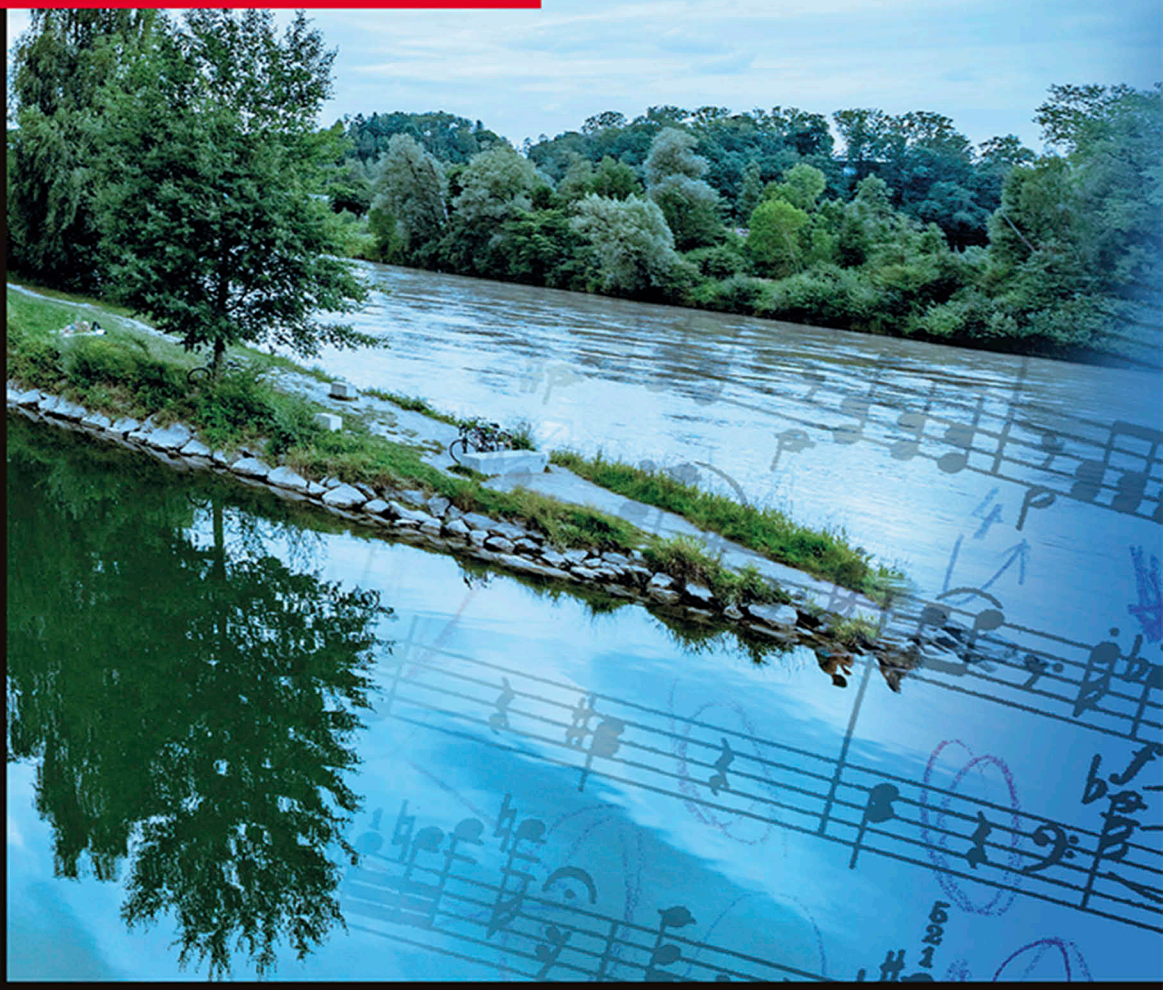
ROUTLEDGE HANDBOOKS



The Routledge Handbook of Music Signification

Edited by Esti Sheinberg and William P. Dougherty

THE ROUTLEDGE HANDBOOK OF MUSIC SIGNIFICATION

The Routledge Handbook of Music Signification captures the richness and complexity of the field, presenting 30 essays by recognized international experts that reflect current interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary approaches to the subject.

Examinations of music signification have been an essential component in thinking about music for millennia, but it is only in the last few decades that music signification has been established as an independent area of study. During this time, the field has grown exponentially, incorporating a vast array of methodologies that seek to ground how music means and to explore what it may mean. Research in music signification typically embraces concepts and practices imported from semiotics, literary criticism, linguistics, the visual arts, philosophy, sociology, history, and psychology, among others. By bringing together such approaches in transparent groupings that reflect the various contexts in which music is created and experienced, and by encouraging critical dialogues, this volume provides an authoritative survey of the discipline and a significant advance in inquiries into music signification.

This book addresses a wide array of readers, from scholars who specialize in this and related areas, to the general reader who is curious to learn more about the ways in which music makes sense.

Esti Sheinberg has published articles on music signification. Her books include *Irony, Satire, Parody and the Grotesque in the Music of Shostakovich* (Ashgate, 2000); she also edited *Music Semiotics: A Network of Significations—in Honour and Memory of Raymond Monelle* (Ashgate, 2012) and Anatoly Milka's *Rethinking J. S. Bach's* The Art of Fugue (Ashgate-Routledge, 2016).

William P. Dougherty, Ellis and Nelle Levitt Professor of Music Theory and Composition at Drake University, has published articles on music semiotics and on the semiotics of the art song. In particular, he has explored settings of the Mignon Lieder from Goethe's *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*.

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Working with 30 leading scholars of music signification, touching their most recent research that represents the state-of-the-art of our field of study, and interacting with their ideas, was a particular—and unique—prize that came with our working package. It is hard to describe the excitement, involvement, and amount of knowledge we have both gained and gathered during the process of editing this book. For this we deeply thank all our contributors: working with you is an honor and a pleasure.

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On a more personal note, we are both indebted to our very own spouses:

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I offer my deepest and most heartfelt thanks to my wife, Deb, who has somehow found a way to manage our life while I was immersed in the seemingly endless process of editing this volume. Thank you for your forbearance while I obsessed over a complicated project: when I first asked about taking this enterprise on, neither of us anticipated the long hours it would involve, and you have been more than supportive in providing the space necessary to bring it to fruition. WPD

INTRODUCTION

Esti Sheinberg and William P. Dougherty

Tributaries and trees

Human involvement in and with music—our use, understanding, and perception of music as a meaningful cultural artifact—is endlessly compelling. Throughout all history and in all societies, music presents a signifying potential that demands interpretation. The process of *making sense* of music strives to gain access to the thorny issues surrounding the nature and structure of signification in music, and to determine how the relation between content and expression coheres: in short, the task is to address how import in music is both perceived and interpreted.

Signification, as we define it, is a re-cognition of interactions grounded in aesthetic, biological, cognitive, cultural, historical, and physical facts—all of which shape and influence our understanding of the world. Music signification, therefore, results from the process of interpretation that creates intersubjectively understood—or inferred—sense. It is an intentionally broad conception that celebrates how various approaches to meaning converge to illuminate the nature and structure of music signification. The interpretation of a musical object lies at the heart of this enterprise, and insights into how content can be described in terms of expression necessarily intersect and interact with other fields that study human nature, social behavior, and culture.

We anticipate some questions about the titular focus of this volume. Why is this not a handbook on musical meaning? After all, issues of musical meaning are at the heart of all studies of music signification. Why is this not a handbook on musical semiotics? After all, semiotics is intimately concerned with how signification occurs as a result of sign action and sign interpretation. Why is this not a handbook on musical narratology? After all, a focus on musical narratology addresses the trajectory of musical meaning as it is projected in time. And why do we offer a section on the musical topic? After all, the various approaches to analyzing musical topics have become part and parcel of addressing signification in music, and topics are used as a springboard for several essays in other sections.

Our answers are both simple and complex. We contend that music signification is an over-arching umbrella that covers the richly relational ways in which the patterned rapport between sound and meaning demand interpretation. As demonstrated by the essays in this volume, specific means of surmounting the obstacles that may impede a methodological

examination of music signification can attack the difficulties by exploring the interconnections among semiotics, narratology, history, gesture, emotion, embodiment, and intermediality—all of which mold our understanding—but their ultimate goal is to provide subtle and ramified access to the issues that comprise the entwinement of music signification.

Like Rubin's vase, music signification presents an ambiguous figure-ground relationship that shifts depending on one's perspective. In treating music signification as an independent field, our favorite metaphors are "tributaries and trees." Many disciplines—including philosophy, psychology, biology, linguistics, semiotics, sociology, history, literature, and art, among others—literally con-tribute to the currents that shape the river of signification in music. A complementary vision is one in which specific and continuously subdividing tactics branch out from a sturdy disciplinary tree trunk to form an intricate canopy that covers a broad area of investigation. By bringing together essays that both feed the river and that split off from the tree, this volume bears witness to how the field of music signification is simultaneously independent and dependent. It is rich and inclusive, both fortified by and supporting a multitude of perspectives, all furthering clearer and more articulate understandings of music expression, interpretation, perception, and communication—to say nothing of the way it contributes to the understanding of ourselves.

Some history …

Like human history, music signification can claim no definite starting point. One might say, in a seemingly ironic way, that music signified even before it came into being: the need for signification required music. The idea that music signifies appears in ancient mythologies that tell of music's power to affect humans, animals, and even spirits (recall the myth of Orpheus). Music's ability to signify is a recurring motif in philosophical, poetic, and psychological writings. Plato, in his *Republic*, warned against its debilitating nature (Book III, 398); Mendelssohn argued that music is "too definite" to be put into words (letter to Marc-André Souchay, 15 October 1842 [Mendelssohn-Bartholdy 1864]), and recent research confirms the traditional beliefs about music's therapeutic effects (Haas and Brandes 2008). The last two decades have witnessed an immense growth of research that explores the biological and evolutionary roots of our need for music, or, more precisely, for its signifying power (e.g., Dissanayake 2001; Herbert 2011; Parncutt 2016). This power was long ago recognized and applied by autocratic, theocratic—and other—regimes that, either by adoption or by prohibition, have taken advantage of music's psychic and physical effects.

Indeed, until the turn of the twentieth century (*pace* Hanslick [1854] 1891), the view that music signifies was largely uncontested. Signifying elements in music enhanced textual content at least since Medieval times, with techniques that ranged from tangible mimetic devices to esoteric symbolisms detectable only in written notations. Ceremonies, such as military parades, weddings, and funerals, were marked through appropriate musical indices; tone painting, embodiment, and gestural references are ubiquitous in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century music; nineteenth-century philosophers and musicians regarded signification in instrumental music as cardinal to the very nature of music.

Around the turn of the twentieth century, theories developed in other fields—for example, in Freudian psychology, Saussurian linguistics, and Peircean semiotics—offered new perspectives on the nature of human cognition by investigating the deeply ingrained structures of thinking and of meaning. Musicologists, on the other hand, tended to be dazed by the fashionable trend of "l'art pour l'art," and in the first half of the twentieth century

struggled to propose ways in which instrumental music could be interpreted, sometimes suggesting, paradoxically, that it was an instance of "signifying without signifying." Opinions about the nature of music signification ranged from no signification at all (a claim famously made by Stravinsky [1935] 1975, 53), through cautious philosophical reflections on the symbolization of the motion of feelings (Langer 1941, 1953), to psychological theories of expectation (Meyer 1956, 1967), among others. During the 1970s, approaches to music signification drew heavily on linguistic theories (e.g., Ruwet 1972; Nattiez 1975; Lerdahl and Jackendoff 1983). Since the 1980s, other disciplinary tributaries began to feed accounts of music signification, including semantics (e.g., Tarasti 1979), narratology (e.g., Grabócz 1986; Tarasti 1984), Asafiev's intonation theory (e.g., Zak 1982; Monelle 1992), hermeneutics (e.g., Kerman 1986; Cone 1989; Kramer 1995), semiotics (e.g., Coker 1972; Agawu 1991; Monelle 1992; Hatten 1994; Tarasti 1994), and theories on embodiment and musical gesture (e.g., Lidov 1987; Hatten 2004; Pierce 2007; Cox 2016). The river of music signification was further enriched by tributaries originating in ethnomusicological research (e.g., Arom 1991; Nettl [1983] 2005), social studies (e.g., DeNora 2000; Shepherd and Devine 2015), and approaches to historic analyses, which led to an ever-expanding crop of publications on topic theory (e.g., Monelle 2006; Mirka 2014a).

The sign and the process

Once musicology began to shed its formalistic garb, studies of musical meaning were largely anchored, almost as a rule, in semiotic theory. Two contrasting epistemologies regarding the nature of the sign shaped and determined specific approaches to music signification: semiology—derived from the Saussurian linkage of signifier and signified—and semiotics, based on the Peircean trichotomy of sign, object, and interpretant.

Saussure's dyadic model of the sign is essentially static in that the habitual colligation of signifier to signified is independent of time. For Peirce, on the other hand, "nothing is a sign unless it is interpreted as a sign" (*CP* 2.172). Semiosis is an activity, thus it requires time; the existence of a sign, therefore, depends on its ability to be interpreted with respect to a significative value (i.e., the interpretant). That music is a system of signs that requires interpretation, and that it functions as a "sign system" unleashes a view that is both genial and naïve. It is genial because it captures a mass of intuitions surrounding the ways in which we logically and empirically understand music through the process of sign interpretation; it is also naïve, because it suggests that a simple series of one-to-one correlations between sign and object can capture the inherently processual nature of a time-dependent communication system. This approach, of course, is only a starting point; in reality, individual signs, while singular entities, are understood by and through combinations that accumulate over time to articulate a larger meaning.

We have emphasized that music signification is a multi-aspectual field that unites insights, viewpoints, attitudes, and methodologies garnered from a variety of perspectives and disciplines, all intended to elucidate how music signifies. This broadness, as we have defined it, is a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it admits an array of perspectives that has engaged scholars on many levels. On the other hand, it makes it difficult to map the specific tributaries, or to clearly separate individual branches. Consequently, the sections of this handbook parse music signification in relation to other areas of study: philosophy; semiotics; topic theory; narrative; society; emotion, cognition, and embodiment; education; and intermediality. While they respect how the essays intersect, complement, and link to one another, readily blurring disciplinary and methodological boundaries, these sections are our

attempt to establish some order on the intricate web spun by the complex nature of the subject. As such, this malleability constitutes a cardinal feature of how the nature of music signification can be addressed.

The sections

The studies of music signification in this volume represent both a large number of tributaries while they simultaneously reflect numerous branches that constitute the discipline. They summarize and contribute to the ongoing process of change and growth, and to the constant intellectual effort to understand music. The nature of the field suggests that different terminologies are recognized and accepted, and we have chosen to respect those differences. We have not dictated any single vision of music signification; instead, we celebrate the multitude of viewpoints that capture the state of the art. The goal is to clarify how the interpretive process can be grounded in an intersubjective framework that delineates how re-cognized data (the music) are embodied by the facts.

The first group of essays addresses questions about music signification and its relation to philosophy. Issues surrounding this subject are deeply embedded in how we interpret sonorous events and how we engage with those events to craft an understanding of what makes them cohere as meaningful signs. Although it may seem paradoxical, the opening chapter starts from a seemingly contradictory position, as Jamie Liddle turns his attention to incomprehensibility. He addresses it as a feature of early nineteenth-century aesthetics as it is manifested in Schumann's reactions to the first movement of Chopin's Piano Sonata no. 2 in B♭ minor, op. 35. Liddle's subtle and careful reading unfolds a Romantic view of the nature of music and its clashes with the ineffable touch of a genius that moves beyond conventions by exploring the engagement of music with music criticism. Taking a different philosophical perspective, Christine Esclapez charts a new course by introducing the field of semio-ethics. She brings to the fore questions that surround and combine semiotics with ethical repercussions by addressing the Other. Her contribution, in applying this principle to music, emphasizes the care for life as it is realized by four interrelated notions: attention (awareness), listening, signification, and interpretation. Music is thus perceived as a particular form of speech wherein attention, listening, and interpretation are governed by ethical values. Ben Curry plumbs the Peircean conception of the sign to explore the disconnect between musical signs and the real world. His essay starts from Peirce's categorizations of firstness, secondness, and thirdness, all of which, according to Peirce, are independent of a mind-free reality. Borrowing from the work of Wilfried Sellars, Curry details the disjunction between the space of musical meanings and external reality by exploring the causal nexus that informs our understanding of music signification as ultimately derived from the real world. Eero Tarasti discusses the connections between music and existential philosophy by using his Zemic model to address music signification. After combining the existential foundations of his model with some of Greimas's semiotic concepts, he details how a Zemic interpretation elucidates music signification. Tarasti applies his model to a host of musical compositions, from Bach to Wagner, to illuminate the ways in which music, semiotics, and authentic identity are connected.

