a journal of the Society for Music Theory

Volume 4, Number 2, March 1998

Review Article, "Will the Real Anton Webern Please Stand Up?": Anne C. Shreffler, *Webern and the Lyric Impulse* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), pp. xvi+256

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KEYWORDS: Shreffler, Webern, lyricism, atonality, analysis, sketch study, postmodern, vocal works

ABSTRACT: Anne Shreffler's recent book on Webern is a breath of fresh air in the antiseptic laboratory of more traditional Webern studies. Challenging his conventional image as a "cerebral master of control," she paints an intimate portrait of a lyrical composer of Lieder in the line of Schubert and Wolf, whose intellectual concern for logical coherence is tempered by an intuitive appreciation of the expressive potential of ambiguity. This book presents detailed musicological evidence about Webern's life and compositional process to substantiate analytical assertions about his music in support of this lyrical reappraisal. There is important new information about the composer's sketching routine, the precise nature and sequence of each compositional step, the aesthetic criteria invoked in revisions, and the essential character of his creative decision making. Contrary to analytic approaches that ignore or devalue ambiguity as a flaw, Shreffler praises the richness of multiple associations it implies. Poignantly, it is the quintessentially structured music of Webern, the paragon of analytic formalism, in which the author asserts this theoretical imperative. Her musical insights and interdisciplinary methodology merit careful attention and considerable praise.

This review is the last to be prepared under former MTO Reviews Editor, Brian Alegant, who commissioned it.

Introduction

[1] It is testimony to Anton Webern's stature that the contemporary erosion of structural formalism has not witnessed any concomitant decline of interest in his music. Attention has shifted rather toward the composer's neglected expressivity and poetic sensibility. In *Webern and the Lyric Impulse: Songs and Fragments on Poems of Georg Trakl*, Anne Shreffler adds momentum to the current swing away from a traditional structuralist approach. Her thesis is that the composer's more intuitive alter ego and the "lyric impulse" at the core of his music has been undeservedly overlooked. Shreffler condemns Webern's exclusive "association with a cerebral, detached aesthetic" as a historical bias fostered by the "anti-Romantic agenda of the post-war serialists," an overreaction against 19th-century sentimentalism, and the "Darmstadt project's" reification of systematic relationships in all music—particularly St. Anton's (page 3).(1)

[2] Shreffler's lyrical Webern is no longer the calculating Mr. Spock of "sparseness, severity, and control" like the familiar logical one, an "intellectually driven genius" (page 4) determined to extricate himself from the lugubrious excesses of musical Romanticism. The meticulous musical engineer who memorized train schedules, once revered for "building structures from sound itself," is transmogrified into Shreffler's "champion of the lyric genre" (page 4), an expressive humanist invoking a keen poetic sensibility to avert an aesthetic crisis caused by an arid and overly mechanistic compositional technique.

[3] Lyrical Webern appeals to our heart, not our brain. He implores us to hear his music not as "Chinese puzzles" to be deciphered and unraveled, but as emotional experiences to be felt and savored. Shreffler conceives of these neglected compositional traits as manifesting a latent tension within musical modernism itself. She dubs Webern's setting of Trakl's poetry in op. 14 the centerpiece of her study, a "quintessentially modernist work" (page 19). Although the author does not propose this realignment, however, lyrical Webern can be filtered through a postmodern, poststructuralist lens as well.(2)

Lyricism

[4] Lyricism is the gravamen of Shreffler's complaint. But just what exactly is *lyrical* about Webern's music? The composer once suggested that everything he wrote had an "almost exclusively lyrical nature" (page 18). Yet his music is surely not "lyrical" in any ordinary sense of the word—say like Puccini's. Most listeners perceive a poetic stillness in these enigmatic sounds, a myopic focus on the inner nature of things—what Kierkegaard called a sense of "passionate inwardness." Yet, whatever is lyrical about these haunting echoes from an intensely personal, private world seems elusive enough for advocates of opposing aesthetics to appropriate as evidence of their own agenda. These are murky waters in which drifts in trying to assert lyricism as the cornerstone of Webern's music.(3)

Background

[5] Shreffler has emerged as a significant contributor to the renaissance in Webern studies over the past decade. Her partiality toward Webern's music presumably played some role in her own expatriation to Basel, Switzerland, placing the composer's archives in the Sacher Foundation in her analytic backyard. She has co-authored several articles with Felix Meyer, its knowledgeable curator, including a recent essay on revisions in Bailey's fine collection. Shreffler's book joins Bailey's own analysis of Webern's serial music and Allen Forte's eagerly awaited study of the atonal works as the only books about this composer by a single author in the English language in recent times.[(4)] This alone puts *Lyric Impulse* on the required reading list for anyone seriously interested in Webern.

