of irony in a musical work cannot be sustained without an authorial presence implied, as it involves reflection or comment – and thereby surface meaning and deep meaning. Whether something strikes us as just ‘odd’ or ‘profound’ largely depends on our willingness to project an authorial meaning into it. The amount of Empfindung which Bach invested in his work is stressed in similar wordings by himself and others:

Ich bin gewohnt, bey allen meinen Compositionen, so gar bey blosen Instrumentalsachen, wen sie auch noch so klein sind, vielleicht mit mehrerer Empfindung zu denken, als viele andere Componisten: [...] 

[...] daß die Ursache der überaus seltenen Stärke, die in manchem Ausdruck war, und die viele Leute mehr in Bewunderung setzte, als als sie es recht fühlten, daß diese blos darinnen liege, daß Herr Bach vieles weit stärker und lebhafter bey der Arbeit empfunden habe, als die mehresten Menschen im Stande sind, nach zu empfinden.69

Though one may interpret such passages as pointing simply to a superlative intensity of feeling, there may be an implied argument about the quality. The expression realized by Bach in some of his works is not one that explains itself, as an extreme sentimentalism, but an intensity created by complexity.

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68 E.g. Wollenberg (1988a)
Among modern commentators, Mark E. Bonds speaks of the fusion of serious and comic as an ‘ironical’ undermining of ‘aesthetic illusion’, which I consider a rather unfortunate term (in spite of its credentials) for what I have described above in different terms as the ‘framing’ of auctoriality (and by consequence reader-listenership).\textsuperscript{70} Contrary to Bonds, as I have argued above I \textit{do} think that in works of this period the music implies an ‘aesthetic I’, which of course does not have to be a narrator – there are other speaking modes than story telling – and I do not think his comparison of genre to ‘narrative convention’ adds to our musical understanding. Musical genre is not an alternative to the literary narrator – it is an alternative, vaguely, to literary genre. Only a pathological listener-reader-spectator is under an “aesthetic illusion” that the literary or musical art work is not something artificial, or in a state of “willing suspension of the consciousness of [his] physical presence”.\textsuperscript{71} Involvement in the imagined action in no way replaces consciousness of one’s real being. As illustrated above, an awareness of the physical component in one’s emotional life is very much part of period aesthetics.

**Example 5:** C. P. E. Bach, Sonata Wq. 59/6 (H. 284) (1784), mm 17-37 of the Allegretto section

The C-major Fantasia of the fifth Kenner und Liebhaber collection Wq. 59:6 (H. 284) is one of those that depart from the concept of ‘freye Fantasie’ and approach the rondo – one might almost characterize it as a quarrel between a fantasia and a rondo. The first Allegretto section within this fantasia tends by its all-too-predictable sequential nature to excessive sentimentality. The casual arpeggio accompaniment in

\textsuperscript{70} Bonds (1991a) p. 57.

\textsuperscript{71} Bonds (1991a) p. 81. One may insist on the distinction of ‘aesthetic illusion’ from other kinds of illusion. This does not make the concept more illuminating. The abbé Dubos already wrote with lucidity against the concept of illusion as spectator’s attitude, see Réflexions critiques sur la poésie et la peinture, 1755, URL = http://visualiseur.bnf.fr/Visualiseur?Destination=Gallica&O=NUMM-88225, p. 429
the first measures invites a free, recitative and quasi-spontaneous performance. In the continuation (Example 5), it loosens direction altogether – as if the improviser starts wondering how long one can continue a sequence in good taste – taking a break and trying one repeat more. The dramatic employment of rests is very much like that in the *Sanguineus-Melancholicus* trio, bringing the ‘speaking I’ obviously in the foreground. An ironic destruction (some would say ‘deconstruction’) of expressive value runs parallel with a destruction of the structural validity of clichés.