As noted above, for many decades studies of music signification fell under the aegis of a general musical semiotics. Although perspectives that examine music using other disciplinary connections have emerged, semiotic analyses that address the ways in which signs, as meaningful entities, function in music, are a vital and powerful tool to unearth the nature of music signification. The essays grouped in the second section of this volume focus

on principles that derive from, or extend, semiotic interpretations that enlighten music signification. Lawrence Kramer revisits the Saussurean concepts of signifier and signified by questioning the lexical specificity of Saussure's model. Delving into the relationship between these two components, and marshalling insights from theories of Barthes, Lacan, and Derrida, Kramer articulates a hermeneutic re-consideration of how signification arises in music. He focuses on the signifier, and he examines its nature as part of a network of relationships by analyzing examples from a variety of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century composers and compositions. Anne Kauppala untangles a skein of references, revealing the ways in which Charles Panzéra, Barthes's voice instructor, generated meaning by modifying the musical object, as vocally crafted and delivered, and thereby clearly differentiating it from standard lexical meanings. She demonstrates how this practice—by focusing on vocal timbre, the ineffable ways in which the tongue creates consonances, and/or the friction created by a sound emission—influenced Barthes's semiotic concept of the "grain of the voice" as a unique form of music signification. Nicholas McKay examines the ways in which musical topics, typically found in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century music, underscore pivotal dramatic points in twentieth-century neo-classical operas. Taking his examples from Britten's *The Turn of the Screw* and Stravinsky's *The Rake's Progress*, he analyzes how the two composers use intertextual allusions and diegetic versus non-diegetic musical events to create fresh compositional perspectives on the interplay of signs. Closing this section, Robert Hatten traces the development of his theory of musical meaning. Describing his work in semiotics and markedness theory, he demonstrates the import of his approach to topics, tropes, and gestures through an analysis of Bach's "O Mensch, bewein' dein' Sünde gross," BWV 402. The essay traces how a semiotic approach is enriched by insights from other disciplines and how it forms a compelling treatment of music signification.

The third section of this handbook gathers essays that consider the relationship between music signification and topic theory. Musical analyses treating topics as meaningful signs, shared between composers and listeners, experienced an exponential development in the last decades, with dozens of important studies of various styles and historical periods. Lauri Suurpää connects two classes of signs by detailing syntactic and semantic elements and their interrelation in Haydn's String Quartet, op. 71, no. 2. Combining formal theories—such as Schenkerian voice-leading structure and the sonata principle—with semantic approaches—such as musical topics and gesture—Suurpää generates a multi-layered understanding of the composition's signification. Lóránt Péteri ties a musical interpretation of the march topic in the first movement of Mahler's Symphony No. 3 to political allusions. Offering a new reading of the work, Péteri probes the composer's social and professional circumstances, and he argues that the march at the beginning of the finale of the third act of Mozart's *Le Nozze di Figaro* strongly influenced Mahler. Highlighting the parallels between the two works, he concludes that Mahler incorporated the idea of a dissimulated political statement as an inseparable part of the chain of signification that arises in his symphony. Johanna Frymoyer explores Russian opera in the last quarter of the eighteenth century, a period in which Italian, French, and German composers and styles significantly influenced Russian music. The essay details the acculturation of stylistic registers that arise when European topics are incorporated into Russian opera. The article extends topic theory beyond its original Western applications by describing in detail the topics' distillation into a new cultural and social context. Chia-Yi Wu presents a feminist reading of musical references to the spinning wheel, addressing the boundaries between a musical imitation of a real phenomenon and a musical topic. She analyzes musical depictions of a spinning wheel as

they are employed in a series of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century compositions. Arguing for a spinning-wheel topic, precisely because it does not merely function as a mimetic device, Wu demonstrates how musical references to the spinning wheel signify the social role and cultural context of women at the time. Taylor Greer transports readers to the exotic heterotopic garden in Griffes's *The Pleasure-Dome of Kubla Khan*. Starting from Foucault's concept of "heterotopia"—a phenomenon combining contradictory features while maintaining an underlying coherence—Greer analyzes the tone poem, its relation to Coleridge's poetic description of Xanadu, and its blending of the pastoral and the bacchanalia topics. In the process, he tracks the relationship between the larger conception of a musical topic and its unique application in this individual case.

While the traditional disciplinary home of narrativity is literary criticism, it has been appropriated by studies of music signification, generating a cornucopia of insights into the nature of musical experience. Literature and music are both temporal arts, and therefore music's relation to narrativity—actually, to a kind of "story telling"—would seem obvious, if not always self-evident. Starting with general studies, such as those of Propp and Greimas, the large number of applications to music in this area have to confront complexities that arise from the differences between the two disciplines in order to engage with the specific nature of narrative processes in music. The articles in this section offer insights into the various ways in which music may unfold a narrative. Byron Almén details noteworthy historical developments that influenced and shaped narrative conceptions of music. Moving into a detailed description of his own method, he defines the context in which his theory emerges by clarifying its essential features. He argues for a broad perspective of narrativity that treats musical and literary narratives as "siblings" that are part and parcel of a proposed meta-model. Michael Baker combines an analytic focus on Schenker's linkage technique and Greimas's actorial model to explore Britten's *The Turn of the Screw*, *Albert Herring*, and *Peter Grimes*. Employing conjunct and disjunct Greimasian relations, he focuses on the ways in which linkage creates continuity between musical gestures in neo-tonal music by analyzing crucial dramatic points in the narratives of the three operas. Anatole Leikin revisits Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, reading it as a musical narrative. He ties his interpretation of the music's trajectory to the ways in which Beethoven confronted his own life's challenges. The inferred narrative guides the reader through a course of musical events that culminates in a triumphal dance that simultaneously captures intellect, humor, and courage. As a peroration to this section, Márta Grabócz traces influences and precursors that have informed musical narratology, offering a complement to the outline found in Almén's chapter. Investigating the sequencing of musically significant events, she identifies the processes of emotional and affective evolution that create musical narratives. Grabócz details and defines the ways in which these ideas have shaped narratological studies in music, and demonstrates how these ideas have been applied to specific analyses of Beethoven, Chopin, and Liszt.

The relations between music signification and human society are complex. The fact that music embeds values associated with specific cultures and sub-cultures—historically, geographically, and politically—is difficult to pin down, but it is nevertheless undeniable. The essays in this section present ways in which music signification is affected by social circumstances, conditions, and interchanges. Marina Ritzarev explores the transformations of vernacular music, intercultural processes of cultural negotiation, and differing perceptions among communal and national groups—each of which claims ownership over a specific musical entity's "authenticity." She introduces the terms "phylo-vernacular" and "onto-vernacular" to represent different stages of social—and sometimes

ethnic—acculturation. Using examples from Russian, Gypsy, and Irish migrant and immigrant populations, Ritzarev conjoins sociological and ethnological research to illuminate processes embedded in the musical vernacular. Oscar Hernández contemplates the effects that music has on social (and a-social) behavior by analyzing how disparate groups respond to musical stimuli. He regards events that involve crowds and music as thymo-political, and examines two disparate case studies, one involving football fans and the other consisting of a comparison of three different religious rituals. His examples make it clear that the communal context directly affects the musical experience in each of these events. Martin Čurda raises questions about the relevance of historical, physical, and political circumstances to the interpretation of musical compositions. To inspect this morally and ethically problematic field, he investigates compositions by the Czech-Jewish composer Pavel Haas. Assessing the impact that Haas's internment in the Theresienstadt concentration camp might have had on his music, Čurda contends that it is not only possible to examine these works of art independent of the external circumstances that surrounded their composition, but also that such an approach expresses a respectful attitude toward the composer as artist. William Echard addresses issues of freedom and constraint that are typical of much popular culture. After discussing the relation between the analysis of relatively fixed structures and the fluidity of power, practice, and identity, he explores questions of musical textuality that are both problematic and important. Summarizing the contributions of popular music studies to theories of music signification, he uses a reading of the idiolect of FKA twigs to develop a model of popular music signification that focuses on musical sound and experience. Edward Campbell considers the functions of signification in the music of several post-World War II composers born in China and Japan, who integrate their own musical traditions into compositions largely steeped in the practices of Western art music. In view of the complex interrelations between these cultures, Campbell argues that the use of particular instruments, gestures, and timbres create a range of musical units, some of which may be considered as topoi.

Meaningful communication can emerge from visceral and other non-verbal cues. As a result, numerous authors engage with music signification through approaches that address visual, tactile, intuitive, and sentient signs. These writers map out areas that are associated with feelings and perceptions by focusing on emotion, cognition, and embodiment. The essays in this section grapple with the real sense in which music signification subsumes these types of intersubjective understandings. Michael Spitzer traces the ways in which music reflects Western cultural outlooks of emotional expression as they appear in philosophical studies that range from Augustine of Hippo to late sixteenth-century authors. By focusing on expressions of joy that appear in Gregorian chant, Josquin des Prez, and Monteverdi, Spitzer offers a model of musical emotion as it is manifested in Medieval and Renaissance music. Mark Reybrouck argues for a perceptual approach that explains musical sense-making by securely grounding it in the musical experience. In his article he traverses a wide array of disciplines and ideas to clarify the ways in which music signification is cognitively assimilated. His approach is innovative in that it addresses the full trajectory of mental activities in which musical information is processed in real-time listening situations. David Lidov triangulates melody, gesture, and emotion by employing Manfred Clynes's essentic theory and Pierce's studies of bodily motions to illuminate how it can assist an understanding of music signification. By describing how melody represents different emotional states in Beethoven's Bagatelles, op. 126, nos. 1 and 5, Lidov clears a path that connects physical performance and listening by charting how gestures suggest emotional expression through their energy, pressure, and direction.

Too often it happens that approaches to music signification are treated as abstract methodologies that are exclusively reserved for scholarly studies. The way we see it, however, is that music signification should be a key component in music education at all levels. Teaching music signification cannot be limited to the theoretical realm; instead it needs to be applied to practical music performance and listening strategies. This challenge has been too little explored. The two essays in this section offer different responses to this difficult but stimulating task. Juha Ojala outlines a broad vision of the subject based on a Peircean semiotic approach. He gives it tangible applications by exploring the educational theories of John Dewey. Seeking ways by which the practical can be taught, Ojala focuses on musical semiosis as a process. He relies on pragmatism and phenomenology to articulate an educational theory that accounts for and enables musical understanding, learning, and growth. Joan Grimalt offers several hands-on devices for teaching music signification in university classroom situations. He presents a series of ideas that could be included in a curriculum that incorporates music signification. Differentiating between teaching musical topics, tropes, and signs, he offers a series of examples such as "musical laughter," *tempesta*, pastoral, and *pianto*, all of which can be taught to and perceived by students of music at various levels.

Music functions within broader aesthetic signification systems. In such cases, it acts as both a whole and a part, tracing signification as it moves among various art forms. Bálint Veres describes precisely such a situation. Based on Herbert Lindenberger's conception of the operatic principle as a combination of opposing qualities, verbal extravagance, an avoidance of mimesis, and a preference toward the histrionic, Veres considers music's function within an artistic intermedial amalgam. Realizing that opera is not a closed cultural terrain, but a part of an entire medial paradigm, he analyzes the musical, the literary, and the visual as inseparable elements of an integrated landscape. In a completely different approach to opera, Yayoi Uno Everett links topic theory with Peircean classifications to explore the *pianto* as an expressive signifier that is intimately related to notions of grief. Focusing on the identification of musical topics as they are defined by Monelle and Karbusický, she illuminates the *pianto* as a fused topical signifier by dividing it into three style types. Each of these types is dependent on its schematic context, a classification demonstrated through the analysis of certain points in operas by Thomas Adès, Kaija Saariaho, and John Adams. Closing this section—and the whole volume—Siglind Bruhn scrutinizes signification through the lens of musical ekphrasis. Her approach demands a clear understanding of the aesthetic merger resulting from the inputs of two artistic media. Bruhn explores the creative processes in works by Ravel and Ptaszyńska that fuse poetry and music, and painting and music, respectively. In this context, music signification exemplifies and articulates concepts that have their genesis in other artistic realms, achieving a meaningful aesthetic whole.

How to use this book

When using this book, several points need to be considered:

- References from individual chapters are combined into a general bibliography at the end of the volume, reflecting the breadth and depth of the scholarship that comprises the current state of research in music signification.

- Dates in square brackets in a reference indicate the original date of writing in order to place the work in its cultural/historical context. The square brackets are always followed by the modern date of publication as referred to in the volume.
- Music examples that appear in the volume are limited to those unavailable through online sources, such as the International Music Score Library Project (IMSLP), and to examples that include analytic annotations enhancing arguments made by the authors.
- References to the *Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce* (abbreviated *CP*) are conventionally designated by volume number and paragraph number (e.g., 3.24). Other abbreviations are avoided throughout the volume.

The eight sections of this volume focus on music signification as a vibrant field of study. Topic theory intersects with semiotics, which, in turn, melds with narrative theory and philosophy, which relate to perception and embodiment. Tributaries and trees are real metaphors for the multiple connections that provide insight into the complex relationships that comprise music signification. This vital field of concern is rich and continually evolving, demanding a multi-aspectual and multi-disciplinary approach.

We end this introduction on a personal note: both of us are keen on good food that respects the ingredients and that is compellingly prepared. Frankly, our first metaphor for the structure of this book was a broccoli plant, with its branching florets forming a lovely green copula stemming from a single stalk, and marvelously—indeed, incredibly—open to a host of interpretations in the kitchen. Given our focus on the variety of approaches to music signification (not to mention our love of broccoli), we acknowledge the many chefs in this volume—our colleagues—who have presented enticing food for thought in the hopes that their work will be savored, discussed, and evaluated by our readers, much like a meal prepared for good company.

PART I

Music signification and philosophy

1

"MUSIK IST DAS NICHT"

On Romantic incomprehensibility in Chopin

Jamie Liddle

> Assume, for example, that some provincial cantor came to a metropolitan music centre to buy music. He is shown the newest things, but he will have none of them. Finally, some bright fellow shows him a "sonata." "Aha," he exclaims, "that is something for me, an echo of the good old days!" He buys it and tries it out at home. I should be gravely mistaken if, after laboriously negotiating the first page, he were not to swear by all the musical saints that this was no proper sonata and probably godless at that. But Chopin will have achieved his objective. He will have got into the cantor's house. Who can tell whether, under the same roof, and years later, a romantically inclined grandson may not come upon it, dust it off, play it through, and think to himself: "The fellow wasn't so wrong after all!"
>
> *(Schumann [1841] 1988, 173)*

The incomprehension of Schumann's "provincial cantor" seems to have been a common critical response to nineteenth-century music. Incomprehension suggests a failure in the process of signification—a breakdown in communication—the fault for which, most contemporaneous critics imply, lies with the composer, the text, or both. Later writers, in contrast, tend to assign culpability to a lack of critical sophistication in listeners; hence, apparent difficulties and ambiguities are typically rendered "comprehensible" by stressing new-found thematic or harmonic unities. This schema reflects the significant change in listening strategies throughout the nineteenth century, from music understood as rhetoric to music as text, a change recently considered by Mark Evan Bonds (Bonds 2017, 329–32). This shift refocuses the semiotic process—the burden of comprehensibility—from composers as originators of messages towards listeners. The responsibility for signification rests with the recipient of the message and listening emerges as hermeneutic. The transition from rhetorical to hermeneutic modes subsequently accentuated the importance of music criticism: it became a key element in the construction of musical meaning, effectively the complement of the compositional process. The critic, as an active participant, wrests some control of "meaning" from the composer and as a result, failure of comprehension reflects a failure in interpretation.

Romantic "incomprehensibility," however, breaks this schema. In early-Romantic literary aesthetics, incomprehensibility was understood as arising not from a failure of critical interpretation, but rather from a deliberate aesthetic stance. As will be seen, Romantic incomprehensibility uses an apparent semiotic failure—the failure of signification—as a means of communicating the incommunicable. Incomprehensibility thereby paradoxically forms an important aspect of the "meaning" of Romantic texts. Incomprehensible Romantic texts occupy an unusual position between the rhetorical and the hermeneutic: they are understood as actively resisting determinate meaning by requiring continual re-interpretation. Text and reader engage in a continual reflective dialogue that the Romantics viewed as an analogue of subjective consciousness and as a way of approaching the Infinite.

The development of Romantic aesthetics is, as Bonds describes and analyzes (2017, 302–8) contemporaneous with the shift in mode of perception and reception of music; perhaps it was also, at least partially, responsible for it. This essay explores the way in which the discourse on incomprehensibility can inform not only Romantic literature, but also music: it addresses music signification by considering what the perceived *absence* of musical meaning signifies—it attempts, in other words, to comprehend musical incomprehensibility. Two contemporaneous works, which are both read as "incomprehensible," are examined here. The first is musical: the finale of Chopin's Piano Sonata in B♭ minor, op. 35 (1839); the second is literary: Schumann's infamous review of the sonata in his own periodical, the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*. The review is one of the best-known instances of ostensible critical incomprehension in the face of ambiguous new music, but the interpretation I offer addresses it as a Romantic text that deliberately resists determination. Schumann's critique ironically endorses the perceived incomprehensibility of Chopin's work, implying that the music's avoidance of full comprehension is part of its aesthetic.