Interdisciplinary Approach

[6] Shreffler is also one of a small yet growing band of scholars wearing two hats in an attempt to bridge the methodological schism between musicology and theory via "historically contextualized analysis." Musical works are not approached as insulated, autonomous structures, but as living texts conditioned by their own historicity. From this perspective, the analytic task is not fully satisfied by discerning abstract structural relationships as though one were inspecting a crystal in a lab. It necessitates grounding analytic inferences in the evolutionary process of actual creation. Shreffler's observations about musical structure are not distilled in a theoretical vacuum, but are wedded empirically to its genealogy. Her musicological data carries analytic import; this is musicologically informed analysis. For anyone other than a devout purist of either discipline, the author's effort to span the interdisciplinary divide via this hybridized methodology is refreshing.

Sketch Study

[7] Since the conventional image of a logical Webern arose in a relative musicological void, it is vulnerable to attack on the grounds that it may be dictated more by theoretical bias than historical fidelity. Shreffler appeals what she condemns as Darmstadt's premature verdict on the grounds of newly discovered evidence. She is among the first to peruse the atonal sketches, particularly for the vocal works of opp. 12–18 upon which her study dwells. In general, her book falls in the same camp as Bailey's analysis of the serial sketches by emphasizing their link rather than break with musical tradition. It also supplements a growing body of analytic sketch studies of this and other post-tonal composers.[(5)]

[8] The analytic as opposed to musicological value of sketch study, of course, has come under attack from those considering it irrelevant to the autonomous structure of the finished work. Shreffler's methodological debt to Lewis Lockwood, a leading sketch advocate and editor of the *Studies in Musical Genesis and Structure* series in which this book appears (based upon Shreffler's 1989 dissertation under Lockwood's direction), is evident from her unflinching archival commitment.[(6)] Unlike Lockwood, however, Shreffler attempts to circumvent rather than refute the controversy by disclaiming any objective assertions about the music itself, and modestly asserting that sketches merely enrich our own subjective apprehension instead. She thus leads with a striking neo-Kantian curtailment of claims: we can never know music anyway, but only our perception of it. The value of sketch study, Shreffler disarmingly confesses, lies in the work's "reception rather than elucidation" (page 12).

[9] Despite Shreffler's epistemological disclaimer, however, like most theorists she continues to make what still sound like objective propositions about the music itself—not simply about her subjective impressions. The legitimate distinction Shreffler is driving at, though, entails a fruitful shift of focus in sketch study away from the compositional *intent* of a revision to its compositional *effect*. Instead of trying to burrow inside the composer's head to divine the subjective reasons for his choices, we can discern their objective consequences in the structure of the music itself.

[10] Whatever the vicissitudes of sketch study, the fact remains we are still interested in the underlying issue itself, that is, the complex relationship between the creative process and the work of art. Analysis of the score as an isolated entity can sometimes present a narrow, stoic view that may feel incomplete, contrived, or unsatisfying. Sketch study, like the companion issue of compositional intent, is controversial precisely because it breaches this modernist requirement of aesthetic autonomy. In this sense, sketch study has a postmodern bite, insistently anchoring analytic abstractions in the terra firma of creative reality. In the hands of a skilled practitioner like Shreffler, who not only makes it her academic business to gain access to archival sites in remote sectors of the scholarly universe, but also possesses the musicological and theoretical skills to construe them in enlightening ways, sketch study can be a valuable analytic tool.

Antiteleology

[11] Negating the autonomy of the finished work, Shreffler shows compensatory respect for the sketches themselves by rejecting a teleological view of the compositional process. She cautions against forcing earlier versions of a piece into a "teleological step ladder" by demoting them to inherently inferior stages of creation, progressively purged of their impurities and "culminating in an aesthetically and structurally perfect work" (page 13). Revisions change a work, but without necessarily improving it.(7) Sketches merely represent "points along a continuum [on] a path that could even have taken different directions" in the creative evolution of a work. Their analysis reduces "our perception of [a piece's] autonomy by making audible the different voices present at various stages of its becoming" and "suggests that a view of Webern's music based only on the published works is incomplete" (page 13).

[12] Shreffler's attitude toward the creative process parallels her rejection of the modernist view of music history as a teleological progression between different styles, in favor of a postmodern conception that is de-centered, discontinuous, fragmented, and pluralistic. History as evolution is replaced by history as synchronic tension. Webern's atonality is not an embryonic, inherently flawed stage of unsystematic musical chromaticism, eventually shedding its structural deficiencies and blossoming into the rational totalization of serialism. Serialism can claim no structural superiority over atonality simply because it came later. These are both independent and fully developed musical languages, premised upon equally valid but merely different aesthetic criteria. If anything, atonality's more ambiguous theoretical premises might account for its greater longevity in surviving serialism into the postmodern era.

Compositional Process

[13] Shreffler traces the successive stages of Webern's compositional process through motivic fragments, continuity drafts, revision copies, and printer's copies, in each step carefully monitoring his musical methods and choices. We learn that he customarily began composing by intuitively conceiving a short, striking musical gesture which then became the opening idea of the piece. Webern next extended this motivic cell into a single, monophonic vocal line, from which he then generated the remainder of the piece. Accompanying instrumental parts were added only after he first completed the vocal line, as opposed to vertically coordinating all the parts together at the same time.