Auctorial involvement is most obviously expressed in Wq. 66 (H. 272), *Abschied von meinem Silbermannischen Clavier* (1781), and Wq. 67 (H. 300) (1787), titled *Bachs Empfindungen* in the version with violin accompaniment (Wq. 80 / H. 536), a rondo and a fantasia which playfully confound frames by integrating the author into the title (thus making the author, and in the first of these his favorite instrument, a ‘character’ in the piece). A comparable play with the frames of author, implied author, and title is Sterne’s publication of his sermons under the title *The Sermons of Mr. Yorick*. Here an already deceased character in one work (Tristram Shandy), promoted to narrator of another work (*Sentimental Journey*), is credited with the authorship of real life non-fictional works (with a second title page correctly identifying the author and a - shamelessly opportunistic - excuse in the preface).72 Sterne may be have been ironizing his persona as a clergymen or not – it is difficult to determine. A function of Sterne’s irony seems to be to raise the consciousness of our role playing, both amplifying its scope and confounding role definitions. In sociological perspective, this kind of self-publicizing through a created persona may be a consequence of increased marketing and press publicity, a development in which Bach was very much involved. Self-presentation of authors on stage was in 1767 perceived as a scandalous novelty by Lessing, who criticized Voltaire for taking curtain calls.73

### 2.3 Soliloquy and preaching

The typical mode of speaking in this and other fantasias seems to be the monologue or soliloquy; there is little sense of their being a ‘speech’ directed at an audience. More precisely, since music is written for audiences – which may consist even of a solitary player herself – they pose as soliloquies. What is known as ‘oratory’, and associated with the formal canon of rhetoric, is just one type of monologue, and one that is directed at an audience. Associated with this is the ‘oratorical stance’, described by Sulzer as a delivery “mit Feierlichkeit” and a certain “Grad der Würde, Größe und Wärme”.74 Sulzer shows in his articles on *Rede* and *Redekunst* some

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72 Sterne (1777) p. v: “[…] the first will serve the bookseller’s purpose, as Yorick’s name is possibly of the two the more known; and the second will ease the minds of those who see a jest, and the danger which lurks under it, where no jest was meant.” The second title page is absent from this edition.
74 Sulzer (1771), articles *Rede* and *Redekunst* (see note 51). At some universities rhetoric is being advertised as communication science. The idea that the growth of knowledge has been arrested with the ancients persists even there: "Das System der Rhetorik ist in allen wesentlichen Zügen bereits in der Antike (Aristoteles, Cicero, Quintilian) entwickelt worden und in dieser Form bis heute Grundlage der Allgemeinen und der Angewandten Rhetorik.‖ (http://www.uni-tuebingen.de/uni/nas/definition/rhetorik.htm) While the
uneasiness over the subject: on the one hand nothing has been contributed to the
discipline since the ancients, on the other the traditional precepts are limited in scope
and apply mainly to forensic speech. Sulzer adapts the concept *Beredsamkeit* to the
sentimental spirit: persuasion is not the unique purpose of a speech – “Oft sucht er
bloß zu rühren, eine gewisse Leidenschaft rege zu machen oder die Gemüter bloß zu
besänftigen.” Therefore a speech need not be based mainly on declarative sentences;
an important place is taken by exclamations – a predominant articulatory mode of
the period. As in the teaching of grammar, in rhetoric no clear discrimination was
made between the prescriptive and the descriptive. A consciousness that precepts
were insufficient, and that good practice could not always be accomodated with the
school book was growing. Diderot and D’Alembert condemned in the *Discours
préaliminaire* of the *Encyclopédie* school rhetoric as “puérilités pédantesques”,
insisting that eloquence (the communication of passions, not of ideas) could not be
taught. Rhetorical tradition held out better in Britain than in France or Germany;
still, Sterne was doubtful of the didactic and prescriptive value of rhetoric.75 Besides
ridiculing school rhetoric by the figure of Walter Shandy – whose ignorance of the
classics is emphasized by a long list of authors he had not read, though he astonished
academics “that a man who knew not so much as the names of his tools, should be
able to work after that fashion with ‘em”, Sterne had a reputation for ex tempore
preaching – virtuoso pulpit oratory was a major entertainment. His style of preaching
broke with rhetorical conventions:

Instead of the typical perorations and recapitulations, they found the most abrupt openings
they had ever seen. [...] Sterne’s devices were taken from secular literature and drama: resting,
often paradoxical opening statements, digressions, character sketches, dialogues, tableaux -
devices which lend themselves well to a preacher who regards the pulpit as a stage.76

The religious sermon must have been for a wide audience the most familiar area of
application of rhetoric. Much of the rhetorical art of the sermon is the art of extended
talk with just one thing to say; musically: to keep a movement going with only one
*Empfindung* which is expressed in the theme or *Hauptsatz*. Sulzer’s article under this
heading makes the problem quite clear:

Wenn also ein Tonstück nichts anderes zur Absicht hätte als eine Empfindung bestimmt an
den Tag zu legen, so wäre ein solcher kurzer Satz, wenn er glücklich ausgedacht wäre, dazu
hinlänglich. Aber dieses ist nicht die Absicht der Musik; sie soll dienen den Zuhörer eine
Zeitlang in demselben Gemütszustande zu unterhalten.77

In fact, some of Bach’s sonatas (and many romantic sonatas) tend to exhaust
themselves with the *Hauptsatz*, and to continue by means of a mechanical process.
From a formal viewpoint, his discontinuity can be seen as an attempt to keep his
discourse alive by unmediated motivic-thematic contrast rather than large scale
harmonic process.

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75 Cash (1986a) p. 50
76 Sterne (1760) p. 79 (Vol. I Ch. 19), Cash (1986b) p. 40-1
77 Sulzer (1771), article *Hauptsatz* (see note 50).
The question what sonatas want, is not to be answered with a standard approach – one difficulty contemporaries had in theorizing about instrumental music was the inapplicability of any one simple answer. ‘Speaking’, a sonata could in principle emulate any kind of discourse; but then, many sonatas don’t speak – and are not less meaningful. Alternative literary modes of ‘speaking’ are dramatic monologue, lyrical poetry, and philosophical soliloquy – a genre which since antiquity has produced some of the most prominent ‘process literature’, by authors including Augustine, Pascal, Descartes, and Sterne’s favorite Montaigne. All these forms are un-rhetorical by not being openly directed at an audience. The musical solo performer, then, has within the spectrum of these alternatives several optional roles to adopt and will have to decide in which ‘mode’ the sonata ‘speaks’. A performer who commences Haydn’s sonata Hob. 29 in F major (Example 6) in the ‘oratorical stance’ may become the victim of the composer’s Laune, when in m. 21 he gets stuck on a repeated G, keeps stuttering for two measures more, to break free with a rather desperate flourish on the diminished chord – and carry on smiling in C major.

**Example 6:** Haydn, Sonata Hob. XVI:29:I (1774), mm 21-26

The first movement (Allegro) of Haydn’s Sonata Hob. 30 in A major is dramatically brought to a stop just before the end by what I will call for lack of a musicological term the *ta-dá* signal - one of those pervasive musical clichés that seem never to have got a name, a favorite also of Bach’s (as in the sonata Wq. 65/17)\(^\text{78}\). It announces a short recitativic formula, followed by a drawn-out arioso which serves as an open-ended middle movement. The way the transition is (on the basis of sequential harmony) melodically unified is remarkable: three ‘kinds of music’, the motoric hustle-and-bustle, the short recitative insert, and the subsequent sentimental cantilena follow a scalar outline over the main melody notes just exceeding an octave (mm 162-170: D–C♯–B–A–G♯–F♯–E–D–C). The cantilena (mm 165-183) is one of the more likely instances of Bach influence;\(^\text{79}\) the sequence it includes (mm 175-180) is one of the most sentimental moments in Haydn (Example 7).

\(^{78}\) Cf. note 40.

\(^{79}\) Leisinger (1994) p. 301-4
On a half cadence follow a Minuet theme and variations, the simplicity of which acquires by this preparation a transcendental quality which might be lacking otherwise. The uprooting of continuity by the transitional movement may add to the significance of a quasi-quotation of thearioso-interlude in Variation 6: where the ‘aesthetic I’ has made itself manifest, resemblance becomes reminiscence. Variation 2 (Example 8a), with both voices of the theme in the left hand, brings out a similarity of the theme to the A minor middle movement of Bach’s Sonata in A major Wq. 65/32 (H. 135) (Example 8b), which has the same device in mm 51-52. Bach’s movement, headed *Andante con tenerezza*, is a sarabande alternating ornamented statements of the eight measure theme with modulating transformations and a statement in the major mode. While the phrase structure of Haydn’s theme looks like an amplification
of Bach’s, doubling the number of bars, it is unlikely that Haydn knew this manuscript sonata.