Schumann extends this important aspect of Romantic aesthetics, and my aim in the following readings is to locate both his review and the music within one philosophical context, producing a type of double hermeneutic at the intersection of the two texts—artwork and review. Inevitably, creative misreadings involved in criticism inform the resulting interpretive dialogue, but the semiotic concerns related to Romantic incomprehensibility reside precisely in such hermeneutic interactions—even miscommunications—between readers and texts. I will, therefore, consciously risk over-interpretation to reconstruct some elements of the interpretation of an important Romantic critic: the goal is to recapture Romantic incomprehension, the perceived suspension of musical meaning, and its analogous relationship to subjectivity.

Chopin, Piano Sonata in B♭ minor, op. 35

Schumann's critique of Chopin's op. 35 portrays the Finale as an exceptionally problematic ending to the sonata:

> What we then get in the last movement under the heading of "Finale" is more mockery than music. And yet one must confess that from this songless and cheerless movement there breathes a special and dreadful spirit, suppressing with resolute fist every inclination to resist. We hear it through, spellbound and without complaint—but without praise, too, for music it is not. Thus the sonata ends as it began, enigmatically, a sphinx, smiling, mocking.
>
> *(Schumann [1841] 1988, 174)*

The twice-made assertion that this Finale is not even music appears to be the root of the problem: such "non-music" is surely the antithesis, or negation of "music"; it is *songless* and thus, by implication, perhaps even inhuman. This striking characterization might be a response to the unusual degree of equivocation to which every element that normally structures music—harmony, melody, texture, rhythm—is subjected throughout the movement. Although the music is not incoherent, the comprehensibility of its structure is significantly reduced; this "non-music" cannot be comprehended in a conventional way.

The parallel octave motion throughout the entire movement, for example, all but removes the sense of textural hierarchy that commonly differentiates melody, bass, and figuration. This feature alone is strikingly dissociative, almost a negation of conventional pianism, but its combination with the reduced function of both melodic and rhythmic structures heightens this effect. The continuous *moto-perpetuo* triplets have suggested parallels with the Prelude from Bach's Suite for Cello in D major, BWV 1012 (Leikin 1992, 175) and Chopin's own Études op. 10, no. 2 and op. 25, no. 2 (Samson 1985, 130). In these works, however, while figuration certainly replaces melody, its consistency tends to create a coherent sense of "line" that is supported by clearer harmonic contexts. Even in the most obvious model for the Finale, the E♭ minor Prelude op. 28, no. 14—which Kramer considers as an "extreme attack on compositional wholeness" (1984, 104)—the coherence in the figuration and underlying tonic-dominant opposition helps differentiate melodic motion from harmonic context. This movement, in contrast, never settles on a stable figuration: once a pattern is established it is almost immediately altered, creating continual disorientation. Scalar motion and quasi-sequential repetition provide movement and direction, with hints of fragmented melodic anchors throughout, but none of these are established for any sustained period. Such momentary coherence never produces a sense of consistent line; it never allows for melodic comprehension. Instead, this prominent lack of tangible melodic or motivic figures results in ambiguity—incomprehensibility—throughout.

These melodic fragments also unsettle the metric structure. The frequent shifts of melodic direction tend to coincide with metric alteration; the "line" does not occur consistently within the same subdivision of the beat. These shifting emphases introduce strong elements of cross-rhythm and hemiola, so that although the movement is ostensibly in a compound meter, its rhythmic structure is often unclear. This metric ambiguity is replicated in the macro-rhythmic structures: periodicity is a casualty of the absence of consistent figuration, preventing the emergence of any clear phrase structure.

The harmonic structure intensifies this impression by resisting standard comprehension as well, since the reduction in textural hierarchy undermines bass function, which significantly affects harmonic clarity; through much of the composition there is little to contextualize either consonance or dissonance. On a surface level, the tonal center is deliberately occluded in favor of extensive tonal ambiguity: the off-tonic opening gives four measures of rising diminished harmony, acquiring dominant function just prior to the first appearance of the tonic in measure 5. This arrival, however, immediately moves away into a sequential repetition on A♭, undermining the sense of an established tonal center: indeed, the rising chromatic lines lead to the first semi-stable tonality that is actually heard—the A♭ *major* chord in measures 15–16. But even this hesitant tonality remains clear for only a couple of measures before more chromatic sequential motion leads further away. The remainder of the movement is similar: throughout, passing moments of harmonic stability and lucidity arise out of tonal ambiguity created by chromatic and sequential motion. These more comprehensible moments, however, prolong individual *chords* rather than key areas, giving temporary tonal centers but little

sense of harmonic progression or larger-scale harmonic rhythm. Sequence and larger-scale repetition give some structure, with moments of more settled harmony around the relative major (D♭, mm. 24–30), preceded by its dominant (mm. 15–16). Nevertheless, there is an absence of tonal opposition driving an underlying harmonic direction. While Chopin commonly delays the arrival of the structural dominant until later in a movement, here it is delayed to the point where the sense of tonal goal is lost, undermining its closing function. There is, in short, little conventional harmonic structuring, resulting in a weakened, ambivalent sense of key definition.

The ending brings the process of tonal obfuscation into sharp focus, problematizing both gestural and functional closure precisely at the point where harmonic resolution should produce maximal comprehension. Measures 69–74 settle towards B♭ minor, with a stepwise descent to tonic over an implied dominant prolonged from the preceding six measures, albeit still obscured by volatile figuration and chromatic inflection. Closure is cued by the broken figurations in the final measures, but stable tonality only occurs in the last measure, with the low bass note and *forte* chord finally producing a clear B♭ minor. The sudden clarity of tonality and return of conventional piano textures, however, juxtaposed with clear dynamic indications, produces a gestural shock: an unequivocal but completely self-conscious closing gesture. While this would normally be a perfectly acceptable ending, here, the unexpected, conspicuous comprehensibility is incongruous; the ending sounds forced rather than achieved. Instead of resolving the preceding ambiguities, the imposed clarity and foregrounding of the closural index exacerbates the problems posed by the movement, resulting in a disjunction between the closing gesture and the extensive ambiguities of the movement; closure is syntactic but hardly semantic.

The functional location of the movement extends the issues of this closure to the entire sonata. Samson (1985, 129–33) views the preceding movements as a succession of genres developed or adapted by Chopin during his earlier years, accommodated within a conventional sonata schema. Thus, the opening sonata-form movement reinterprets the tonal dialectic of the classical sonata as a contrast of "relatively self-contained thematic characters" (Samson 1985, 132–33); the second movement presents one of Chopin's genre-redefining scherzos, rather than one based on the Classical model; the Adagio blends the funeral march and nocturne and, as the most substantial movement, it forms the focus of the whole work. In this schema, the Finale is related to the Études and to the Prelude noted earlier, a problematic assertion, not only because the comparisons are unsustainable, but more because of the scale of the movement: compared to the earlier movements this is little more than a fragment (Rosen 1995, 50–51). The juxtaposition with the expansive Funeral March foregrounds this strongly: the Finale seems an unsatisfactory conclusion to such an extensive sonata.

The conventions of the sonata-form genre make this apparent. This work represents Chopin's first mature engagement with the defining genre of the Austro-German tradition, but its Finale cannot be readily located within sonata practice: it avoids both the Beethovenian teleological drive towards a substantial finale and the *lieto fine* of the Mozartian galant style—nothing in Mozart is so fragmentary or thoroughly ambiguous. Thus, while ending the work, this movement hardly functions as a sonata finale: the constant equivocation reduces established musical function and meaning, resulting in a certain incomprehensibility of language, where each parameter signifies only through its absence. The problematizing of closure self-consciously negates generic "norms," producing a paradoxical movement that is simultaneously closed and unfinalized. Resisting determinate meaning in favor of indeterminacy, this Finale minimizes musical comprehensibility to

provoke incomprehension; its elements, functioning as a complex, signify their own negation or antithesis—they become "non-music."

Schumann's review

Schumann presents two possible responses to this "non-music," contrasting musical conservatism with Romanticism. Both responses result in incomprehension, but the crucial difference lies in the value attached to this concept: the incomprehension of the conservative reading renders the music meaningless; from a Romantic perspective, incomprehension is meaningful—it signifies. The anecdote of the provincial cantor and his Romantic grandson quoted above is key to this interpretation: these stereotypical figures function as analogues of the contrasting viewpoints. In effect, the tale is a *mise-en-abyme*, narrating the deliberately contradictory views seen throughout the review and introducing a self-reflexive critique into the text itself.

Schumann's fictional cantor is presented in the review as an unsophisticated musical conservative, his liturgical role suggesting an emblematic function that represents the traditional values of the laity. He is fooled into purchasing this work by its disguise as a "sonata," but upon trying his hand at it, he rejects it. Throughout, this cantor is treated hyperbolically, satirically undermining the views he actually expresses and those he stereotypically represents beyond the immediate locale of the narrative. For example, Schumann later bemoans that both the "lay public" and "cultivated" pianists "cannot see or judge beyond what they can master with their own fingers." They reject works like Chopin's as "'queer' and 'confused'" because of their technical and harmonic difficulties. These, though, were precisely the actions of the cantor; the analogy implies that confusions around genre, harmony, and technique arise from an inability to comprehend or tolerate such music. Significantly, this satirical function undermines not only the positions of the cantor and other conservatives, but even the authorial voice at times. In the review, the cantor narrative appears after the author's apparent assertion that this sonata does not conform to generic conventions—the often-quoted description of "four of his [Chopin's] most unruly children" joined together as a sonata and smuggled into company where, individually, they would be unwelcome. The unmistakably boorish figure of the cantor, however, embodies precisely this view: this seemingly genre-defying sonata is rejected, because it is "no proper sonata, and probably godless." In fact, the juxtaposition exposes not the deficiencies of the work, but of the genre's conventions (the expectation of formal and musical unity) and those who judge works according to them, whether cultivated pianists, lay persons, or even reviewers.

The Romantic grandson, in contrast, can gain some understanding of the music. Analogous by implication with the "connoisseur" of the opening paragraph, he understands at least that Chopin "wasn't so wrong after all," recognizing the music as unmistakably Chopin's. The figure of the composer is therefore central to Schumann's ironic text, and it is characteristically Romantic that he is presented in contradictory ways. The unique expression of genius is first invoked: Chopin's work is "true to himself"; he "no longer writes what could as easily be had from anyone else." In contrast, he is also presented as a dissembler (an ironist), deceiving the cantor with a sonata that could be called either "a joke, if not sheer bravado." Similarly, Schumann specifically equates Chopin with Jean Paul, the epitome of the Romantic poet, but couches the compliment in ironic terms, as a seeming criticism of their mutual incomprehensibility; both have "passages and parentheses where it is inadvisable to tarry too long lest the trail [i.e. comprehension] be lost."

This first half of the review is a self-reflexive complex that both presents and *enacts* opposed reactions almost simultaneously. While the satirizing of the cantor results in an undercutting of musical conservatism, the Romantic analogues are not subjected to this; they are, in that sense, preferred. Romantic understanding of the music, however, is never explicitly clarified, and this ambiguity is complicated by the equivocal presentation not only of Chopin himself, but even of Schumann's authorial voice. This pervasive irony forms the context for the critique of the individual movements, casting its shadow over the views Schumann *seems* to express; we should perhaps suspect that they, too, are subject to the play of irony. Indeed, while the opening movements are apparently treated quite seriously, with the first compared to Liszt and Bellini, and the second to Beethoven's scherzo movements, the comments on the funeral march reintroduce incongruities that undermine the authorial voice. The march is described as "sombre" and "repulsive," where "an adagio, in D flat … would have had an immeasurably more beautiful effect"; this parallels Schumann's earlier opposition of beauty and "dissonance through dissonance to dissonance," with both phrases seemingly evoking the classical distinction between beauty and sublimity. The middle section of the movement, however, is precisely the beautiful adagio in D♭ major that the author would apparently prefer. Schumann plays on this incongruity, creating an ironic reversal of the apparent meaning; the asserted preference for beauty is undercut, ironically elevating the "repulsive" with its connotations of sublimity.

The closing comments on the Finale quoted above form a complex of terms that function almost as Romantic code-words, demonstrating Schumann's proximity to early-Romantic aesthetics, and suggesting that the passage should be interpreted in that context. The "special and dreadful spirit" that suppresses the listener again appears to invoke Burkean sublimity, but the references to mockery bring the comments closer to Jean Paul's definition of humor as "the inverted sublime" (Richter [1804] 1973, 88). This is not transcendence but annihilation, not only of the individual, but of *both* the finite and the infinite. The portrayal of the movement as "non-music" appears, in context, to echo the cantor's assessment—such negation is surely "godless" and not "proper." This view is, however, consistently ironized: through Romantic, ironic mirroring this "negation of music" paradoxically becomes preferred; it is a great and terrible image, an absence of meaning that leaves listeners "spellbound." The closing references to the enigmatic sphinx smiling ironically rounds out the early-Romantic imagery: each term figuratively asserts incomprehensibility in the face of ambiguity; the sonata movement, ultimately, is unknowable.

This incomprehension, however, is different from the inability of musical conservatives to understand the music. While this music "estranges … the lay public, which prefers not to be forever mystified and harried," the implication of the Romantic-aesthetic terms and the self-reflexive narrative is that the Romantic will understand the final movements as an expression of the incommunicable. Crucially, however, this understanding is not a greater cognitive ability, or a clearer perception of the music; Romantics are still puzzled, the music is still incomprehensible. Rather, the Romantic inclination views incomprehension itself as a virtue. The Romantic *chooses* to be mystified because incomprehensibility attains metaphysical significance as a gateway to the Infinite; the avoidance of determinate meaning is interpreted as an infinite *absence*, paradoxically signifying the negated image of the Ideal.

Romantic incomprehensibility

"Incomprehensibility" is characteristic of the early Romantics, many of whom Schumann was familiar with, such as Jean Paul Richter, Tieck, and Novalis. For example, the style and

structure of Richter's *Hesperus*, for Thomas Carlyle, "appear alike incomprehensible … We close the work with a mingled feeling of astonishment, oppression and perplexity; and Richter stands before us in brilliant cloudy vagueness, a giant mass of intellect, but without form, beauty or intelligible purpose" ([1898] 2010, 120). Tieck's fairy-tale *Der blonde Eckbert* (1797) and Novalis's Bildungsroman *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* (1800) cultivate it as "the means for evoking a *higher* coherence and for creating allegorical, enigmatic ciphers" (Menninghaus 1999, 13). At times, it is expressed through characteristically aphoristic formulations: Novalis writes that "the highest *presentation* of the incomprehensible is synthesis—unity of the un-unifiable. Positing of contradiction as non-contradiction" ([1795–1796] 2003, 11). His *Monologue* famously enacts the very problems of representation and incomprehension that it apparently addresses:

> Even if … I believe I have described the essence and function of poetry in the clearest possible way, at the same time I know that no one can understand it, and I have said something quite foolish because I wanted to say it.
>
> *([1797–1799] 1997, 84)*

Friedrich Schlegel's "On Incomprehensibility," however, from the final edition of *The Atheneum* (1800), articulates the importance of the concept of incomprehensibility to Romantic aesthetics most provocatively. This seeming defense against the accusations of "incomprehensibility" leveled by Goethe and Schiller in their "Xenien" (1797), attempts to account for the fragmentary, ironic style of the journal. At a crucial point, Schlegel asks "is incomprehensibility really something so unmitigatedly contemptible and evil?" He asserts that "the salvation of families and nations rests upon it" ([1800] 1971, 268).

The importance of incomprehensibility centers on the common Romantic concerns with subjectivity and the relationship of finite to infinite. Novalis's and Schlegel's aesthetics attempt reunification of the rational (noumenal) and the sensuous (phenomenal), separated in Kantian thought, through an infinite reflexive process in which the self becomes fully conscious, knowing itself simultaneously as both subject and object—consciousness "raised to the 2nd power" (Wood, in Novalis [1797–1799] 1997, xxii). The vehicle for this was "transcendental" poetry, "whose essence lies in the relation between the ideal and the real" (Schlegel [1800] 1991, 50), conceived not as an object but as a *process* of continual assertion and negation (self-creation and self-destruction), a perpetual mirroring or "poetic reflection" that can *approximate* the infinite. Since, for the Romantics, language is a precondition of cognition, poetic language united artist and art. The reflective process in Romantic poetry produced a corresponding reflection of consciousness as object and reflecting subject, a continual movement towards the infinite.