[14] This contrapuntal layering of successive parts is visually evidenced by discernible vertical misalignments between individual lines in the sketches shown in the book. It is also conspicuously reminiscent of similar vertical misalignments between successively conceived voices in the music of Heinrich Isaac, whom Webern notably admired. Shreffler construes this cumulation of independent melodic strands as revealing a predominately linear approach to polyphony, which she in turn attributes to the essential lyricism of Webern's musical conception. She further extrapolates that the composer's lack of interest in combinatoriality in his later serial works manifests this same lyric orientation, inducing him to conceive of rows primarily from a horizontal and melodic perspective rather than a vertical or harmonic one.

[15] Other crucial aspects of the sketches support Shreffler's revised conception of a lyrical Webern as well. Instead of deliberating intensely over each painstaking note as one might imagine, he actually seems to have jotted his musical ideas down rather quickly, fluidly, and intuitively, revising if at all on the spot. In fact, there is virtually no evidence that he ever reworked or even revisited previously sketched material during this atonal period at all. His entire approach to composing appears to be based instead upon free transformations in a through-composed, "stream-of consciousness-like fashion" (page 234), as opposed to any rigorous, intellectual, systematic procedures that might appeal to logical Webern.

[16] Given the intricate structure of the musical outcome, it is nothing short of astonishing that Webern's atonal sketches, like Schoenberg's, reveal absolutely no precompositional aids, schemes, charts, plans, or diagrams suggestive of any systematic approach whatsoever.(8) They also suggest as much concern with purely expressive elements on the musical surface, such as contour, register, texture, and orchestration, as they do with underlying pitch structures. Rehearsal and performance materials confirm Webern's preference for an expressive performance style far removed from antiseptic precision of Boulezian modernist performance practice. Finally, of greatest interest to theorists, contrary to the hallowed image of the composer in single-minded pursuit of rational order and coherence, Shreffler's study reveals that Webern at times deliberately sought out ambiguity and disorder for their lyrical potential.

Vocal Works

[17] Shreffler contends that the vocal works of Webern's middle period, "the vocal decade" from 1914–1924 comprising half his total output, "have simply been bracketed out of the Webern canon" because they are incompatible with the conventional image of a logical Webern (page 4). She argues that these "forgotten works" contain an essential lyric ingredient rather than a logical one, that "lies at the heart of all his music" (page 18), and accordingly warrant a radical reappraisal of the composer's evolution.

[18] Shreffler detects a subtle shift from the static pointillistic textures of free atonality in Webern's early pre-war instrumental pieces to the more extended linear counterpoint in the later works after 1924. She attributes this transition not to Schoenberg's serialism, but rather to Webern's discovery of lyricism during the intervening vocal period. The crisis in Webern's career was not his later stylistic confrontation with his mentor's methodology and his need to develop a personal serial voice, but rather his more elemental need to develop a basic contrapuntal and melodic technique. The specific manner in which Webern confronted this fundamental challenge—by learning how to write a flowing lyrical atonal line in a vocal setting—set the stage for how he later addressed serialism as well.

[19] According to Shreffler, Webern's initial atonal period from 1908–14 hit a dead end in musical miniaturism because his compositional technique was basically incapable of sustaining an extended melodic line, and thus generating bona fide counterpoint. These early aphoristic pieces from opp. 5–11 are "not contrapuntal and could not be," in the sense of combining independent, self-sufficient horizontal melodies (page 107). They have an essentially vertical construction based upon the static "juxtaposition of non-overlapping musical ideas" and "isolated gestures," creating more of a timbral mosaic than a contrapuntal web. Even in those works that "seem contrapuntal" like op. 5/3, Shreffler contends that the apparent parts are really only "quasi-independent layers rather than truly autonomous, self sustaining polyphonic melodic voices." In short, Webern really didn't know at this stage "how to maintain the total chromatic in a contrapuntal context" (pages 107–08).

[20] Shreffler argues that the composer turned in desperation to song as a way out of this musical cul de sac. The continuity of the words in a poetic text necessitated horizontal thinking and a more fluid melodic approach. Writing vocal music in a declamatory style, to which Webern exclusively devoted himself for ten years, led to a more integrated linear style, as opposed to the fractured juxtaposition of autonomous cells in the earlier instrumental pieces. Projecting the long lines of a poem with a sustained melody, from which the other parts organically derived, not only led out of the atonal impasse, but eventually blossomed into a linear, melodic, or "lyrical" approach to serialism. Webern's experience in writing through composed vocal music thus "predisposed" him to "writing rows melodically and accompanying them with similar linear figures" (page 18).[(9)]

Disjunct Lyricism

[21] Shreffler discerns that Webern's final serial period represents a synthesis between the disjunction of his early period and the lyricism of his middle period, culminating in a hybrid "disjunct lyricism." He eventually blended the aphoristic, verticalized pointillism of the instrumental miniatures with the fluid, horizontal counterpoint of his songs. After learning how to write extended atonal melodies in his vocal works with the mimetic aid of a text, Webern reabsorbed his earlier fragmented instrumental style by "refracturing" these vocalized melodies, or "instrumentalizing" the vocal line. He thus employed the voice first to achieve a lyrical style, and then proceeded to logically deconstruct it again.