**Example 8a:** Haydn, Sonata Hob. XVI:30:ii, mm 33-38

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Example 8a: Haydn, Sonata Hob. XVI:30:ii, mm 33-38
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**Example 8b:** C. P. E. Bach, Sonata Wq. 65/32:ii (H. 135) (1758 or later), mm 51-54

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Example 8b: C. P. E. Bach, Sonata Wq. 65/32:ii (H. 135) (1758 or later), mm 51-54
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Looking back on the first movement of Haydn’s sonata, and wondering whether there is a specific motivation to be found for the unusual transitory middle movement, we cannot draw a parallel to very similar intrusions in Bach’s Sonatas in A Wq. 55/4 (H. 186) or in B-flat Wq. 51/2 (H. 151). The first is a quasi-symphonic galloping *Allegro*, which is halted on the cadence, to prepare with a *ta-dá* signal for the *Poco Adagio* in F-sharp minor (which reminds so strongly of KV 488). In Wq. 51/2 the ‘intrusion’ is more fully motivated by the overall dramaturgy – the previous movement sounding like a clavier-adaptation of a bravura aria, preceded by a truncated slow introduction, which after its *pp* final cadence is re-asserted (*Adagio mesto e sostenuto*) to lead into the following movement in E-flat. Haydn’s dramaturgy and sense of overall form are very different; if the intrusion is ‘motivated’, it is by the management of flow and stasis: flow in the long sequences of mm 26-37 and mm 79-96, stasis in the subsequent key confirmation areas. The recitative thus breaks stasis at a point of arrival, which after the extraordinarily expressive sequence might sound unsatisfactory.

The *Adagio* of Haydn’s Sonata Hob. 34 in E minor has a transitional conclusion similar to the beginning of that of Sonata Hob. 30. This exquisitely lyrical movement, considered by H. C. Robbins Landon an uninspiring finger exercise,80 is one of those that feel like a choreography for the hands, giving us a sense of the composer at his instrument, approaching the keyboard with utmost relaxation, shaping the melody with arm and hand rather than finger play, creating smooth quasi-vocal lines by portamenti, picking out bass notes by a gentle movement of the arm. The eight measure *Hauptsatz* of this sonata form (Example 9a) has the very common stop-stop-go-shape (T-D, D-T, cadence). Its continuation slips seemlessly into concerto style, after the cadential trill in m. 17 sliding back into the intimacy of a very Bach-ish cadence in the low register (Example 9b). The sequential development section starts

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80 "[…] the Adagio is rather empty and the intricate figurations are suitable to the pupil's fingers but hardly calculated to awaken his enthusiasm.” Landon (1978) p. 584
with a statement on the dominant of the parallel key, that is, the tonic key of the first movement, quoting (in m. 22) m. 8 of that movement. The second concertante cadence at the end of the movement – a deceptive cadence - is followed by a ta-dá signal announcing a varied restatement of the cadential motive of m. 22 and concluding on the dominant of E minor (Example 9c).

Example 9a: Haydn, Sonata Hob. XVI:34:ii (publ. 1783), mm 1-8

Example 9b: Haydn, Sonata Hob. XVI:34:ii, mm 16-22

The Vivace molto seems to compensate for the North-German character of the second movement by letting an Alberti bass run most of the time. Its character indication innocently however is unusual in the Viennese tradition and likely to have been adopted from Bach. As a performance direction, it probably warns us to make the melody not too expressive and keep the accompaniment light. As a character indication, after its semi-operatic preparation this sudden ingénue mood seems one of posturing rather than true nature. The contrast between both movements is bridged by hidden detail: the bare melodic outline of mm 1-4 of the second movement, scale notes 1-7-2-3, is copied in the Vivace by the notes around the barlines (e²–d²–f²–g²); the descending seventh of the second half of the Adagio

81 Leisinger (1994) p. 316
theme (mm 9-10: G–A on a progression I₆–II₆, echoed by the fifth D–G on the
cadence) is varied on sequential harmonies in mm 9-18 of the Vivace (D–E, C–D₂, B–
E). This finale has a variation form which alternates a minor antecedent and a major
consequent. The same form is found in the finale of Sonata Hob. 44 and in the
emotionally profound ‘Piccolo divertimento’ in F minor Hob. XVII:6, and the