This reflective approximation, however, can only be continually incomplete because of the perceived inability of language, even poetic language, to communicate the "inner intuition" of the Ideal. The Romantics were acutely aware of the problems of representation arising from apparent paradoxes in linguistic function. Language was understood as a system of arbitrary, purely self-referential signs that could never signify beyond its own limits. Novalis, for example, writes that "the particular quality of language, the fact that it is concerned only with itself, is known to no one" ([1797–1799] 1997, 83). A.W. Schlegel describes "the recognized insufficiency of language to make fully adequate an inner intuition because language only has arbitrary signs which reason attempts to appropriate" (quoted in Behler 1990, 68). From this viewpoint, language encodes within itself its own failure to signify beyond itself: it cannot represent the Ideal because the infinite

can hardly be contained by the finite, much less such a closed system. Schlegel characterizes the resulting paradox as "the impossibility and the necessity of complete communication" ([1798–1800] 1991, 13): the Romantic desire for the infinite makes artistic communication of the Absolute essential, yet incomplete communication is inevitable; the infinite will remain inaccessible.

Incomprehensibility, however, makes such linguistic paradoxes apparent, foregrounding the arbitrary, "systematic" nature of signification and making us aware of its limits; it gestures, as it were, beyond language itself, towards a supposed "reality" inaccessible to linguistic communication. This suggests an analogy with the relationship between phenomena and inaccessible noumena: the Beyond of language corresponds to an intuition of the Ideal, producing some sense of the infinite. It does so, however, only negatively, reversing the process of the Kantian sublime. Rather than the failure of perception yielding to a transcendental understanding of "totality," incomprehensibility frustrates comprehension, producing only an awareness of absence of meaning. On this view, the intentional failure of language paradoxically communicates the inner intuition of the Ideal in negative; incomprehensibility indexes infinite negation.

It also precipitates a movement beyond this into the reflective process of Romantic poetry: negation and assertion are mutually implicative and in Romantic thought the negated image *mirrors*, rather than obliterates. Romantic mirroring always reflects back, but raised "to a higher power" (Schlegel [1798–1800] 1991, 32), which is itself then mirrored by its negation. The resulting spiral of near-simultaneous assertion and negation produces the continual process of approximation that forever approaches, but never fully attains the infinite. Consequently, incomprehension embraces the failure of its own medium to fully communicate in order to produce a reflection on language's own subjective, arbitrary nature. The Absolute cannot be represented through language, so Romantic poetry aims to reflect its structure, conceived as the simultaneity of opposites, that is, as an infinite paradox that Schlegel refers to as an "infinitely teeming chaos" (Schlegel [1798–1800] 1991, 100).

If the reflective motion arising from incomprehensibility allows artworks to approximate the Ideal, then the failure of signification becomes not simply desirable, but, as Schlegel insists, *necessary*. Where "other kinds of poetry are finished and are now capable of being fully analyzed," Romantic poetry (and by implication subjectivity) should never be entirely comprehensible, but rather "forever be becoming and never be perfected" (Schlegel [1798] 1991, 32). As Ernst Behler explains, "The classical aesthetics of a complete identity and harmoniously organized structure of the work of art is consequently replaced by a type of artistic creation which exhibits nonidentity, dissimulation, otherness, and difference" (1990, 65). In other words, the finite structures of Classical texts are replaced by Romantic works that actively resist final determination and full comprehension, cultivating incomprehensibility through fragmentation, ambiguity and irony. Such incomprehensibility is a dangerous game, risking incoherence and misunderstanding in order to paradoxically communicate—or, more accurately, *enact*—an absence of meaning that borders on the Infinite.

Romantic irony

The epitome of incomprehensibility is Romantic irony, a term avoided until now both because of its varied applications to music and because it is sometimes treated synonymously with incomprehensibility. Schlegel consistently defines irony in terms of paradox: irony is the "form of paradox" ([1798–1800] 1991, 6), an irreducible self-contradiction, the simultaneous presence of antithetical terms. For Schlegel, it is the paradoxical structure of irony that allows it to best

approximate the "chaos" of the infinite. The "permanent parabasis" (Behler 1990, 84) of Romantic irony, however, incorporates artistic subjectivity into its scope: Romantic irony is "Socratic," rather than rhetorical, in that even the authors of ironic works cannot control its process or escape its reach; every assertion is, ultimately, countered by ironic negation, capturing artist, artwork, and readers in an infinite paradoxical reflection. Although Schlegel explicitly identifies the pervasive irony of the *Athenaeum* as the source of its incomprehensibility ([1800] 1971, 265), he nonetheless appears to maintain a distinction: irony produces incomprehension and reflective approximation, but not all incomprehensibility is *Romantically* ironic.

Rather, incomprehensibility and irony are both part of the all-encompassing project of "Romanticizing," which Novalis defines as

> a qualitative raising to a higher power [potentization] … By endowing the commonplace with a higher meaning, the ordinary with mysterious respect, the known with the dignity of the unknown, the finite with the appearance of the infinite, I am making it Romantic.
>
> *([1797–1799] 1997, 60)*

Interpreting incomprehensibility as a reflexive image of the infinite, even in negative, requires a Romanticizing *tendency*—Schlegel's terminology for an alternative mode of aesthetic perception. This tendency is inherently hermeneutic, drawing readers into an active participation in the construction of meaning and *non*-meaning, it is an interpretive leap that moves comprehension itself to a different level.

In this context, Schumann's review emerges as a quintessentially Romantic reading of Chopin's work: the assertion that the Finale is non-music, that it is ironic, mocking and enigmatic, indicate a perception of Chopin's Sonata within the aesthetic context of Romantic incomprehensibility. The construction of the review moves beyond simple critique, itself enacting incomprehensibility. This text *plays*, in a characteristically Romantic-literary way: the different layers of irony and the self-reflective narrative dissemble, producing seeming contradictions that obscure the clarity of meaning. The end of the review is puzzling, tailing off into "incomprehension" by resisting the sense of final, unequivocal authorial meaning or any single determinate resolution. In perceiving the irony and by understanding the implications of the Romantic terminology, one might approach "meaning," but even then, as Schlegel warns, this path is treacherous—Schumann's *real* meaning can never be entirely certain. "Perfecting" Chopin's work is thus avoided by resisting a fixed, stable interpretation, even one that is overtly Romantic. Parallels between the irony and incomprehension of Schumann's review and the characteristics it attributes to Chopin's Finale are established; both end in uncertainty with an absence of fixed, determinate meaning. Schumann *romanticizes* Chopin's work: his poetic review draws the music into a Romantic reflective process in which music itself is treated not as a language, or even as an expression, but as a Romantic *text*, capable of a play of meaning and non-meaning.

In aligning his review with Romantic practice, Schumann locates Chopin's music within the same identity of art and subjectivity—the same consciousness of the negated ideal—as Romantic poetry. From this Romantic-aesthetic viewpoint, the incomprehensibility of the Finale seems to address the teleological Austro-Germanic sonata model after all, approaching final transcendence or apotheosis only in reverse, as a type of infinite absence. In this reading, the dialectical power and expressivity of the Funeral March is answered with the terrible sublimity of "non-music" that signifies the Ideal or Absolute *ex negativo*. While my

earlier analysis focused on this negation, it is possible that the Finale moves into the reflective approximation that underlies Romantic ironic consciousness. This movement is not Romantic Irony as such: it does not produce the typical shifting of "levels" of discourse, the intrusive parabasis that breaks aesthetic illusions around the artifice of art, or the continual processes of alternating creation and destruction seen in Schlegel's formulations. Rather, Chopin's Finale is just coherent enough to assert itself as music, and yet it all but negates the very conditions of its own comprehensibility, its own "meaning." In this way, the music reflects upon its own conditions of being, becoming both music and non-music simultaneously. The closing gesture functions not as a shift of discursive level, but as a fulcrum around which the reflective process turns: its final assertion of tonality reaffirms the preceding negation; its problematized ending asserts closure but also makes its own finality contingent. In this moment, the music is caught between knowing itself as a finalized object and a reflective subject. Its incomprehensibility both asserts and negates itself, reflecting Romantic ironic consciousness in an approximation of the Infinite.

Implications

The incomprehensibility of this sonata's Finale is a singular example that threatens traditional locations for musical comprehensibility. Tonality and closure (gestural and functional) normally provide inherent syntactic meaning and semantic completion, but this movement significantly obscures the comprehensibility of both. Schumann's identification of the sonata as characteristically Chopinesque, however, implies that the practice appears elsewhere, pointing to an important tendency in some of Chopin's output. The description provides, in other words, a hermeneutic basis for interpreting some of the composer's other works as instances of Romantic incomprehensibility. Indeed, analogous approaches can be traced even from some of his earliest compositions. The Mazurka, op. 7, no 5, for example, seems an entirely inappropriate ending to a short cycle. The Mazurka's simple alternation of a musical banality in the tonic and dominant of C major, repeated *senza fine*, problematizes tonal function, with the tonic continually gesturing towards the dominant, and the dominant, in its turn, continually reflecting back. The performer must decide when to finish, and closure is necessarily arbitrary—imposed, as it were, upon the music. Chopin overtly problematizes the ending of both the individual Mazurka and the larger cycle; though banal, the composition is locked into a theoretically infinite circle.

The Ballade in F major, op. 38, is a more sophisticated problematization of tonality. Its juxtaposition of a pastoral Siciliano topic with brilliant-style bravura figuration that invokes Burkean sublimity overlies a two-key tonal scheme: although F major seems to be the tonic, A minor continually supplants it. This harmonic structure is a Romantic innovation developed from the post-Classical, brilliant style, but the inherent duality establishes an irresolvable structural ambiguity wherein one key is never preferred. The final return of the Siciliano topic in A minor—the original key of the bravura topic—apparently offers a solution, promising to resolve both the underlying tonal and topical polarities. This resolution, however, is avoided: the Siciliano is fragmented and, following silence, the final cadence is undermined both gesturally by the juxtaposition and by concluding in the "wrong" key. The ambiguity highlights the ultimate lack of synthesis: the ending is entirely contingent, a disjunction between the cued syntactic closure and semantic and harmonic "openness" that is never entirely resolvable and never fully "comprehensible."

These compositions mirror aspects of the tonal and closural issues of the sonata Finale. Like the Sonata, they problematize musical comprehensibility, albeit through different compositional approaches, creating a similar resistance to being perfected. Examples like these extend the "incomprehensibility topos" suggested by Daverio (1993, 49–54) by widening its scope beyond the focus on the use of fragmentation to include problematizing tonality and closure. The deliberate incomprehensibility enacted in these Chopin examples might also suggest parallels with the works of other composers, including those of Schumann, who was often accused of incomprehensibility, and whose compositions actively cultivated ambiguity and indeterminacy. I do not mean to suggest that "incomprehensibility" functions as a *topical* signifier. Chopin's equivocality can hardly be replicated, even typologically, because no motivic, rhythmic, or gestural elements consistently "signify" it. Instead, the singular nature of incomprehensibility is precisely the point: while each instance is irreproducible, the Romantic tendency perceives it across disparate works, as a "common place" of interpretation, rather than a "commonplace" of signification (Allanbrook 2014, 97).

Schumann's review hints at precisely such a function. His cantor cannot apprehend the importance of incomprehensibility because of his limited aesthetic perception. The Romanticizing tendency that allows the grandson to understand is vital to the new Romantic music. This approach mitigates the propensity to "finalize" the music by defining its meaning too specifically. In contrast to the rhetorical origins of topics, this new tendency is inherently hermeneutic, always allowing for—indeed necessitating—alternative readings of the text. The genius of Schumann's critique is precisely in its refusal to perfect Chopin's music: parallels with the review's structure instead offer a truly Romantic response that is itself incomprehensible. My critique is more prosaic: by interpreting both the music and the review from a new Romantic-aesthetic perspective, it elucidates the meaning of both texts, collapsing their states of incomprehensibility to make the respective agendas more comprehensible. By doing so, I hope to have provided a means of reconstructing elements of Schumann's interpretive engagement with the music, and of the Romanticizing tendency. The challenge for music signification (and certainly for music analysis) is that of *non-music*—the deliberate failure of elements of musical "language." In Romantic music, even apparent absence is semiotic: "empty signs" and absent meaning can become meaningful as a symbol of an infinitely teeming chaos.

2

FROM SEMIO-ETHICS TO A SEMIOTICS OF SPEECH IN MUSIC AND MUSICOLOGY

Theoretical (and Utopian) projections[1]

Christine Esclapez

Introduction

Situated in the domains of the philosophy of language, generalized linguistics and semiotics—and to some extent in the philosophy of science—semio-ethics is a field of research whose leading proponents are the Italian team of theorists, Susan Petrilli and Augusto Ponzio (2003; 2010). Numerous fields of study contributed to the creation of the theoretical foundations that gave rise to this vast field. Of note here are the linguistic and scientific writings of Charles Sanders Peirce, Thomas Sebeok, and Roland Barthes, as well as the philosophical research of Mikhaïl Bakhtin and Emmanuel Levinas.[2] Petrilli and Ponzio emphasize that semio-ethics does not represent a branch of semiotics; instead, it may be viewed as a philosophical *attitude* vis-à-vis the world of signs and signifiers that undergoes constant expansion and diversification. The texts, objects, habits, and social interactions that constitute the primary object of generalized semiotics are progressively superseded by diverse life-forms, collaborative projects, digital creations, cyber-networks, and immersive platforms that render our use of signs, and our interpretation of them, increasingly complex.

Semio-ethics, a field concerned with potential means for improving living conditions through critical examination of the value of being, focuses primarily on the Other. By accepting Otherness as fundamental in any given society, we observe that it acquires a peculiar dimension within the context of globalization. The Other has never been closer, while at the same time, being increasingly distant, virtual, or even invisible. How, therefore, are we to incorporate Otherness in our local and general semio-spheres (Lotman [1984] 1996)? How are we to derive meaning from the world, while simultaneously respecting the multitude and diversity of signs? Inevitably, some signs are foreign to us; how do we respond to this space becoming broader, more organic and reticular? How might we foster new forms of communication and social exchange? What meaning should we assign to the illusion that gradually inserts itself between reality and its representation, as in the case of new immersive experiences (such as virtual reality, for instance)? And finally, what is our

relationship with meaning when the distinction between human and non-human beings—a distinction that is of absolute primacy in the traditional notion of society—is blurred by bio-semiotics (Sebeok 1995)?[3]

To answer these questions, semio-ethics emphasizes a return to *care for life*, to careful listening to the self and others. It touches upon extant notions of critical thinking, activism, and the importance of responsibility vis-à-vis signs and signifiers globally, in any and all aspects of life. Semio-ethics invites us to broaden our conception of signs, i.e., to consider them as entities that transcend communication, speech, and the unequivocal meaning between signifier and signified: it is an invitation to exercise critical thinking about signs and to go beyond established conventions and value judgments (Ponzio 2010).

My essay applies this global vision of the world of signs to the domain of musical meaning (Tarasti 2006; Esclapez 2014). This theoretical and speculative hypothesis proposes a means by which the field of music semiotics can evolve beyond the communication model—the paradigm from which it emerged during the post-1960s theory of linguistic turn—towards something I call the "interpretation of musical speech." Beginning with an overview of semio-ethics and some of its key concepts, I outline the nature of musical semiotics as it relates to present-day practice.

Semio-ethics: the perspective of the Other

Semio-ethics provides a unique perspective on the study of signs in that it is not merely a compendium of pre-established rules and principles, but rather, it represents a general vision that addresses the question of interactions between semiotics and ethics (see Fontanille 2007).

In the tradition of Aristotelian aesthetics, semio-ethics presupposes that discrete and collective actions depend on interrelations between the action itself and the various associated components that give rise to meaning (objectiveness, speaking or gesturing to the other, context, presence of the other in the self) as opposed to any pre-established values. Petrilli and Ponzio relocate signs beyond their primary function or political, cultural, or aesthetic doxa, into the realm of the "unclassified" or "unordered." In critical analyses of our contemporary, globalized world, semio-ethics offers an opportunity to move "beyond the human" ("au-delà de l'humain"), which has largely defined Western thought since the eighteenth century.

Semio-ethics is founded upon the acknowledgment of difference and separation from the Other, emphasizing the reflection upon this difference while affirming the importance of recognizing our own identity. It is the difference, or rather, the indifference (Jullien 2012, 5) that lies at the heart of the project: how are we to differentiate ourselves from each other without conflict, disregard, or self-identification? It is about thinking beyond what we believe we know without implying this "beyond" to be transcendent or metaphysical.

Taking Peirce's concept of *firstness* as his starting point, Eduardo Kohn proposes that we imagine a "beyond human" semio-anthropology, which frees the symbolic function from its singular role in communication. He liberates the force of cues and icons as a means of embracing other possible forms of inter-subjective and inter-species exchanges. Kohn insists that "such encounters with other kinds of beings force us to recognize the fact that seeing, representing, and perhaps knowing, even thinking, are not exclusively human affairs" (Kohn 2017, 1). His assumption only becomes possible when we realize—as did Jakob Johann von Uexküll ([1934] 2010)—that every organism communicates using models that were constructed within the context of a specific ecological niche.