[22] Shreffler places op. 14, *Six Songs on Poems by Georg Trakl* at the musical juncture between these opposing lyrical and logical approaches. But it was only the latter impulse of the first and last periods, without the opposing melodious, lyrical impulse of the middle vocal period that tempered it, that the Darmstadters seized upon and reified in trimming Webern's aesthetic to fit their own formalist conceit. Armed with empirical evidence from the composer's newly discovered sketches, Shreffler seeks to redress this historical imbalance by elevating lyrical Webern to a level of parity with his logical counterpart.

Analytic Approach

[23] Shreffler devotes over half her book to dissecting op. 14 in light of its sketches to furnish analytic support for her claim. Although another reviewer scurrilously castigated her for exploiting the "babble-prose of Power Analysis," the terminology she invokes is conventional set theory. While many theorists will enjoy competent analyses conducted by an astute musicologist with archival details at her fingertips, others might miss a bit more technical sophistication at this evidentiary stage of her case. To be fair, though, there are few scholars capable of combining comprehensive archival skills with a mastery of high-voltage analytic techniques, and one probably ought not expect Shreffler or anyone else for that matter to excel in both.

[24] Given the ambitious methodological scope of her endeavor and the controversial nature of her allegations, however, a broader analytic pallet might help at times. The author's analyses essentially are confined to foreground relationships on the musical surface. They could be enhanced by penetrating to deeper structural levels and adopting a more "transformational attitude." For the most part, though, Shreffler makes an able case with the means she invokes. The book's technical limitations also assure that there are no intimidating theoretical impediments to its apprehension by the expanded audience of musicologists and theorists it is designed to address.

[25] One of the inherent consequences of Shreffler's interdisciplinary approach is the relinquishment of excessive technicality in either direction. While some musicologists may find her invoking analytic "babble-prose," some theorists may discern insufficient analytic evidence to substantiate her claims. To anyone who values communication beyond increasingly narrow occupational walls, however, Shreffler's style is exemplary. A more complex theoretical apparatus might easily compromise not only her hybridized methodology, but her thesis of an approachable, less systematic, lyrical Webern.

[26] Still, Shreffler's discussion of op. 14/4's *Abendland III* is one spot where a heftier analytic toolchest would help. Her contention is that the piece reflects a significant change in compositional technique away from the fragmented juxtaposition of cells towards an integrated, linear contrapuntal web. Attempting to show the organic derivation of instrumental parts from the lyrical vocal line, she extracts a handful of disparate referential sets from the initial vocal gesture—(56E), (3456), (456E), (E056), and (E3456)—which she then designates as a single collective referential motive.

[27] Acknowledging that these constituent sets are "not formally equivalent," Shreffler nonetheless argues that they "are functionally so because of their common origin" in the vocal phrase (page 163). Her analysis here, as well as throughout, could be reinforced by identifying prime forms, instead of merely normal orders. Boiling these down to (016), (0123), (0127), (0167), and (01237) makes things a lot clearer, and highlights their invariant subset relationships. More seriously, however, she restricts herself to locating local recurrences of these different sets on the musical surface, which she then submits as evidence of an organic contrapuntal style manifesting Webern's lyric impulse.

[28] But Shreffler casts too wide a net. Other than their common origin in the initial vocal gesture, there is little analytic payoff derived from noting the subsequent recurrence of so many sets in the instrumental parts. Motivic saturation in itself reveals nothing unique about this particular piece. Numerous first period works reveal the same saturation derived from an opening gesture. Without some further demonstration of how these sets link up to one another at deeper levels of structure, it is not exactly clear how this piece "represents a breakthrough in Webern's handling of motivic atonality . . . changing how motives relate to each other" (page 174), let alone reflecting anything notably lyrical.

Embellishments

[29] In other instances, Shreffler's sketch evidence alone provides a valuable springboard for further analyses bolstering her contention that Webern was not exclusively concerned with achieving maximal structure and order. The revisions of op. 14/3's *Abendland II*, for example, reveal that the composer actually sabotaged long-range coherence to achieve a more expressive local effect. The beginning of the piece presents a pair of (01) dyads, [C-C♯] followed by [D-D♯] at T2. The end presents two (014) trichords at the same pitch levels, [C-C♯-E] and [D-D♯-F♯], also related at the same transpositional level.

[30] Shreffler partitions out the semitone dyads [C-C♯] and [D-D♯] within each trichord to show their equivalence with the opening dyads. She accounts for the nonconforming E and F♯ at the end as "imbedded modifications" of the initial dyadic idea. In an earlier sketch, however, she notes in passing that the opening [C-C♯] dyad was originally preceded by an E, thus

presenting a [C-C♯-E] trichord both at the beginning and the end. A reasonable inference could be drawn that the sketch was therefore actually more unified by a long-range structural relationship than the revision. By lopping off the initial E, Webern disrupted the equivalency between opening and closing trichords, opting in favor of a more local association between dyads at the expense of large-scale unification.