Example 9c: Haydn, Sonata Hob. XVI:34:ii, mm 43-49 and iii, mm1-19

Vivace molto

innocentemente
source for the procedure is very likely to be Bach’s one-movement Sonata in C minor Wq. 50/6 (H. 140). Though expressive content and keyboard technique in this sonata (Hob. 34) may be said to be close to *empfindsam* attitudes, it would be wrong to say that it is in the ‘empfindsam manner’; structurally, its harmonic and melodic phrases are too long and regular. More representative of *Empfindsamkeit* in Haydn are the sonatas in C minor Hob. 2083, E-flat major Hob. 38, G minor Hob. 44, and C major Hob. 48. The expressive contents of these sonatas seem however more straightforward. It is the ambiguity of ‘public’ and ‘private’ attitudes in the Adagio, the dubious innocence of the Vivace, this all preceded by the stormy *Presto* with its quasi-improvisatory (but thematic) arpeggios in the development section, which show an expressive complexity comparable to that of Bach.84

### 2.4 ‘Sprache der Empfindungen’

Structurally deeper, and more problematic, than the conception of music as ‘speaking’ by surface prosodic features is the doctrine of a ‘language of emotions’. This is different from the traditional idea that the ‘movement’ perceived in music would express, represent or excite emotion or *Gemüthsbewegung*. The motion-emotion equation combines very well with the baroque *Affektenlehre*. In the *Empfindsamkeit* a new element is coming into play, which significantly changes musical aesthetics in the direction of a process-oriented conception, in which the musical-emotional motion itself is considered dynamic, changeable. Sulzer, who stresses that no formulas can be given for specific expressions, proposes that the composer should collect expressive phrases, vary them and see how the expression changes with variation; more importantly, he pleads for transitions of tempo and rhythm (*Bewegung*) which should express changes in emotional expression.85 As practiced by Bach in his works, and prescribed in the *Versuch*, the musician should not just communicate emotions, but may alternate them in quick succession: “Kaum, daß er einen stillt, so erregt er einen andern, folglich wechselt er beständig mit Leidenschaften ab.”86 For many theorists, this was still a difficult issue. Johann Jakob Engel, not an old man (a generation younger than Bach) wrote in 1780:

> Setzen sie, daß das schönste accompagnirte Recitativ eines Hasse ohne die Singstimme, oder noch besser vielleicht, daß ein Bendasches Duodram ohne die Rollen, bloß vom Orchester ausgeführt werde; was würden Sie in dem besten, mit dem feinsten Geschmak und der richtigsten Beurtheilung geschriebenen Stücke zu hören glauben? Ganz gewiß die wilden Phantasieen eines Fieberkranken. Warum das aber? Offenbar, weil die Folge von Ideen oder Begebenheiten, aus welcher allein die Folge der Empfindungen konnten begriffen werden, aus dem Ganzen weggenommen worden.87

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83 Rosen calls the first movement of this sonata “the finest example we have of a style often labelled *Empfindsamkeit* or ‘sensibility’” (sleeve notes entitled *Three Sturm-und-Drang Sonatas or Three ‘Romantic’ Sonatas* for the recording CBS 61112).
84 ‘Ironic distance’ in some works of Haydn is discussed in November (2007).
85 Sulzer (1771), article *Melodie - Ausdruck* (see note 50).
86 Bach (1753) Bd. I p. 122

C. P. E. Bach, Haydn, and the art of mixed feelings © Lodewijk Muns 2008 – p. 30
From this he deduces the demand that a sonata or symphony contain no more than one Leydenschaft, which may ‘branch’ (ausbeugen) into various Empfindungen (presupposing a clear differentiation between the two). This was many years after Lessing (in Critique nr. 27 of the Hamburgische Dramaturgie, 1767) had launched his notorious phrase of the ‘musical monster’: “Eine Symphonie, die in ihren verschieden Sätzen verschiedne, sich widersprechende Leidenschaften ausdrückt, ist ein musikalisches Ungeheuer [...].”88 No doubt this strong word has contributed to the Zitierfreude of historians; in the context of Lessing’s argument the statement looses much of its force. In brief, the argument runs like this: music must be unambiguous in its ‘affective’ content; however, within one movement the composer can realize contrasts (“Es sei, daß er es in einem Stücke, von der erforderlichen Länge, eben so wohl tun könne”), but from one movement to another, a sharp contrast would be an unpleasant shock. The licence to shock is the poet’s exclusively, because words may provide a post facto rationalization. Lacking such rationalization, music leaves us with unmediated and incomprehensible contrast. Gerstenberg has contradicted this judgment privately (1768) à propos the (later so-called) ‘Hamlet-fantasie’ discussed above; publicly, C. F. Cramer in 1783 pronounced the fantasia Wq. 58/6 in E-flat “das förmliche Dementi” of the unitary-affect-dogma.89 They could have used Lessing’s own words. Lessing allows both transitions and mixtures of affective content; in fact, his discussion of the music which occasioned the article, J. F. Agricola’s music for Voltaire’s Semiramis, might pass for a manifesto defending programme music. With strong approval, he finds in the three-movement Anfangssymphonie mixed contents characterized as: “ernsthaft; manchmal gar wild und stürmisch; [...] Zärtlichkeit, Reue, Gewissensangst, Unterwerfung [...].” Movement 2 evokes “dunkle und mitleidige Klagen;” and in the third “vermischen sich die beweglichen Tonwendungen mit stolzen [...]”. Since the author also demands that an overture do no more but indicate “den allgemeinen Ton des Stücks [...], und nicht stärker, nicht bestimmter, als ihn ungefähr der Titel angibt,” we must wonder – the title being Semiramis – how much is ‘in a name’!