Semio-ethics constitute a political project; significantly, Petrilli and Ponzio position themselves firmly against all forms of glottocentrism or anthropocentrism that prioritize the conception of meaning strictly based upon words.[4] They recognize that communication and social exchange may also be effective through non-verbal means, which enriches semiosis and expands the possibilities of meaning. For Petrilli and Ponzio, since human beings are "semiotic animals," other types of semiosis (such as animal or biological semioses) are not foreign to them (Petrilli and Ponzio 2010, 157).

The epistemological territory of semio-ethics cannot be separated from globalization and its secondary effects—whether technological, economic, cultural, or social—which Petrilli and Ponzo consider as *pharmakon*, a remedy as well as a poison (Stiegler 2010, 10). Their approach differs from numerous critical studies about globalization (e.g. Abélès 2008). In the very acknowledgment of adverse effects of globalization, they see the possibility of its circumvention. The answerability of the individual, vis-à-vis life, culture, and the Other, is at the center of this semiotic stance, widely influenced by the ethical philosophy elaborated by the Bakhtin Circle in the 1920s. The writings of this collective are main sources of the researchers' work, inviting us to act responsibly, confronting globalization with free and critical thinking. Consequently, Petrilli and Ponzio are skeptical about disciplinarity and the hyper-specialization of knowledge.

Conceptual migration

This dynamic model for understanding signs, or the semiosphere, leads to a renewal of methods and modes of acquiring knowledge, as well as rules of production and analysis of meaning. In this sense, semio-ethics constitutes a practice, a knowledge-base with ethics and responsibility as its source. In this context, I propose different ways of understanding music signification, based on "conceptual migrations," developed from what Edgar Morin calls "migratory notions" (*notions migratrices*; see Morin [1990] 1994). Within the global context of semio-ethics presented above, I retain four notions: attention, listening, signification, and interpretation (Figure 2.1).

Attention prioritizes what is being experienced; it implies a distancing from the linearity of Western conceptions of time and history. In a chronological and abstract way, history is represented as a succession of events: past-present-future, the time of experienced history (the time of consciousness), must have as its starting point the notions of "attention" and "milieu,"

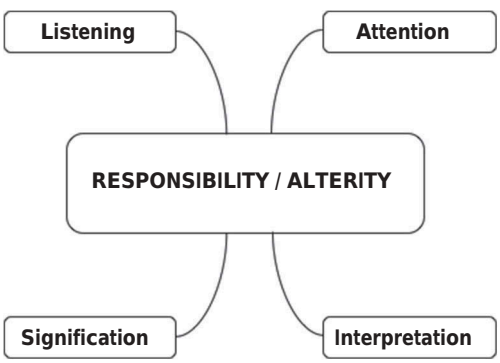


Figure 2.1 Cartography and transposition: on some of the "migratory notions"

as demonstrated by Bernard Stiegler ("milieu" also translated as "environment," see Stiegler 2010, 29). The focus on the present is positioned between retention of the past and protention of that which is to come, implying a sharing of space-time. It is both "*psychological attention*, perceptive or cognitive (being alert, aware, concentrated), and *social attention*, practical or ethical (being careful, taking care)."[5] Attention refers to *care* (Zielinski 2010, 634). It is a disposition, but also (and primarily) a practice, based on an ethic of detail, relief, and fragment. "Being careful" requires taking care of things and people, principally those that at first seem insignificant, and that are, in this sense, unclassifiable. Attention demands an active listening to the Other. The philosopher and sinologist François Jullien proposes not a question of the Otherness, but rather of the "interval" or the "gap" (2012). The "gap" presupposes a fertile and adventurous distance: it is a transient place, communal for human beings, while "difference" presupposes a comparison or classification founded upon a common frame that serves as a reference, to which any and every form of life is relative.

Listening is also a practice, since it requires both a negation of value judgment and a willingness to enter into a dialogical relationship with the Other, letting it surprise us, and, through this irruption, understand it as radically Other (Levinas 1974, 65–67). Listening acknowledges our semantic diversity and focuses on attention, free of any interest beyond the understanding of this particular gap and distance, striving to resist the myth of sameness, of unity, or of fusion. This *rediscovered instant* cannot be satisfied by a univocal signification, as suggested in Saussurian linguistics. In fact, univocality between signifier and signified has the effect of creating a vertical hierarchy of signification. In contrast, *signification*, which is connected to listening and care, becomes what Kohn describes as "a vast range of significant differences, between qualities and beings," which compels us to develop a series of relationships that "precede the usual categorization and communication process inserted in historical and linguistic frameworks" (2017, 13). Signification (in its multiple verbal and non-verbal facets) opens the field of the sign to *interpretation*, as immersed in the unknown, stimulating the capacity to respond, that does not seek to close, judge, or classify, but rather to listen to what is being outlined beyond words (Zielinski 2010, 638). Interpretation, thus, is an attentive reading and questioning of the Other and of the Self. These four migratory notions must be understood in a non-hierarchical way. They are in constant interaction with one another as edifices of experience that manifest themselves in the space of intersubjective exchange. These four "notional nuclei" enable expansion into secondary notions (Figure 2.2).

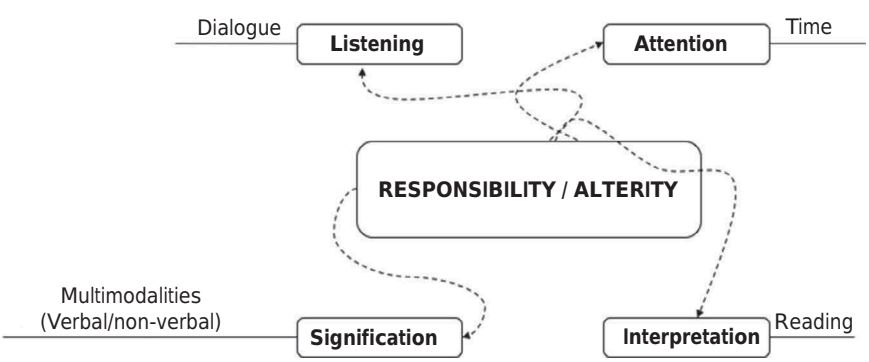


Figure 2.2 Cartography and transposition: migratory and secondary notions

Awareness, listening, signification, and interpretation are crucial to musicology, affecting interactions between interpreter, musicologist, analyst, artist, and listener. Might not the semiotics of musical compositions' speech provide an opportunity to reimagine the field of musicology?

Towards a semiotic of musical compositions' "speech"

The notion of speech is commonly used in reference to Saussurian semiology, and to the language/speech (langue/parole) dichotomy that determines the way in which language functions.[6] My construal, however, follows the more focused perspective of Benveniste (1966, 1974). Speech is the discourse that is in play, and it is the channel through which the Subject emerges. It embodies a competence and the individual actualization of society. Dosse (1992) emphasizes the marginalization of Benveniste's theses in the structuralist context of the late-1960s. Thus, the notion of speech suggests a return to the works themselves, conceived as fields of singular presence, referring to norms and historical codes, but also to actions that negate questions of the creative act of representation or expression, prioritizing instead a focus upon exploration and invention. In this sense, the idea of the work as a completed entity—autonomous from the world—is questioned by actions, which, receiving and conceiving that work, define it as a particular mode of presence (Vecchione 1992, 2008; Hauer and Esclapez 2001). In the field of contemporary art, Cristofol proposes that art can be thought of as "work of forms" as opposed to a "production of objects" that give rise to a thought-process and a specific set of functions (2005, 3). His hypotheses conceive music (and of art) as a singular form of speech, which creates, by its presence, a plurality of possible worlds. Musical (and artistic) works provide opportunities to experience something that is not to be reduced merely to context, intention, and technical/technological conditions. In this sense, art is not communication, but an exploration and interpretation of reality.

Defining musical compositions as instances of "speech" demands a conception of music signification that instantiates a dialogue between several "actors": composers, listeners, performers, musicologists, and so on. These instances are individual, but also collective, and they are derived from their contextually-determined social, economic, or cultural milieux. They no longer refer only to the "composer–performer–listener" continuum, which would otherwise reactivate the above-mentioned scheme of communication. Rather, this dialogue creates a complex network of experiences that is to be deciphered rather than decoded.

This shift towards practical and discursive questions is not new. From Aristotle to John Dewey to Bruno Latour, numerous writers conceive of interactions between the sciences, arts, and action in the world. In this sense, practice has no aim beyond the act of transforming the Subject, social interrelations, or even the natural environment. It is neither a question of opposing theory and practice, nor of merging them; the aim is to think of them as Others, in their mutual distance and fecundity. It is not about inaugurating a system of values among several significant facts, but instead, it is to recognize the diversity of symbolic systems as cognitive systems that are characteristic of a certain culture and historical context. That which constitutes meaning is no longer the relationship between a Subject and a signifying object; rather, it is the content of the action and the values invested therein (Panier 2008). Given this, semiotic speech in music is conceived of the study of a practical field that explores the world outside of conventional topoi and that traces the course of musicology as an action.

Attention

The problem of attention calls historical writings into question; more precisely, it examines the distance between the past and the contemporary historian. Foucault states that "whatever escapes History is the instant, the rupture, the tearing, the interruption" (Foucault [1979] 2001, 790). Writing history, therefore, is a subtle problem. François Dosse (2003) states that for Michel Certeau, for instance, the writing of history needs to find the balance point between signification—achieved only by a "closed," or finite, statement of facts—and the open "gap"—where the distance between the subjectivity of historians and their subjects is manifest. It implies a paradoxical relationship towards an absent Other: attention is therefore a critical practice that allows the past to situate itself in a paradoxical space not entirely concerned with authenticity. This interspace is the one of ethics; it revisits the intersection of Subject and Object, favoring the permeability between the researcher and the studied events. For Daniel Charles, history is significant only in a "complete time," in other words, it includes the three dimensions of time in an equidistant manner: past, present, and future (Charles 2001, 43–66).

In the 1970s, musicology re-evaluated some of its prior tenets by focusing on musics of the Other, previously considered to be of minor importance. In the last part of the twentieth century, such musics gained institutional recognition, a phenomenon that indicated a significant shift in values, welcoming notions of the original and the unfamiliar, celebrating the act of artistic creation as one of continuity, re-writing, re-configuration, and re-composition, and accepting that the analysis of art music should include other musical practices. Creation is, as it were, a game that includes the ideas of others (*idées des autres*) or that interacts with other ideas (*idées autres*). Hybridization, appropriation, and decontextualization are notions particularly relevant in their transformation of a general semiotics of work-practices speech into the singular study of musical practices (Esclapez 2007).

Listening

If, like attention, listening is one form of experience and knowledge of the world, then it is no less a singular practice that links the semiotics of musical compositions' speech to world sounds. This broader viewpoint constitutes an essential aesthetic shift, inasmuch as it upends the hierarchy of sound, and does reevaluate sound and listening over the historical proclivity for the visual (Pardo Salgado 2014). The second half of the twentieth century witnessed an exploration of new territories that obscured the distinction between music and sound (Schaeffer 1966). Noises, soundscapes, and sound installations deemed "musical" called for a critical examination of the definition and nature of music (Schafer [1977] 2010). Brian Eno describes a lineage that resulted in a culture of musical experimentation that profoundly undermined the barriers between sound and music (in Nyman [1999] 2005, 9–12). Despite the fact that credit for these explorations is often accorded to sound artists, as opposed to composers and performers, we are nonetheless observing a broadening of musicological discourse, and now there is a considerable study on what "noise" is in contemporary music (Spampinato 2008; Solomos 2013), and how its presence relates to the more general context of art and the world (Szendy 2001; Sterne [2003] 2015; Deshays 2006; Barbanti 2011). This aesthetic turn toward the "sounds of the earth" suggests, according to Petrilli and Ponzio, a perception that prioritizes the signifying material (the sign) rather than the signified (the object). A semiotics of musical compositions' speech strives to physically experience sound. In this sense, it relates to Barthes's *plaisir du texte* ("pleasure of text"), *grain de la voix* ("grain

of the voice"),[7] and inter-subjective listening (1973a, 1982). If sound is a projection, a resonance and vibration, then listening is the primordial threshold to that most subjective aspect of sound-as-a-sign. This subjectivity is not merely the acknowledgment of the ways in which we attribute a meaning to things; it is also a place for memory, absence, disappearance, imperceptibility, and impermanence. Barbanti explores the foundations of a sonic ecology, based on Heideggerian hermeneutics, which implies three modes of being in the world: co-existence, continuity, and ontological complicity (2011, 11–18). This third notion is, for him, essential for an ecology of sound that hypothesizes a permeability between the perception of a sound and the sound itself. The notion of the act of listening is therefore shifted towards a question of relationship: sound is an intermediary apparatus which connects people, things, and noises of the world in a manner which is both local and silent. Sound is a critical space where interdisciplinary artistic practices and creative acts emerge. To arrive at musical compositions' speech requires: (1) that we not separate music from sound (regardless of its various forms), (2) that we not downplay the historical and aesthetic importance of orality (musics of oral tradition, improvised and experimental music, etc.) vis-à-vis notated forms, and (3) that we no longer study music detached from the social context from which, and for which, it emanated (concerts, performances, rituals, installations, processions, etc.). Semiotics of musical compositions' speech listens, in order to "reach music reality" (Vecchione 2007, 279). It endeavors to listen before attempting to identify or classify; it listens in an attempt to better understand what is foreign to us, to observe the aural nature of musics and their power to reach our ears in the first place.

Signification

The position of Petrilli and Ponzio suggests that the study of signification ought to extend beyond notions of communication, meaning, message, or code—principles inherited from post-Saussurian structuralism (Ricoeur or Genette)—in order to be able to address the non-verbal domain. Such an extension suggests that semio-ethics seeks to offer an alternative to Saussurian semiology, or even to Greimassian semiotics, which have been applied to music by Eero Tarasti (2006) and Márta Grabócz (2009), among others. While the use of linguistic theory in musicology has been particularly commonplace since the early 1960s, an approach to music signification seems to resist this association: the musical sign is not easily reduced to a set of verbal operations. Music Signification refers to that which is felt and that which is heard when the performing musician challenges the degree of uniformity in our subjective reasoning, a notion Robert Francès ([1958] 1984) described as "pre-reflexive."

Music invades the body, possesses it, and, in this sense, speaks the world in a non-verbal manner. Music signification refers to the Peircean notion of firstness, and to the conception of being in its totality. It is possible because, as a practice, it is experienced in a type of atemporal instant that corresponds to emotional life, in its most primitive but also utopian sense. Other non-linguistic interpretations abound. For Spampinato music signification metaphorically leads into a musicology of "contact" (2008). Vecchione sees music as an imaginary entity (Esclapez 2016), the study that contemplates the expressive non-verbal. Such an approach implies a theory of the imaginary and a dialiectics of the Real, the Perceived, and the Imaginary (Francastel 1970). Recall that the musical sign (like any other sign) is situated within a semiosphere; it can be sent by any kind of creature, animal, or plant (see Mâche 1983; Martinelli 2007; Barlow 2012).

From this perspective, the goal is to conceive of music signification as a tangle of speeches (sounds, gestures, signals, clues) that problematizes the relationship between signifier and signified, allowing their diffraction, their lack of symmetry, and their anarchical nature to flourish. Semiotics of the speech of musical works proposes to rediscover this life that has made music—in all its forms—a place of *speech in action* as opposed to a message charged with determinate meaning.

Interpretation

I do not refer here to the question of the interpreter, who is nonetheless essential in giving meaning to music, and whose body participates in the shared act of listening; instead, following Petrilli and Ponzio, interpretation is understood as a critical space and a reading of the musical compositions' speech. Interpretation, on this view, is a matter of accounting for the perspective of the musicologist who addresses and analyzes this speech. Musicology, as a mode of interpretation, lives on the periphery of hermeneutics.

For Vecchione, who addresses the relation of musicology to fields such as musical/historical anthropology and to the semio-hermeneutics of music, the term "musicology" is insufficient to describe what is at stake in the discipline, given that it is situated at the crossroads of historical, philosophical, humanistic, and social critical sciences. He opts instead for "musicological reality," (2007, 275–76) and thereby argues for a dialogue among musicologists, music compositions, practices, and context. Musicological reality is, therefore, a relational whole, and it is conceived of as an "eco-form."

Between the progression—the quest—and pure chance, this type of pragmatic musicology becomes an interleaved space where musicology as an interpretive science is situated (Vecchione 2008). The musicologist plays with critical distanciation: given the principle of "letting things be," we are better able to negotiate a desire to reach an anthropological grounding based upon the fiction that music is offering and a deployment in a discourse that may, in turn, constitute the universal basis of accepted knowledge. Semiotics of speech enters into dialogue with musical works and with their most unstated characteristics: the intention of practitioners, the fiction of the world they place upon the stage, the shared listening they imply, the modes of enunciation, and the production they establish.