[31] Shreffler's impressive archival excavation of three different sketches of the opening vocal gesture of op. 14/1's *Die Sonne* also affords additional analytic inferences in support of her thesis of a lyrical Webern. Each of the three preliminary versions of the phrase is internally unified by an equivalency relationship between two constituent sets. In the final version, however, Webern again ruptured this internal symmetry by juxtaposing two disparate sets instead. This revision also suggests a preference for lyrical disorder over logical order, supporting the revised conception of the composer Shreffler proposes. This compositional orientation of undermining rather than promoting logical coherence is subtly summed up in the final gesture of the finished work as well. A note-for-note equivalency relationship unfolding progressively between two sets is ultimately derailed by the last two notes of the piece in a dramatic crescendo. The deliberate disruption in the revision process thus provides a useful analytic paradigm for comprehending structural aberrations in the final score, too.

Proto-Serialism

[32] Shreffler falters uncharacteristically in her otherwise convincing attempt to show that Webern was not immediately enamored with serial techniques. According to her, shortly after Schoenberg first serialized op. 25, Webern sketched a quasi-serial "near retrograde" in op. 14/1 between the pentachordal segments <A♭-E♭-D-F-E> and <C♯-C-Eb-D-G> (page 234), which he later threw away. Shreffler contends that the fact that Webern "rejected an operation similar to those found in serial pieces indicates that he was not following a system" (page 234), and thereby manifests his sense of lyrical confinement and dissatisfaction with systematic logic. But while Shreffler's hypothesis of Webern's lukewarm reception of serialism may be correct, this is not the best evidence.

[33] At the outset, these two pentachords are not "near-retrogrades" as Shreffler claims, but rather "near-retrograde inversions" at RI5. Their *ordered pitch-class interval successions*, <-5-1+3-1> and <-1+3-1+5>, are near-retrogrades, not retrograde inversions as they must be to make the pitch segments themselves near-retrogrades. This is a minor oversight that might actually support Shreffler's argument, however, since the abandoned RI relationship is even stronger evidence of a serial state of mind than a mere retrograde.

[34] But Shreffler's case is seriously jeopardized by the fact that the two segments are more directly heard as near-transpositions or traditional canonic imitations. The first four notes of the second pentachord, <C♯-C E♭-D>, form an exact transposition down a whole step of the first pentachord starting on its second note, <E♭-D-F-E>, with the same <-1+3 1> interval succession. Moreover, this is succeeded by another transpositional entrance down another whole step of a third pentachord <B-F♯-F-G♯-A>, whose first four notes transpose those of the first pentachord exactly from its beginning, again with the same intervals <-5 1+3>. In light of this conventional transpositional scheme, Shreffler's contention that lyrical Webern was rebelling against Schoenberg's logically ordered retrogrades and inversions when he abandoned this sketch seems to attack a straw man.[(10)]

Progressive Transformations

[35] Transformational analysis with a dose of "fuzzy logic," however, confirms that these three near-equivalent pentachords are in fact systematically related by a *progressive transformation* or "P-transformation." A "P-transformation" is a recurrent "fuzzy" operation without the strict equivalency requirement of conventional "all-or-nothing" functions on one hand, but which formalizes the vagueness of "near-transformations" by specifying the precise degree of relatedness on the other. Any transformation can be applied recursively or cyclically through incremental stages by progressively increasing or decreasing the number of notes participating as a subset in the operation.

[36] Canonic serial operations, for example, can be defined progressively as "progressive-transposition (PnT)," "progressive-inversion (PnI)," "progressive-retrograde (PnR)," and "progressive-retrograde inversion (PnRI)," where n equals the size or cardinality of the participatory subset of equivalent notes between two near-equivalent sets. The value of n also represents

the number of the successive application or "run-though" of the transformation in a sequence, ranging from (1, 2 . . . m), with m equal to the maximum cardinality of the entire set, at which point the progressive transformation is identical to the normal equivalency operation. P transformations flush out the continuum of transformational increments between the "all-or-nothing" of strict equivalency relationships.(11)

[37] PnRI successively retrogrades the interval succession of the three pentachordal segments in Webern's op. 14/1 sketch, but progressively inverts only n of their members at a time. The first run-through, P1RI, retrogrades the entire intervallic succession <-5-1+3-1> of the first pentachord <A♭-E♭-D-F-E>, but inverts only its first interval. This generates <-1+3-1+5>, the interval succession of the second pentachord, <C♯-C-E♭-D-G>. The descending fourth <A♭-E♭> at the beginning of the first pentachord thus becomes the ascending fourth <D-G> at the end of the second, while the transpositionally invariant tetrachords <E♭-D-F-E> and <C♯-C-E♭-D> remain intact.