When Johann Nikolaus Forkel sketched in the introduction to his Allgemeine Geschichte der Musik a theory of music as ‘language of the emotions’, the element of ‘motion’ was given only marginal significance. He conceived of music as independent of language but an essentially parallel phenomenon, being “eine allgemeine Sprache der Empfindungen [...] deren Umfang eben so groß ist und seyn kann, als der Umfang einer ausgebildeten Ideen-Sprache.”90 The linguistic features of music mainly reside in syntax, manifested in Periodologie. Taking Forkel’s main point seriously – that musical syntax is (in some sense) like linguistic syntax – one has to admit that there are many obvious flaws in his account. In large part, these flow from the presuppositions that constitute the framework of his theory. First, what we may call his historicism: the idea that the music of his days is what music has come to be and

88 Lessing (1982) p. 155
90 Forkel (1788) p. 19
ought to be, that music has ‘realized itself’, like language (though through an incommensurably longer process!). Second, the idea that what music is, must be explained by its origin, this being the common origin of music and language in emotion (probably deriving this from Herder’s *Abhandlung über den Ursprung der Sprache*, 1772). In this theory of expressive origin, an insight into the psychological dimension and the process of signification is conspicuously lacking.

A key concept in Forkel’s quasi-linguistic theory of music is *Logik*, defined as *innere Bedeutung* (§ 74), which corresponds to harmony. Harmony determines (bestimmt) a potentially tonally ambiguous melody in a way that makes it a “real truth to perception” (“für die Empfindung eine wirkliche Wahrheit” §§ 20, 38). This is not easy to interpret, especially on the basis of the harmonic theory of the time. While Dahlhaus rightly points out that the proposed analogy of harmony and logic is inflated (“Überinterpretation”)\(^\text{91}\) and imprecise, Forkel was not embroidering on metaphor.

The basis for the conception of music as ‘language’ is the idea that music expresses musical *Gedanken*, units of undetermined extension with some definite expressive content. Widespread use of the term coincides roughly with the period of *Empfindsamkeit*, especially around the ‘Berliner Schule’\(^\text{92}\); for Bach it is an ordinary, often applied notion:

> Worinn aber besteht der gute Vortrag? in nichts andern als der Fertigkeit, musikalische Gedancken nach ihrem wahren Inhalte und Affeckt singend oder spielend dem Gehöre empfindlich zu machen. Man kann durch die Verschiedenheit desselben einerley Gedancken dem Ohre so veränderlich machen, daß man kaum mehr empfindet, daß es einerley Gedancken gewesen sind.\(^\text{93}\)

*Gedanke* would thus liken the fixed element in a musical unit – the ‘notes’, or rather what they directly represent – to the propositional content of a sentence, which remains the same, while in music performance may appear to change the ‘formulation’. No features of a musical *Gedanke* could make it ‘true’; instead, it may be said to be well-formed or ‘making sense’. Dahlhaus interprets this by distinguishing harmonic progression as ‘grammar’ from the underlying ‘logic’ of fifth-relations, as different ‘layers’ in the hierarchy of harmonic phenomena.\(^\text{94}\) Since harmony is in Forkel’s thought a category of grammar as well as ‘logic’, this might be the most sensible explanation. If it is true that in the recitative quoted above (Example 4) the words “Es sei – zum Tode” express (by turning around, as it were, the meaning of “Hoffnung”) better the enharmonic change of G-sharp to A-flat, which effects a turn back toward F minor, harmonic relations as ‘inner meaning’ can be correlated with aspects of linguistic meaning. The vindication of harmony (contra Rousseau) received Bach’s special embrace in his review of Forkel’s *Geschichte*. It is