Conclusion

The semiotics of the musical compositions' speech constitutes an ethical and philosophical project that attempts to create an alternate space, which seeks to better grasp music outside the framework of established modes of assessment. Attentiveness, listening, signification, and interpretation are at the heart of this project, which represents an apparatus that creates meaning. The term "apparatus" (*dispositif*) is used in the humanities and social sciences, but also in writings on art, replacing the formerly normative term "structure." From Foucault (1975) to Deleuze (1989) to Agamben (2007), this term has gradually evolved from its initial Foucaldian one, which associated it with the production of knowledge, or to power constellations. Its appropriation in the field of performance studies and practice by contemporary practitioners of art and music—by those at the forefront of sound art, experimental music, and digital installations—invites us to make use of it with care, but also with enthusiasm. The apparatus proposed by the semiotics of musical compositions' speech concerns live experience. By "live experience" here, we imply not only a technical, sonic,

aesthetic, and spatial apparatus, but also a critical one that fosters the emergence of a network of possible relationships that come into being between musicology and musical works as active practices. The apparatus in the field of contemporary arts invites us to reconsider the complexity of interactions between works, spaces, and bodies.

Notes

1 Translated from French by Jonathan Bell and Paul Clift.
2 In the article "Semioethics" (2010), the two theorists acknowledge the extent to which Levinas (1972) provided the basis for their approach.
3 Biosemiotics takes into account the entire spectrum of the living entities, from bacteria, to plants, to humankind. It establishes a connection between the work of Peirce and work in cybernetics and biology.
4 While glottocentrism, strictly speaking, is the attitude that prefers one language while disregarding others, Petrilli and Ponzio use this term to describe the extent to which, since Saussure, verbal expression has been the primary focus of research, at the cost of all other forms of expression (pre-verbal, for example).
5 http://arsindustrialis.org/attention ("*attention psychologique*, perceptive ou cognitive (« être attentif », vigilant, concentré (accessed November 14, 2018).
6 See Lawrence Kramer's chapter in this volume.
7 See Anne Kauppala's chapter in this volume.

3
MUSIC AND REALITY

Ben Curry

Introduction

In the study of music signification, the semiotic theory developed by the pragmatist philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce is a touchstone. This chapter outlines the role of Peircean categories in understanding music signification, arguing that Peircean thought should lead us to place special emphasis upon a mind-independent reality. The difficulties encountered in tracing musical meaning to real things and events is then addressed through a consideration of Raymond Monelle's Peircean analysis of musical topics such as the *pianto* and the sarabande (Monelle 2000, 17–18). I argue that a full understanding of music signification recognizes a causal underpinning for musical events and behaviors but, nevertheless, grants a vital disconnect between the space of musical meanings and the causal nexus that is the ultimate reality of the world. In developing this picture, this essay draws heavily on the thought of the highly influential neo-pragmatist philosopher Wilfrid Sellars.

Peirce, signification, and reality

The Peircean categories—firstness, secondness, and thirdness—are most commonly encountered as sign types: icon, index, and symbol. Because they articulate Peirce's fundamental categories—to which, it is claimed, all phenomena can be reduced—these sign types appear both exhaustive and penetrating in their analytical potential, while remaining capable of insight into the most trivial of actions, signs, and meanings. They allow us to distinguish between meanings or connections that derive from shared qualities (e.g., color, shape, and timbre), from causal or actual connections (e.g., kinetic, spatial, and temporal connections), and from law-like connections (e.g., habitual association and pattern-governed processes). This trichotomy allows us to conceive more clearly how, in the case of an icon, the *quality* of a slow musical work might signify unhurried human activity, or how, in the case of an index, a particular set of musical traits might signify a particular performer (who ostensibly caused the traits in the first place), or how, in the case of a symbol, a national anthem might be habitually associated with one nation and/or territory rather than another.

Also important in Peirce is the emphasis placed on reality. The category of secondness or indexicality is, in key respects, the most fundamental of the categories. It is toward

secondness as actuality, that all inquiry is aimed, and it is from secondness that all knowledge of the world stems. Thus, Peirce's philosophical outlook is, in important respects, decidedly modern: he insists upon the existence of a mind-independent reality and, furthermore, insists that our understanding of this reality can be advanced through scientific inquiry.

A further Peircean insight concerns the interconnection of sign functions and reality. In studying music signification, we might assume that reality need not concern us excessively. The faun of Debussy's prelude has no basis in reality, we might claim, so surely, we need not consider any connection to a real world, only to a world of fantasy. But this would be a mistake. For not only, as Peirce notes with reference to the phoenix, do real descriptions of fantastical creatures exist, such creatures do, in fact, have every basis in reality (Peirce [1903] 1998, 295). Fauns may not exist but the goat and the human, from which the idea faun derives, do.

Peirce's position on the role of the real world in human thought is decisively laid out in a relatively early article titled "Some Consequences of Four Incapacities." In it he claims that:

1. We have no power of Introspection, but all knowledge of the internal world is derived by hypothetical reasoning from our knowledge of external facts.
2. We have no power of Intuition, but every cognition is determined logically by previous cognitions.
3. We have no power of thinking without signs.
4. We have no conception of the absolutely incognizable (Peirce [1868] 1992, 30).

Peirce forms a picture of mental content entirely rooted in our experience of the real, articulated through interconnected categories. Through action, we confront the world (secondness: the object) such that percepts (firstness: signs) develop into further thought (thirdness: interpretants). The external world constitutes the hard facts and these bring about the cognitions (signs/interpretants) that logically develop, one from the other. Music signification, then, from a Peircean perspective, must ultimately derive from reality even when the signs we use in our thinking may seem fanciful or wholly mental.

Peircean signs and music

A useful example of how Peircean sign types can be deployed in elucidating musical meaning is found in the second chapter of Raymond Monelle's *The Sense of Music* (2000). In it Monelle argues that while the musical topic as codified by Ratner is essentially symbolic (because it is controlled by rules or conventions), it can be further analyzed by appealing to the icon/index distinction. Monelle posits a two-fold process whereby music signifies. In his examples (*pianto* and sarabande), the first stage can be either iconic or indexical and signifies an "object," which, it seems, has a relatively clear relationship with reality. This object, in turn, indexically signifies a "signification," which is more abstracted or generalized. Monelle's diagram is reproduced in Figure 3.1a, and the entities he has in mind for each of the terms in boxes are added by me in Figure 3.1b, drawing on the main body of Monelle's text (2000, 18).

There is little doubt that Monelle brings us closer to understanding the musical topic through his discussion, but there are limitations. Consider first Monelle's claim that the *pianto* signifies the moan of someone in tears iconically, that is, through resemblance or

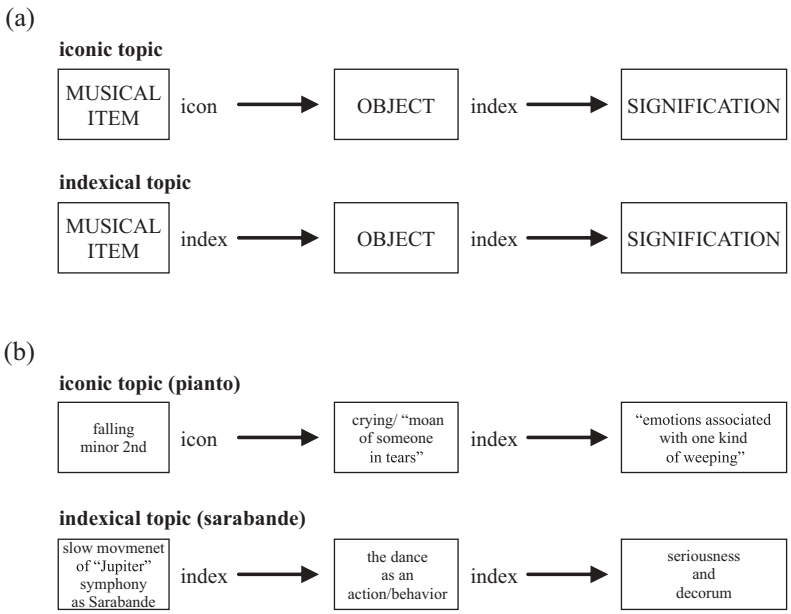


Figure 3.1 a. Monelle's Peircean Diagram of iconic and indexical topics; b. diagrams specifying *pianto* and sarabande

shared qualities. This is a reasonably clear case of a Peircean icon in that the music and the moan might be said to share the quality of falling or the shape of tension followed by release (something that is heavily encoded, but that need not undermine Monelle's point). But is there not also a causal connection here? Could it not be said that humans have developed the habit of articulating the musical *pianto* in response to the sounds of moaning, and therein lies a causal relationship, albeit a highly complex one? Like a shadow, then, the *pianto* is simultaneously iconic and indexical, it is just that a shadow is not stylized like the *pianto*, because it is not fed through human behavior.

Now consider Monelle's claim that the metric structure of the slow movement of Mozart's "Jupiter" Symphony (K. 551) indexically signifies the act of dancing (as an object). The index here is conceived in line with Peirce's example of a bullet hole in glass. Thus, we can work back from the "object" to the "musical item" to identify a causal link. In the case of the sarabande, then, we have a fairly clear index in the way that the dance as a real-world action or behavior causes the musical item to be structured and articulated in a particular way. The arrow of signification subsequently works the other way, so that the music signifies the dance just as the bullet hole signifies the bullet. But again, the icon/index distinction seems tenuous. Surely the act of dancing also shares qualities with the meter and articulation in Mozart's slow movement—the qualities of temporal shaping and organization—so the relationship is, again, just as successfully analyzed in terms of iconism as it is in terms of indexicality.

The ambiguities here stem, I would suggest, not from faults in Monelle's grasp of Peirce, but from ambiguities in the Peircean categories themselves. Indeed, any indexical connection can be recast in iconic terms. The object, for Monelle, is something more concrete than the signification. But we should bear in mind that Monelle wisely keeps in

play the question as to what extent the object concerned is something real as such. Indeed, Monelle states: "Music does not signify society. It does not signify literature. And, most of all, it does not signify 'reality'" (2000, 19). The quotation marks around "reality" perhaps indicate that Monelle is altogether uneasy with such a concept, and while we may challenge such an apparent rejection of the role of reality in human understanding and behavior, there is an important reason for Monelle's uneasiness with the role of reality in music signification.

The arrows in Figure 3.1 (based on Monelle 2000, 18) suggest a process of signification that runs from the musical item to the object and then to a signification that is more general, but, nevertheless, somehow more accurate in its account of the meaning posited. These arrows suggest something of the thinking we find in Peirce. In the case of the bullet hole, the arrow of causation runs from the bullet, together with its movement to the hole in the glass; then, on inspection of the glass, the arrow of signification runs in the opposite direction where the bullet hole (through an interpretant) brings to mind (or provides evidence for) the actual bullet and its movement. Similarly, in Monelle's account of the second movement of the "Jupiter" symphony, a generalized behavior that can be described as seriousness or decorum becomes manifest in (or plays a role in causing) the dance known as the sarabande, and this leads to (or plays a role in causing) the musical item. In listening to the musical item, the arrow is reversed, such that the music can be said to signify "seriousness" with reference to dancing (and perhaps to the Spanish court).

But how, we might ask, can one claim that the dance (as a set of behaviors) caused the musical item? Surely, the musical item is just as likely to have caused the dancing. The idea that seriousness and decorum caused the dance is similarly problematic. A better understanding would be that the very notion of seriousness and decorum *evolved* in relation to the dance just as a certain kind of sound (the music) and a certain kind of bodily movement (the dance) evolved in relation to one another.

This way of understanding signification processes draws into question the Peircean framework in which reality can be straightforwardly drawn into meaning-making processes. Monelle, it seems, is right to be uneasy with the idea that reality is referenced or signified by music. It would be a mistake, however, to dispense with a mind-independent reality altogether, and it would also be a mistake (*pace* Monelle) to suggest that musical meaning has nothing to do with reality.

Sellars, music, and the logical space of reasons

I have identified two key concerns with the application of Peircean thought to music: (1) the problem of distinguishing the iconic and the indexical, and (2) the problem of positing causal reality as the basis of music signification. We can overcome these problems by enlisting the work of Wilfird Sellars, who, in certain key respects, developed key ideas introduced by Peirce.[1] We begin by recognizing that in encountering (1) and, in particular, (2) we are, in a sense, caught between the two horns of a dilemma. The first is a Peircean insistence that all thought derives from reality or external facts. The second is a Monellean insistence that music signification does not concern reality at all.

To move through these horns, we need to open up a space, compellingly theorized by Sellars, termed the "logical space of reasons." To understand it, it is useful to first consider another of his most influential concepts: the myth of the given.

It is tempting to think, as Peirce appears to have done, that our knowledge of the world derives from a direct experience of the things (objects and their qualities—secondness and

firstness) that constitute it, and that these experiences are subsequently brought under concepts (rules—thirdness) to form fully-fledged thought. For Sellars this is the myth of the given: the claim that experience can be both immediately given to the senses and at the same time epistemically efficacious. DeVries and Triplett (2000, xxxi), provide a useful summary of Sellars's myth of the given:

> Sellars's argument against all forms of giveness focuses on (1) that the given have some positive epistemic status in its own right, (2) that it have this status in a way that renders it epistemically independent of all other knowledge, and (3) that it be epistemically efficacious with respect to other elements of a person's epistemic system.

In simple terms the difficulty is this: if some experience is to act as the foundation for knowledge then it must allow inference; it must, in a sense, be some sort of mental entity that can act as a basis for reasoning; that is, it can justify the inferences considered to follow from that mental entity. But if some experience is such a mental entity, then it is not independent of mind, and cannot provide access to the real that is assumed of it. Another way to approach this point is to consider that there is no experience that is not conceptual. There is, for example, no sense data that is not already conceptualized.

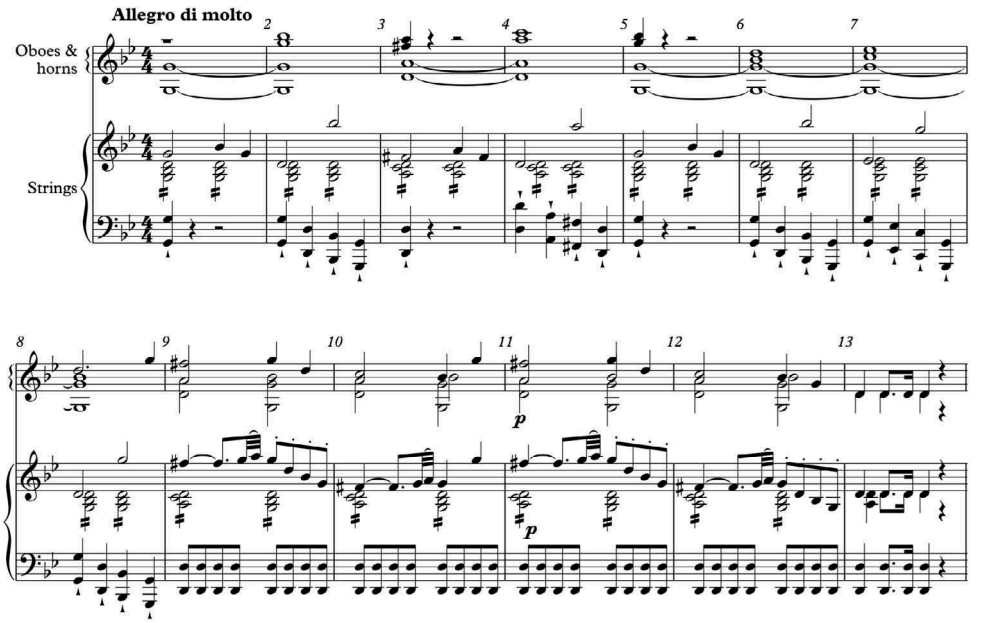
The myth of the given allows us to understand how music signification can be both distanced from reality while remaining ultimately subject to the real world of causal processes. If there is no epistemically efficacious data given directly to the mind, there must be a fundamental disconnect between music's reality and the meanings the mind develops through listening processes. The space of reasons, however, is ultimately beholden to the real, for the space of reasons is not to be explained in terms of transcending or going beyond the real. It is explained in terms of human behaviors and habits in the world. These are not transcendent ideas, but normative operations situated within a psychological-social-historical network thoroughly penetrated by a causal reality.

The term "normativity," then, is vital in understanding the space of reasons and, indeed, Sellars's philosophical system as a whole. O'Shea, for example, subtitles his book on Sellars's philosophy "naturalism with a normative turn" (2007), and given the importance of this term in Sellars's philosophy and in modern philosophy generally, it is surprising that it has been afforded so little attention in the study of music. The notion of norms does gain some currency in music theory following Hepokoski and Darcy's use of the term in formulating sonata theory, where it indicates more-or-less consciously deployed and recognized formal devices in sonata-form movements (2006, 36–40). But sophisticated decisions of this sort are only a part of the far-reaching notion of normativity as it is deployed by Sellars in mapping the logical space of reasons. Normativity concerns not just highly sophisticated decisions such as those outlined by Hepokoski and Darcy, it concerns far more fundamental decisions that characterize human behavior. The notion of normativity captures *biological* and *social* norms of human behavior and thought and is not, therefore, exhausted by intentional human behaviors.