[38] The second progressive application, P2RI, then retrogrades the output of P1RI, but this time inverts just its first and last intervals. This generates <-5-1+3+1>, the interval succession of the third pentachord, <B-F♯-F-G♯-A>. Now the first and third pentachords share a transpositionally invariant tetrachord at their beginning, with the descending semitone <F-E> at the end of the first pentachord matching the ascending semitone <G♯-A> at the end of the third pentachord. The three segments of Webern's sketch thus comprise a coherent transformational network logically organized by a single progressive transformation.(12)

[39] But regardless of the means of structural integration in this sketch, Shreffler's conclusion is warranted by its most crucial point: its abandonment. Webern ultimately disrupted even the fuzziest logic by tossing out the second pentachord altogether and substituting a structurally anomalous and inexplicable <C♯-G-C> trichord in the final version instead. The underlying compositional process here as before reveals the composer deliberately revising his sketches to instill greater ambiguity rather than order through the distortion or "fuzzification" of a logical scheme.

Multi-Referentiality

[40] This instantiates Shreffler's pivotal notion of "multiple reference," a term she coins to indicate that Webern's atonal pitch structures often associate flexibly or perhaps "lyrically" with each other in a loose family or "network of references" based upon similarity or resemblance rather than strict, systematic equivalence, somewhat akin to Schoenbergian "developing variation."(13) The "richness of associations" (page 242) through multiple references compensates for the relinquishment of precision. "Even some of [Webern's] most strictly controlled works have elements of ambiguity," she observes, and goes on to cite the unexpected exploration of the "possibilities of row disorder" in his serial music as well (page 4).

[41] The compositional process suggested by these sketches of ambiguating or "dissonating" the normative regularity of a structural idea alters the composer's traditional image as a calculating precisionist invariably seeking total coherence and organic unification. It transforms the familiar portrait of logical Webern into his lyrical alter ego trying to stretch beyond the restrictive confines of his intellect in pursuit of the expressive potential of ambiguity. It also flips the compositional process on its head as a process of deconstruction rather than construction. Instead of logically integrating, purifying, and rationally shaping an initial, amorphous, intuitive idea through the progressive refinement of its structural imperfections, Webern at other times appears to have employed the inverse process. He intentionally blurred the logic of systematic prototypes in order to translate the fractured syntax and juxtaposed metaphors of Trakl's expressionist poetry into the disassociated discourse of free atonality.(14)

[42] Must the act of composing or theorizing inevitably imply defeating incongruities by bending them into conformity with some totalizing principle? Is aesthetic value always dependent upon what Derrida calls the "illusion of a centered structure?" Ironically, it is the music of Webern, this paragon of logical refinement, that suggests not. In presenting this reappraisal, Shreffler invokes a more magnanimous conception not only of his music, but of music generally—one that embraces the beauty of "crippled symmetry" and invites us to celebrate flaws and wrinkles instead of always trying to "iron them out."(15)Ambiguity is not always a shortcoming. It can serve an expressive function comparable to dissonance in a normative context of structural coherence. As Robert Morris points out, conflict rather than unity "can be at the heart" of a piece. When "one does not quite grasp how [music] works," observes David Lewin, he listens "with added, rather than dissipating,

interest."[16]

Conclusion

[43] Theorists and musicologists alike owe Anne Shreffler a debt of gratitude: she has lyricized Webern and, in a sense, the analytic endeavor itself. Shreffler's book serves as a necessary reminder that even St. Anton was not always in the business of organizing every single note so that it conformed to some coherent theoretical account. As Stravinsky once half quipped, "only mediocre composers are consistent."[17]

[44] At the same time, however, Shreffler's lesson in lyricism ought not disrupt one dogma only to substitute another. Her new lyrical Webern need not diminish our appreciation of the old logical one as well, as she herself concedes. An occasional absence of crisp set-class equivalence does not necessarily imply chaos or preclude some other form of rational organization. There are many other significant unifying factors and criteria for musical comprehensibility, particularly with respect to how a piece is heard. Moreover, fuzzy logic and progressive transformations suggest that lyricism and even ambiguity may be achieved through logical means themselves. Lest we forget that logical Webern wrote "even the most fragmented sounds must have a completely coherent effect." Still, at other times lyrical Webern described having "an intuitive vision of the work as a whole . . . inspiration, if you like."[18] Lockwood is wise to counsel sober equilibrium in his preface to Shreffler's book, finding Webern's "lyric impulses tempered at every step by concerns with coherence and structure" (page vi).