\(^{91}\) Dahlhaus (1985) p. 678
\(^{92}\) Leisinger (1999)
\(^{93}\) Bach (1753) Bd. I p. 117
\(^{94}\) Dahlhaus (1989) p. 91
harmony which has effected the emancipation of music from its subserviance to poetry and dance:

Ohne Harmonie, die keinem alten Volke bekannt war, konnte sie unmöglich aus eigenen Kräften wirken, sondern mußte sich eben aus Mangel eigener zusammenhängender Ausdrücke an Poesie, Tanz, u.s.f. so fest anschmiegen, daß sie uns fast stets nur in dieser Gesellschaft erscheint.95

In Forkel’s system rhetoric is the art of combining musical sentences or Gedanken (§§ 29, 68, 73). In this, he departs from the traditional Figurenlehre which was the heart of earlier theories of musical rhetoric. His emphasis on harmony reflects a changed way of harmonic thinking which took away the raison d’être of Figurenlehre – as a system designed to explain exceptions to rules of counterpoint.96 Since he departs from traditional concepts of musical rhetoric, he considers this a discipline hardly known (§ 69). He absolves Mattheson from shortcomings in his earlier rhetorical theory, on the basis of a lack of sophistication of the music of his time:

[...] zu seiner Zeit [...] war die Musik noch nicht von der Beschaffenheit, daß sich eine Zusammenhängende musikalische Rhetorik aus ihr hätte abstrahieren lassen. Es fehlte ihr nicht nur Feinheit und Geschmack, sondern auch vorzüglich derjenige Zusammenhang ihrer Theile, der sie theils durch die Entwickelung der Gedanken auseinander, theils durch die Einheit des Styls u.s.w. erst zu einer förmlichen Empfindungsrede machte.97

Since Mattheson’s days were those of J. S. Bach, this paragraph is surprising – the implication being that the ‘language’ of J. S. Bach, “der größte musikalische Dichter und der größte musikalische Deklamator, den es je gegeben hat, und den es wahrscheinlich geben wird” – lacked sophistication for a fully developed musical rhetoric!98

A keyboard approach somewhat similar to that of the Adagio of Haydn’s Sonata Hob. 34 is (for all the structural differences) found in the G minor Andante of Bach’s Sonata Wq. 55/6 (H. 187) in G major (Example 10). Set between a highly whimsical first movement, which starting from the interrupted chord sequence in the first measure seems to articulate indecision with intermittent bouts of frenzy, and a finale which celebrates confidence, this movement has a fantasia-character, with irregular melodic phrases, fast, often surprising harmonic moves, and constantly changing rhythmic relations of bass and top voice. There are however regularities and motivic relations to balance, in which elements which seem to lack thematic definition in themselves – a vague introductory line, an enharmonic ‘pun’ and a sequence – acquire thematic significance. The overall harmonic outline is clear: arrival at the parallel major in m. 10, followed by a move to the more remote F minor (m. 15), re-arrival at the tonic in m. 17. The first harmonized tonic area (mm. 2–5) is realized as a Quintschrittsequenz which returns at the ‘reprise’ of m. 17, this time in augmentation