Music signification is distanced from the world because the meanings so often postulated as musical (including those considered as pertaining to music theory) concern normative patterns of behavior that relate only indirectly to real things and events. The indirect connection (or "hook-up") does, however, provide a means of explaining an ultimately *causal* underpinning, even though the logical space of reasons and the normative processes that define it cannot themselves be reduced to a causal reality. We now consider in more detail how Sellars maps the space of reasons as a complex of normative operations before looking in some detail at how reality and (musical) reason connect.

Topics as normative operations in the space of reasons

Understanding musical meaning in terms of normative operations within the space of reasons has profound implications, which can be usefully explored by returning to musical topics. Consider measures 1 to 13 of the finale of Haydn's Symphony no. 39 (Example 3.1). After hearing a particular performance or "sounding" of these measures, I might state "measures 1 to 13 are Sturm und Drang," which can be formalized (following conventions in the study of logic, with square brackets added for clarity) as: [S&D] [mm.1–13]. We can adapt Sellars schematization of the "standard" conception of such statements to give the diagram in Figure 3.2 (Sellars 1985, 285).



Example 3.1 Haydn, Symphony no. 39 in G minor "Tempeste di mare," Hob. I:39, finale, mm. 1–13

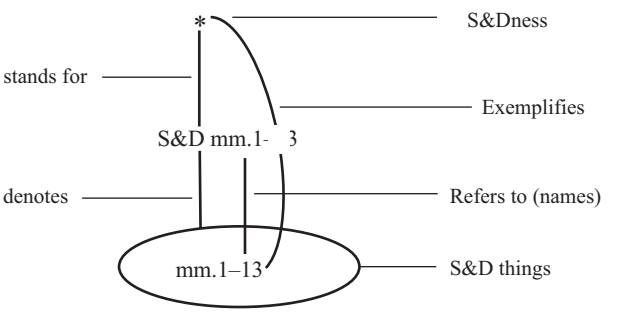


Figure 3.2 Sellars's schematization of the "standard" conception of predication adapted to concern *Sturm und Drang* in mm. 1–13 of the finale of Haydn's Symphony no. 39

In this model of the standard conception (a conception that Sellars will reject), both "S&D" and "mm.1–13" are taken to be singular *referring* expressions. They are thought to be meaningful because they refer or relate to some sort of entity. So, mm.1–13 refer to, or name, a particular sounding of mm. 1–13, whereas S&D refers to S&Dness. The label "mm. 1–13" is more straightforward as it names a particular thing, a particular sonic event. The more complex dual role of S&D, in the standard conception, results from the idea that, to paraphrase Sellars, "S&D" is semantically related both to S&D things and to S&Dness, the property that "S&D-things" have in common (Sellars 1985, 286).

Sellars demonstrates that the standard conception of (in this case) a S&Dness that is exemplified by mm. 1–13 and other S&D things (in this case sounding entities) is problematic. Unlike the naming connection between "mm. 1–13" and a particular mm. 1–13, which Sellars retains (albeit with considerable qualification), the exemplification connection is jettisoned, because the notion of S&Dness as a more primitive entity that can be instantiated by an object or event is not sustainable. One way to demonstrate this is to invoke, following Sellars and deVries, Bradley's paradox.

In this paradox, we begin by recalling that we represent the claim that mm.1–13 is S&D as follows:

[S&D] [mm.1–13].

If we adhere to the model in Figure 3.2, we will read this connection (between S&D and mm. 1–13) as a *predication relationship* between S&Dness and mm. 1–13, whereby mm. 1–13 as a single entity is said to exemplify S&Dness. Now, in doing this we are bringing to bear a new concept, exemplification, to explain the relationship formalized as "[S&D] [mm. 1–13]." But in doing so, we are again invoking predication: just as we predicated S&Dness of mm. 1–13, we are now predicating exemplification of "[S&D] [mm. 1–13]." This further predication can be formalized as follows:

Exemplification ([S&D] [mm. 1–13]).

We hereby enter into a vicious regress. For we must now surely recognize that in positing "exemplification-ness" we are invoking a further process of predication which acts to exemplify "exemplification-ness." This can be written as follows:

Exemplification (Exemplification ([S&D] [mm. 1–13])).

The key point here is that by positing abstract entities such as "S&Dness" to which real world entities relate, we are obliged to recognize an infinite series of further entities, each reproducing a comparable abstract relational idea set up in the initial predication. For Sellars, the answer to problems with predication is to understand entities such as S&D not as qualities or properties in the world, but as normative entities that reside in the logical space of reasons. Thus, a claim that "mm. 1–13 of Haydn's Symphony no. 39 is Sturm und Drang" is not primarily a statement about how the world actually is, but rather it is a statement about, in Levine's words, "the normative properties that govern the linguistic tokens the mind uses in its thinking" (Levine 2007, 252). It is better understood as a statement about the kind of role (defined by normative processes) played by "Sturm und Drang" or sentences deploying these terms in a linguistic economy. If we are to conceive topic labels as statements about musical meaning, we need to be clear that "meaning" here

does not concern reference to existent entities but concerns instead a normatively defined role for the topic label in question. Statements about topic labels, then, are metalinguistic: they tell us about the kinds of roles terms like "Sturm und Drang" or "*pianto*" or "sarabande" play in a linguistic economy and relate only indirectly to reality.

From the perspective of Peircean theory, what Sellars has done is to problematize the notion of a separable iconism that somehow governs a qualitative dimension of actual things. This allows us to avoid the problems encountered earlier when trying to distinguish between iconic and indexical functions. Furthermore, we are able to move away from Peirce's highly speculative picture of a universe reducible to three categories (quality, actuality, and rule)—described by Hookway as "mind-numbing" (1985, 4)—toward a picture in which qualities reside in the logical space of reasons and in which reality is ultimately constituted of causal processes.

Sellars provides a diagram designed to correct the traditional understanding of predication (for our purposes, the process by which qualities are ascribed to things) (Sellars 1985, 320). Figure 3.3 is an adaptation that demonstrates Sturm und Drang in Haydn's symphony. In this diagram Sellars uses the term "individual constant" or INDCON for something approaching a Peircean index. Unlike the Peircean index, however, an individual constant does not relate directly to actual things, and does not provide, thereby, a more primitive relation to the world (secondness) as the basis for fully-fledged thought (thirdness). This would be to fall into the myth of the given. Individual constants hook up with the world only by virtue of what Sellars terms psychological-social-historical (or PSH) relations. They do not directly refer to things in the world but, instead, get caught up in reality as actual existing acoustic entities, what Sellars terms "natural linguistic objects." This process of "getting caught up" or "hookup" is subject to PSH relations and can be termed "picturing" (a term derived from Sellars's reading of Wittgenstein) or linguistic representation (LR).

In Figure 3.3, we can now see that both mm. 1–13 and *S&D* connect via "linguistic representation" (LR) to actual S&D things. But notice that it is not S&D as such (and certainly not an abstracted S&Dness) that connects to the real world of S&D things. The asterisks indicate that it is the "sign design" S&D concatenated with "mm. 1–13" that connects to reality. That is, the pattern illustrated between the asterisks, regardless of assumed meaning (i.e., the sign design), concatenated with "mm. 1–13" forms the basis upon which S&D comes to be connected to reality. Or, in Sellars's words: "[T]he truth is that by virtue of being an 'a' [or a mm. 1–13] concatenated with an **f** [or *S&D*], an '*f*a' is an 'a' which has a character by virtue of which it is semantically associated with *f*-things" (Sellars 1985, 320).

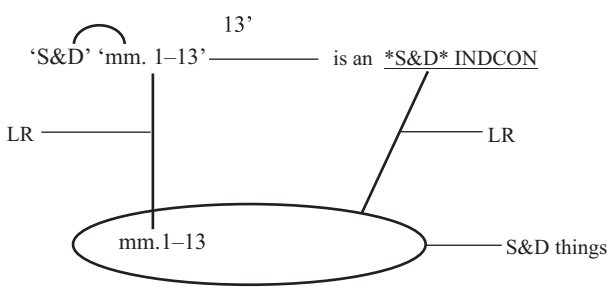


Figure 3.3 Sellars's schematization of a corrected conception of predication adapted to concern *Sturm und Drang* in mm. 1–13 of the finale of Haydn's Symphony no. 39

A key point here is that the association is semantic. It is "semantically assertible" that "mm. 1–13 is Sturm und Drang," but that does not mean that a more primitive Sturm und Drang(ness) is being instantiated in mm. 1–13. Sturm und Drang does not exist in reality. We see in Figure 3.3 that it does not relate to reality (S&D things) at all directly. This is because it resides, like so much musical meaning, in the logical space of reasons. When we talk about musical topics as having certain meanings, then, we are not connecting music to reality (or only very indirectly). We are, instead, entering into a categorization of normative functions. We are saying, in effect: take any performance of mm. 1–13 of the finale of Haydn's Symphony no. 39 and, under normal circumstances, it will be semantically assertible that it is Sturm und Drang.

The music-reality hookup

When Sellars presents the diagrams that I have adapted in Figures 3.2 and 3.3, he is not discussing music, he is discussing language. Where I discuss "S&Dness," Sellars discusses "redness." Thus, the points I am making concerning music are formulated in relation to language. For this reason, the long-standing problem as to why or how language is able to refer to the world, while music seems unable to do so, drops away, but perhaps not in the way we might have expected. As it turns out, language, like music, primarily operates within the space of reasons as a complex of normative functions, which do not refer to the world but, instead, can be said to get caught up in the world through the role they play in human behaviors, which we can, in turn, frame as a complex of PSH relations. We now consider this "getting caught up" in more detail.

When we discuss music signification we have to be careful to make an important distinction. This can be framed in Peircean terms as the distinction between (1) music as sign/interpretant, and (2) music as object. From a Sellarsian perspective we might reframe this to give (1) the role music plays in hooking up with reality, and (2) the role language plays in hooking up with music's reality, where "music's reality" is the actual physical reality of vibrations of a medium in the world.

In our discussion of S&Dness we have been treating music as an object. We have been considering the role language plays in hooking up with music's reality, in that we have discussed the way linguistic terms such as S&D (and by extension—*pianto*, sarabande, and other musical topics) hook up with actual S&D things—i.e., particular sounds situated in time and space. I claim that music's role in hooking up with reality follows precisely the same patterns as the hookup between language about music and actual music. But first let us consider the hookup in more detail.

In his rethinking of predication, what Sellars has done, in O'Shea's words, is to "trade the problem of abstract entities [like redness and S&Dness] for the problem of norms" (2007, 71). Norms can be understood as rule-following processes. In "Language as Thought and as Communication" ([1969] 2007), Sellars makes an important distinction between these rules: (1) ought-to-do rules, where rules are followed with an awareness of the rules, and (2) ought-to-be rules, where rules are followed without an awareness of the rules.

Ought-to-do rules involve intentionality and take the form "if one is in circumstance C, then one ought to do A." Ought-to-be rules do not involve intentionality; they take the form "Xs ought to be in state φ, whenever such and such is the case." Ought-to-be rules form the groundwork upon which ought-to-do rules are built. For example, in sonata theory, the self-conscious rule of which medial caesura to deploy in a given sonata, is an ought-to-do rule. But such an ought-to-do rule will be underpinned by expectations of

certain states (i.e., ought-to-be rules), such as instrument construction (a piano ought-to-be comprised of a certain set of keys), tuning systems (an instrument ought-to-be tuned in such and such a way), and the system of tonality (keys ought-to-be established, departed from, and re-established).

In understanding the hookup between the space of reasons and the causal natural order, Sellars posits the example of an ought-to-be rule, formulated as follows: "one ought to feel sympathy for bereaved people" (Sellars [1969] 2007, 60). This might appear to be an ought-to-do rule in that the levels of sophistication seem high and feeling sympathy is something we do. But, on reflection, we recognize that we do not generally intend to feel sympathy for bereaved people; it is rather something that people find themselves experiencing within a certain cultural context and which they are capable of cognizing as such. "One ought to feel sympathy for bereaved people," then, is actually a form of ought-to-be rule.

These same ought-to-be rules are key to understanding how language and the space of reasons hook up with the causal order and how music theoretical language (by which I mean sentences containing terms like "Sturm und Drang," "sarabande" or "dominant chord"), hooks up with music's causal reality. Important examples of three ought-to-be rules are (1) language-entry transitions (transitions from world to language involving perception); (2) intra-linguistic transitions (transitions from language to language involving inference), and (3) language-exit transitions (transitions from language to world involving volition/intention).

"Sturm und Drang" may have no actual existence, but as a natural linguistic object it gets caught up in the causal order, the actual reality of music, by (1) language-entry transitions: for example, when a student of music is disposed to respond to the sounding of example 3.1 with the statement "that is Sturm und Drang"; (2) intra-linguistic moves: for example, when a student is disposed to make an inference from "that is Sturm und Drang" to the statement "that is a minor key," and (3) language-exit transitions: for example, when a student reliably responds to her own statement "this is Sturm und Drang" by playing a recording of example 3.1 or another Sturm und Drang passage.

So, music-theoretical language, which involves sentences containing terms like "Sturm und Drang," "sarabande," or "dominant," does hook up with musical practice, but it hooks up through normative channels in the selective reinforcement and suppression of behaviors—a highly indirect connection. Music-theoretical language, as normative, pattern-governed behavior, does not track music directly. But, in laying plain the normative functions of words such as "Sturm und Drang," it does get caught up with music's reality as natural linguistic objects via entry, inference, and exit transitions.

Recognizing these points, it seems to me, puts us in position to understand the hookup between musical practice and reality, i.e., music as sign (Peirce), or the role music plays in hooking up with reality (Sellars). This connection, I argue, is made in much the same way as that in which music-theoretical language hooks up with reality. Music as vibrations in air has a highly complex but non-problematic causal connection to the non-musical world. Music as abstract form, however, does not directly connect with musical reality. Our imagining of music in terms of abstracted shapes, forms, and processes connects only indirectly with the reality of music. Music as abstracted shapes, forms, and processes are, if you like, music about music—they have a meta-musical discursive role exemplified by scores, analytical charts, and systems of numbers.

These abstractions are saturated by normativity and cannot be reduced without remainder to the world of objects and actions that they are taken to represent (recall "the myth of the given"). They reside in the space of reasons. However, just as music's theoretical language tracks music's natural acoustic objects indirectly via entry, inference, and exit transitions, our

musical imaginings indirectly track the world of musical practice via entry, inference, and exit transitions. These transitions are the playing of "appropriate" music in response to non-musical things and actions (think of slow music at a funeral) or in introducing non-musical things or actions (a fanfare followed by the entrance of a person, for instance). These transitions are ought-to-be rules that align non-musical events and musical events. They do not, for the most part, involve intentional rule-following, but the following of rules that are second nature. So, in playing slow music at a funeral there may be ought-to-do rule-following, such as complex choices of particular pieces and how to perform them, but there will also be a groundwork of ought-to-be rule-following that leads us instinctively (albeit via bio-social training) to use slow music. These ought-to-be rules are enormously important in music signification. In the same way that they allow Sellars to explain how we come to find ourselves experiencing sympathy for a bereaved person, ought-to-be rules help us explain how, in certain socio-historical contexts, humans might find themselves moving with a due sense of decorum and seriousness to a sarabande, or how humans might feel an urge to weep, or find themselves contemplating weeping, on hearing the *pianto*. Furthermore, in the theory of ought-to-do rules underpinned by a groundwork of ought-to-be rules we can begin to theorize more convincingly why compositional practices, as a complex set of behaviors, might result in the deployment of the sarabande, the *pianto* or Sturm und Drang. The behaviors and the patterns they form are real, even if the music-theoretical abstractions we develop in relation to them cannot ultimately be said to exist.

A neo-pragmatist, Sellarsian perspective on music signification, then, allows us to radically rethink the processes by which music listening engenders meaning. In the emphasis upon an evolving, functionalist, role-oriented theory of communication, and in the flat rejection of abstractions, Sellarsian thought certainly works against a naive conception of music signification—a conception in which music is conceived to operate as a relatively stable sign that signifies a specifiable entity. However, aspects of this ingenuous picture can be retained. For although music signification is now conceived in normative, non-referential terms, it is conceivable as a practice that hooks up with reality in much the same way that language does, allowing a complex process of meaning generation to be recognized, even if the kinds of one-to-one correspondences of more naive models have to be rejected. This, I would suggest, keeps the door open for music signification to thrive as a vital practice that contemplates the fascinating interpenetration (the hookup) of music and world.