[45] Our two Weberns, one logical the other lyrical, exist side by side. Both are real and necessary to our full recognition of their collaborative achievement. But in the end, of course, there is only one real Webern—and he is both together, delicately balanced in a steady state of logical lyricism. It is his music's symbiosis between rationality and intuition, its precarious dialectic between order and expressivity, uniting what Levi Strauss called "the contrary attributes of being both intelligible and untranslatable," that instills its special mystique. This paradox earns Webern's rank and resilience despite shifts in analytic paradigms across the poststructural divide. For how else can the same composer be claimed by contrary aesthetics? Bach, in Webern's time, was appropriated by competing factions. Now Webern seems to have sufficient breadth to be appreciated from different and even opposing perspectives. These oscillating views exist simultaneously in our minds and the music itself. Analysis is simply "a selection," as Leo Treitler once wrote, "from all the true things that may be said" about a work of art.[19]

[46] Despite his advocacy of Darmstadt orthodoxy, Karlheinz Stockhausen nonetheless espoused tolerant catholicity toward Webern's music. As if anticipating Shreffler's heretic reappraisal nearly a half century later, *die Riehe's* "enfante terrible" confessed on the tenth anniversary of the composer's death: "We have been accused of doing violence to Webern's music by reading into it something that is not there at all. There is not one interpretation but as many as there are points of view. The fact that everyone discovers something different in his music and wishes to demonstrate it to others throws a useful light on the manifold ideas about Webern; and that above all, his music allows of interpretation from the most varied points of view speaks only for its vitality. Let us concern ourselves with our common task, for it is unfruitful to make out of it a clash of philosophies. The matter at hand is to acquire a knowledge of the actual contents of Webern's scores, to quicken our perception of it, looking from every possible angle. Not everything that cries out for contradiction should be taken too seriously. And every musician who loves this music may feel it his duty untiringly to bring it nearer to others, to communicate the joy he feels at having discovered it. Then Webern's music will be able gradually to radiate its innermost power, by drawing people together in shared astonishment at such beauty."[20]

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Footnotes

1. Direct quotes from Shreffler's book are indicated by page citation. "St. Anton" is Stravinsky's appellative in "Introduction: A Decade Later," Moldenhauer, ed. *Webern Perspectives*: xix–xxvii. Noting the "imbalance" caused by "hyperserialization" and "number fetishism" that Shreffler seeks to redress, Kathryn Bailey writes: "Webern analysis has until very recently tended not to be enchanted by the naivete of his lyricism so much as bewitched by the complexity of his symmetries." *Webern Studies*, ed. Kathryn Bailey (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996): xiv, xviii. Ernst Krenek's comment that Webern's pieces are "marvelous gems of constructive perfection [and] fantastic complexity . . . integrated like a Chinese puzzle" articulates the conventional assessment. "Anton von Webern: A Profile," *Anton von Webern: Perspectives*, ed. Moldenhauer and Irvine (Seattle: Washington University Press, 1966): 3–14.
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2. Shreffler's expansive interpretation of modernism has ample support, but many scholars discern a sea change warranting the "post" prefix. Postmodernism emphasizes certain contradictions within modernism that are manifested here. Compare Arnold Whittall, "Modernist Aesthetics, Modernist Music: Some Analytic Perspectives," *Music Theory in Concept and Practice*, ed. Baker, Beach, and Bernard (Rochester: Rochester University Press, 1997): 157–80, and Jonathan D. Kramer, "Beyond Unity: Toward an Understanding of Musical Postmodernism," *Concert Music, Rock, and Jazz since 1945*, ed. Marvin and Hermann (Rochester: Rochester University Press, 1995): 11–33, which notably distinguishes Webern from postmodern tendencies.
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3. Soren Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, ed. and trans. Hong and Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992): 203. Even Herbert Eimert, editor of Darmstadt's *die Riehe*, for instance, embraced Webern's "scanty, undecorated, unrhetorical lyricism.""A Change of Focus," *die Riehe: Anton Webern* 2 (1955): 29–36. Christopher Wintle, "Webern's Lyric Character," Bailey, ed. *Webern Studies*: 229–63, underscores the problem by concluding in exasperation, "how curious that, fifty years [later], we have still to get the measure of Webern's lyric character!"
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4. Kathryn Bailey, *The Twelve-Note Music of Anton Webern* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).
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5. Other Webern sketch studies include Wayne Alpern, "Aggregation, Assassination, and an 'Act of God': The Impact of the Murder of Archduke Ferdinand Upon Webern's Op. 7 No. 3," *Theory and Practice* 21 (1996): 1 28; Felix Meyer and Anne Shreffler, "Webern's Revisions: Some Analytic Implications," *Music Analysis* 12.3 (1993) 355–79, and "Performance and Revision: The Early History of Webern's Four Pieces for Violin and Piano, Op. 7," Bailey, ed., *Webern Studies:* 135–69; and Allen Forte, "A Major Webern Revision and Its Implications for Analysis," *Perspectives of New Music* 28.1 (1990): 224–53.
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6. Lockwood summarizes the sketch debate in "The Beethoven Sketchbooks and the General State of Sketch Research," *Beethoven's Compositional Process*, ed. William Kinderman (Lincoln: Nebraska University Press, 1991): 6–13.
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7. The traditional view is expressed by Robert Marshall's "basic article of faith [that] the final reading is superior to the rejected reading," *The Music of Johann Sebastian Bach: the Sources, the Style, the Significance* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1989): 145.
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8. A similar conspicuous dearth of precompositional sketches in Schoenberg's atonal music is noted in Ethan Haimo, "Atonality, Analysis, and the Intentional Fallacy," *Music Theory Spectrum* 18.2 (fall, 1996): 167–99, and also in Bartok's music in Laszlo Somfai, *Bela Bartok: Composition, Concepts, and Autograph Sources* (Berkeley: California University Press, 1996): 81–82.
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9. Shreffler thereby links this study with her previous research showing that Webern's first serial effort in op. 15/4 emerged directly out of a vocal line. "'Mein Weg geht jetzt vorueber': The Vocal Origins of Webern's Twelve Tone Composition," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 47 (1994): 275–338.