95 Suchalla (1994) p. 1249
96 Dahlhaus (1985) p. 690. Forkel however entertains a second, much wider conception of rhetoric; in this, it is a compositum mixtum including also genre (Schreibarten), performance and criticism.
97 Forkel (1788) p. 37
98 Forkel (1802) p. 96
with right hand triplet passages borrowed from m. 15. The continuation of these triplets in the left hand (mm. 21) produces a quasi-duplicate of the unharmonized and metrically free introductory line. This introduction had by a quite unusual asymmetry of repeated segments a somewhat dizzying effect; the unpredictable strokes in mm 19-22 contribute to a similar disorientation. The arrival of this passage at the c bass note (m. 22) parallels that at the emphatic g in the introduction, which is likely to be heard as the a of the neapolitan chord (the implied harmonic outline of the introduction is I – II6) before it resolves ‘the wrong way’. This g thus acquires structural significance, ‘reincarnating’ in m. 22 as the c that prepares for the secondary dominant harmony which leads to the tonic arrival in m. 25. The Quintschrittsequenz has a second reprise, pausing before hitting the A in the bass (m. 26), another reminder of the false a of the introduction; this time we hear a real Neapolitan, which acquires its cadential resolution in the next measure – a deceptive cadence, which is followed by arpeggios imitating those which in m. 9 had signalled the confident arrival in B-flat. At the cadential resolution, the outward gesture of the arpeggio, with a reminder of m. 16, turns inward again. These rapid changes of outwardness and inwardness, the bridging of conflicting expressions even within a phrase, are no doubt the most remarkable aspect of this intense musical soliloquy, which ranges from the deeply melancholic cadence of the introduction to the dramatic highpoint in m. 16, where a slur binds the end of one line, a recitativic diminished fifth in the high register, to the cadential thirds in the middle register. Harmony functions in this discourse as a ‘logic’ by offering not just syntactic integrity, but creating functional relations between phrases with enough sophistication to articulate not merely a sequence of emotional states, but ambiguity, inner contradiction and irony.

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99 One of Bach’s as yet apparently uncatalogued stock figures, interpreted by Gerstenberg in the Fantasia Wq. 63/6 with appropriate morbidity (though bad prosody, cf. note 60) as ‘der Verwesung nahe Stunde’. A more frequently occurring and highly typical cadence uses the flattened seventh note of the scale, e.g. Wq. 50/2:i (H 137) m. 22, and with curious ambiguity in the first Largo of Wq. 67 (H 300).
Example 10: C. P. E. Bach, Sonata Wq. 55/6:ii (H. 187) (1765) (continued on next page)

Andante
Abstract

The concept of ‘Empfindsamkeit’ in music has been insufficiently defined. An attempt to establish the scope of the musical Empfindsamkeit has to take into account the moral-emotional aspects of the international movement of ‘sensibility’. Moses Mendelssohn’s concept of ‘vermischte Empfindungen’, which he developed around the central empfindsam concept of ‘pity’, articulates an awareness of greater complexity of emotional states in aesthetic context. Such complexity is expressed in some of the keyboard works of Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach and of Joseph Haydn. The question of an influence of Bach on Haydn (which has already been established with reasonable security) is for our musical comprehension less important than that of perceived affinity or ‘kinship’ in expressive content, which should not be considered outside the province of analysis.

The empfindsam manner, as exemplified by Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach, has been crucially involved in the ‘emancipation’ of instrumental music. A factor in this is the analogy between music and language, which has often been vaguely described as ‘das redende Prinzip’. This may involve: 1. Surface prosodic features, evident in instrumental recitative, which goes far beyond being an imitation of vocal recitative; 2. A non-metaphorical structural analogy of music and language, which by J. N. Forkel (and often since) has been wrongly considered to be not a historical condition of the late 18th Century, but the essence of music. As an artificial, culturally bound feature of music it has to be taken seriously, though the scope and value of this analogy are still insufficiently understood.

The works of Laurence Sterne, often associated with Haydn, are discussed in order to elucidate some of the literary aspects of Empfindsamkeit.

Postscript (2012)

Footnote 99 refers to “apparently uncatalogued stock figures”. A comprehensive overview of such figures is given by Robert O. Gjerdingen in Music in the Galant Style (2007); the “highly typical cadence” had been previously discussed by Charles L. Cudworth (1949), and has been dubbed ‘the Cudworth’ by Gjerdingen.

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(B) The collected works for solo keyboard. Ed. with introd. by Darrell Berg. New York [etc.], Garland 1985
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(E) Die sechs Sammlungen von Sonaten, Freien Fantasien und Rondos für Kenner und Liebhaber. [Hrsg. von Carl Krebs]. Leipzig, : Breitkopf & Härtel s.a. Exxs. 1, 3, 5, 10 are reproduced from (E), which closely follows the first editions reproduced in (B) (f-mark relocated to top voice in Ex. 3 and restored in Ex. 10 m. 23); Ex. 2 after (D) (first version) and the facsimile in (B); Ex. 4 reproduces the first edition in (B); Ex. 8b after (C). The pieces quoted were not yet available in (A).

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