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10. For purposes of clarity, directed intervals (+ and -) instead of conventionally uniformly ascending intervals are used to denote pitch class intervals, not pitch intervals, i.e., -5 = 7. The prime forms of these three sets are 5-4 (01236), 5-7 (01237), and 5-10 (01346).
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11. David Lewin discusses progressive and partial transformations in a different context in *Generalized Musical Intervals and Transformations* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987): 125–28, 141–43. Joseph Straus explores near transformations in "Voice Leading in Atonal Music," Baker, *Music Theory in Concept:* 237–74. Ian Quinn, "Fuzzy Extensions to the Theory of Contour," *Music Theory Spectrum* 19.2 (fall, 1997): 232–63, offers a "Fuzzy Tutorial" to analyze "slight alterations" in Steve Reich's music.
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12. P3RI would retrograde the previous output, this time inverting just its first, second, and fourth intervals to generate <-1+3+1+5>. P4RI would in turn retrograde that, finally inverting all its intervals, just like a conventionally crisp RI equivalency relationship to generate <-5-1-3+1>. In conventional pci notation, P1RI <7-11-3-11> = <11-3-11-5>, P2RI <11 3-11-5> = <7-11-3-1>, P3RI <7-11-3-1> = <11-3-1-5>, P4RI <11-3-1-5> = <7-11-9-1>.
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13. Shreffler's central theme of "multiple reference" acknowledges affinity with Arnold Whittall's "multiple meaning" in "Webern and Multiple Meaning," *Music Analysis* 6 (1987): 333–53, which in turn cites Schoenberg's "multiple harmonic meaning" in *Structural Functions of Harmony* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1969): 168. See also Janna Saslaw and James Walsh, "Musical Invariance as a Cognitive Structure: 'Multiple Meaning' in the Early Nineteenth Century," *Music Theory in the Age of Romanticism*, ed. Ian Bent (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996): 211–32.
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14. Stravinsky's and Bartok's sketches also were often simpler, classical prototypes or "Urforms" transformed to become increasingly free and remote from their normative structural origins. Joseph Straus, "The Progress of a Motive in Stravinsky's The Rake's Progress," *The Journal of Musicology* 9 (1991):166–85; Somfai, *Bartok*: 155–58.
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15. Morton Feldman, "Crippled Symmetry," *Essays* (Kerpen: Beginner Press, 1985): 124–37; Jacques Derrida, "Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences," *A Postmodernist Reader*, ed. Natoli and Hutcheon (Albany: SUNY Press, 1993): 223–42.
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16. Several recent studies invoke ambiguity as an analytic approach. Morris posits "degrees of relatedness by deviation" in Webern's music in "Conflict and Anomaly in Bartok and Webern," *Musical Transformation and Musical Intuition: Essays in Honor of David Lewin*, ed. Atlas and Cherlin (Roxbury: Ovenbird Press, 1994): 59–79; Lewin explores a "disoriented, out-of-focus" passage in "Some Notes on Pierrot Lunaire," Baker, *Music Theory in Concept*: 433–57; Philip Lambert posits a "scrambling" technique in parsing "tenuous musical connections" in *The Music of Charles Ives* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997): 94–100; Robert Morgan discerns "tonal uncertainty" in "Chasing the Scent: The Tonality of Liszt's Blume und Duft," Baker, *Music Theory in Concept*: 361–76; Joseph Swain presents a "syntactically anomalous" Beethovenian motive in *Musical Languages* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1997): 74–77. Kofi Agawu sounds a cogent dissent in "Ambiguity in Tonal Music: A Preliminary Study," Pople, *Meaning in Music*: 86–107.
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17. Igor Stravinsky and Robert Craft, *Themes and Episodes* (New York: Knopf, 1966): 43.
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18. Anton Webern, *The Path to the New Music*, trans. Leo Black (Byrn Mawr: Theo. Presser, 1963): passim.

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19. Leo Treitler, "Music Analysis in a Historical Context," *Music and the Historical Imagination* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989): 69; Claude Levi Strauss, *The Raw and the Cooked* quoted in Moldenhauer, ed. *Webern Perspectives:* xix.
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20. Karlheinz Stockhausen, "For the 15th of September 1955," trans. Leo Black, *die Riehe: Webern*: 37–39.
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