Note

1 Chief among these is Peirce's central claim that human understanding progresses towards truth. Sellars posits (as a regulative idea) the prospect of a language that will ultimately allow us to accurately picture the world. He terms this language "Peirceish." For a summary of "Peirceish" as well as the overlap between Sellars and Peirce's conceptions of truth, see Hooker 1976.

4

FROM *URSATZ* TO *URZEMIC*

Avenues for theories and analyses of music signification

Eero Tarasti

The aim of this article is to propose some ways to appl y my theory of existential semiotics to music signification. This theory is the result of a developmental process that started with the structuralism of Lévi-Strauss, continued with the Paris school of linguistics and narrativity (Greimas), and ended with German philosophy. This broad trajectory, though, was grounded in and related to the field of music signification.

The need for a well-defined epistemological basis for research in music signification is not always obvious. Although Adorno is a classic example of philosophers who apply their theories to music—securely grounding them in Hegelian principles—most music semioticians are not philosophers *sensu stricto*, but empirically minded scholars whose starting point is music theory. One weakness of these approaches, though, is often a lack of well-defined principles that demonstrate how semiotics, in its broad sense, applies to a musical context.

The Zemic model

I propose that the theory of existential semiotics is relevant to the understanding of music signification in terms of what I call the "Zemic" model; that is, a model that accounts for the combination of elements and forms exemplifying the structure of the human mind. The Zemic model consists of motion and tension as they arise among four modes of being. It is portrayed by the letter "Z," and it is inspired by three philosophical approaches: Hegel's concepts of "being-in-itself" and "being-for-itself" (Inwood 1995, 133–36), the interoceptive and exteroceptive categories of *Moi* representing the individual subject's internal world, and *Soi*, suggestive of the external world, the other, or society (Ricœur 1990, 11–15; Fontanille 2004, 36–42). These approaches are then presented in a Greimassian-style "semiotic square" in which "s1," "s2," "non-s1," and "non-s2" are positioned, thus representing a logical structure of oppositions, contradictions, and implications (Greimas [1970] 1987, 65–67; see Figure 4.1 on the left). The new Zemic model, on the other hand, having no structural contradictions, is therefore only visually similar to Greimas's original structure (see Figure 4.1 on the right).

The essential aspect of the model is that it combines the spheres of the *Moi* and the *Soi*, the individual and collective subjectivities (Tarasti 2012a, 328). Furthermore, while

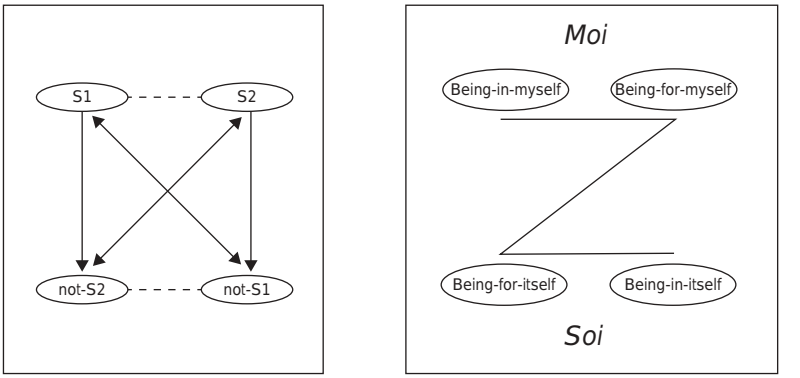


Figure 4.1 Greimas's square (left) and the Zemic model (right)

Greimas's model reflects a static structure of semantic meaning, the Zemic model draws a *motion process* of self-formation and socialization, starting from the extremes of "pre-signs," where the signs of both the subject and society are not yet defined. Each mode of being is transformed by transcending its own limits, acquiring clearer, more definite, and more applicable shape. The process can start from "being in myself" (at the top left corner) and end in "being in itself" (at the bottom right corner), or it could move in the opposite direction. The two interim positions, where semiosis actually takes place, result from the process of self-alienation—or "transcendence"—of these two extremes. Thus, "being for myself" (the top right corner) occurs when the not-yet-defined "being in myself" (*être-en-Moi*)—an amalgam of instinctual energy and urges—transcends itself, gaining self-awareness; "being for itself" (the bottom left corner), on the other hand, represents the materialization of a vague "other" (*être-en-Soi*)—with its general (and sometimes amorphic) values—into perceivable and applicable social rules. The Zemic model offers an ontological hypothesis about human reality, presenting a complex web of interrelations (Figure 4.2).

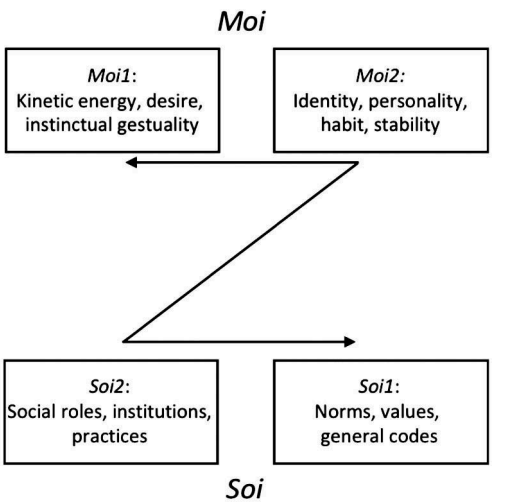


Figure 4.2 Human existential reality as reflected in the Zemic model

The human mind—of which the Zemic is only a model—is not a solipsistic *Moi*: it also contains the *Soi*. The model depicted in Figure 4.2 provides an answer to the crucial question surrounding multimodal studies, critical discourse analysis, cultural musicology, and work on music as social semiotics: how are we social beings? If society, in the form of social behavior, were not in us (that is, through the reverse motion from the *Soi* to the *Moi*), it could not exercise any power on our behavior. DeNora observes that:

> Music is not merely a "meaningful" or "communicative medium." It does much more than convey signification through non-verbal means. At the level of daily life, music has power. Music may influence how people compose their bodies, how they conduct themselves, how they experience the passage of time, how they feel—in terms of energy and emotion—about others and about situations.
>
> *(2000, 16–17)*

Indeed, the general phenomenon of music, as an instance of *Soi1*, affects our bodies (*Moi1*) and influences our experience (*Moi2*) and our conduct (*Soi2*). This power, however, is not above or beyond the "merely meaningful." There can be no power without signification, because nothing can move us unless we feel it has some meaning. Signs are social, and musical signs are no exception. The Zemic model is an effort to articulate this fundamental fact.

We take a step further by pondering how the Zemic world unfolds or contracts in past or future projections, whether by strengthening its own structure, substance, and elements, or by, contrarily, trying to expand it to all dimensions.

Therefore, a subject is the fulcrum of Zemic being. To him or her, signs inundate from four directions: from the present, past, future, and from the "suprazemic" level that in itself is determined by transcendence.

The Xs in Figure 4.3 represent the data as they are presented to the subject. Yet, a subject has a kind of preconception of what they are. A subject can differentiate four categories: *Moi1*, *Moi2*, *Soi2*, and *Soi1*. Through them, a subject articulates *Dasein*—being

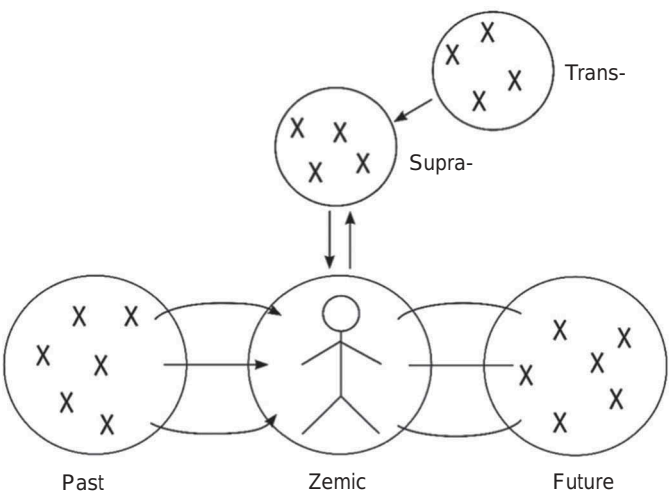


Figure 4.3 The Zemic model of being

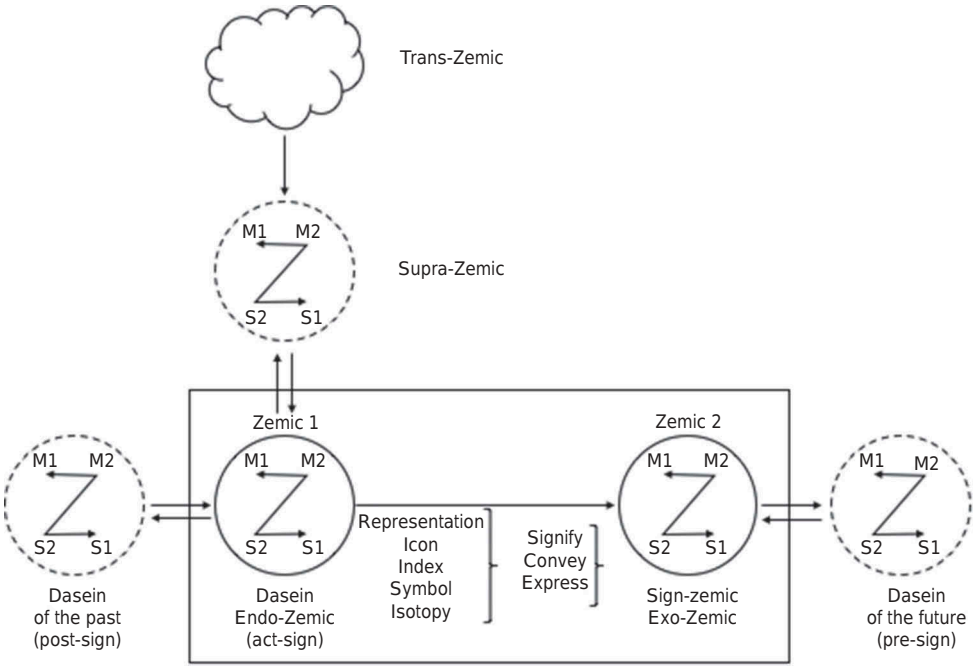


Figure 4.4 The Zemic network

here and now—or the immediate *Umwelt*—the subject's full environment. Our model does not deal only with a pure phenomenological now-moment but extends into the past as well as into the future. Consequently, the *Dasein* consists of act-signs. The signs of the future are its pre-signs and those of the past are its post-signs.

To see what is involved in this complicated network, consider Figure 4.4, which distributes the different spheres and interpretations of the Zemic. The *Dasein*, represented inside the square frame in the figure, exists on two levels: internal and external. The former (Zemic 1) has internal signs; the latter (Zemic 2) external signs. These signs can be of various types, such as icons, indexes, symbols, and so on, and can be materialized through signification, expression, and communication. But over the Zemic 1 rises the world of the suprazemic and the Essence, called *Wesen* by Hegel. In Peircean terms, one might say that this suprazemic level functions as an interpretant to the two Zemics preceding it. Above it exists a third trans-zemic world, beyond signs after transcendence.

The philosophical aspect of my theory may seem so imposing that it almost overwhelms a semiotic approach. But this is, however, a recontextualization of Greimas's theories. In this way, I believe that my theory offers a more systematic and epistemologically grounded interpretation of cultural studies: body, identity, power, discursive constructions, subjectivity, ideology, politics, representation, and so on.

Suprazemic level or Hegel's essence

One essential feature that makes my proposed theory "existential" is that the subject has the option of either affirming or denying the Zemic process, in which case it moves up

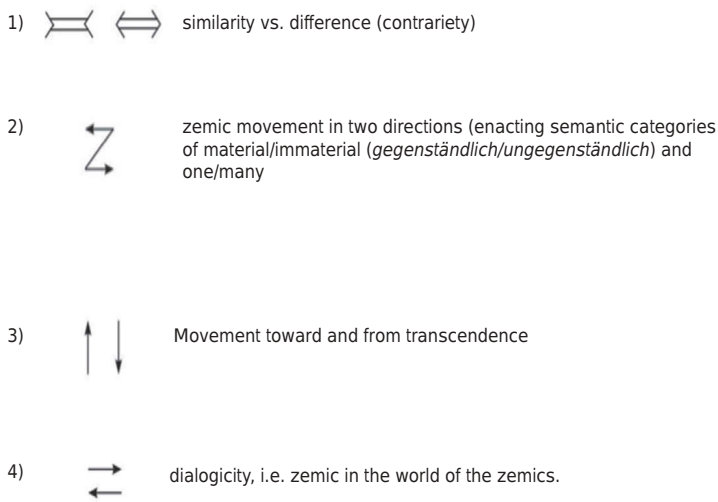


Figure 4.5 Zemic relationships

to the level of what Hegel called Essence or *Wesen*. On that suprazemic level, four categories can be distinguished (after Aristotle's *Metaphysics*): similarity/difference (or contrariety); motion from material to immaterial and vice versa, or from one to many; transcendence (trans-ascendence to trans-descendence); and finally, the dialogical principle, that is, the formation of the Zemic in the world of other Zemics (see Figure 4.5 for a legend).

The suprazemic level reflects the unchanging Hegelian Essence. Being absent from the present, the Essence represents the subject's negation of the Zemic process. This negation is reflected in the suprazemic relations and laws, creating a constant movement between Being (Zemic modes) and Essence (suprazemic principles). Two categories of the suprazemic level—similarity and difference, and the dialogical principle—need to be addressed.

A consequence of these distinctions is that some artistic phenomena are defined by dominant values in *Dasein*. Our awareness of the musical process depends on identifying differences. For instance, stylistic classification of a work is based on the realization of what is not.

The dialogical process has a particular relevance because it is only through it that authenticity is reached. This process was described by Bakhtin and later by Hermans in the field of psychology and psychotherapy (I will comment on dialogicity later).

The Zemic analysis takes place not so much on the level of the notes in the score, but as an explanatory principle that addresses how music functions as a self-regulating cybernetic system in the human brain. The Zemic modes keep a kind of homeostatic balance that acts as a higher directing principle of a semantic gesture (see Rosato 2013). The suprazemic points to a solution on a higher level than the immediately present Zemic. When discrepancies appear in music, flashes or glimpses at the suprazemic level may hint at the later resolution of the narrative program. The hermeneutic approach has as its assignment to open the door to the suprazemic level of a musical work—that is, to its deeper signification.

The four Zemic modes of being are pertinent to music as follows:

- *Moi1* is the "flesh" of music, its physical aspect and kinetic energy; it is the sound itself, a Firstness, in Peirce's term, immediate and devoid of reflection or conscious articulation.
- *Moi2* is the location of Greimassian actoriality where musical themes and motifs tend to become anthropomorphic representations of human subjectivity; Meyer speaks of melodic schemata (scale, broken triad, gap, and fill [Meyer 1973, Chapter 7; 1989, 50–54]).
- *Soi2* involves genre, form, topics, rhetoric, or the rules and formal constraints that make music a form of social communication and praxis.
- *Soi1* consists of values and musical aesthetics—that is, the more or less abstract concepts governing the whole musical process of a generation.

This schematic description may seem rudimentary, but the fact remains that there is no musical utterance or text that would not include these four modes of being:

- *Moi1*—some physical stimulation;
- *Moi2*—some defined musical elements;
- *Soi2*—some relation to a genre or form, and
- *Soi1*—some reference to a set of stylistic and aesthetic values.

Chopin's Étude op. 25, no. 1 in A♭ major, exemplifies the Zemic model by emitting a vibrating sound of constant arpeggiation (*Moi1*), a defined melody voiced in the top line (*Moi2*), a reference to the piano étude genre (*Soi2*), and a reliance on the aesthetics of Romanticism *(Soi1*) (Figure 4.6).

From Ursatz to Urzemic

Yet, when we start to use the Zemic categories as tools for a more detailed musical analysis, some elaborations are needed. I suggest a multileveled process consisting of six separate—but interrelated—phases.

- Phase one: the analyst classifies the musical text into the four modes of being (*Moi1*, *Moi2*, *Soi2*, and *Soi1*).
- Phase two: their modalities (in the Greimassian sense) of the results of phase one are explored on the basis of how they function (being, doing, wanting, knowing, believing, appearing, and so on).
- Phase three: the Zemic modes are examined in terms of their interrelations and interactions.
- Phase four: by assuming that in each individual, there are at least two Zemic modes—one potential and one actual—this phase explores how the interrelationships in this unit are articulated by the logical suprazemic relation.
- Phase five: a focus on how these suprazemic articulations are interpreted existentially.
- Phase six: determine from these analyses how one may elaborate the existential history of the heritage of European classical music.

Each of the six phases presents difficulties, some of which I have discussed elsewhere (Tarasti 2006, 2012b, 2015). For my purposes here, I offer some comments on phase three. To define this notoriously complex relation, I use an analogy with the descriptive power of Schenker's *Ursatz*—that is, a primal and abstract atemporal structure, the elements of which

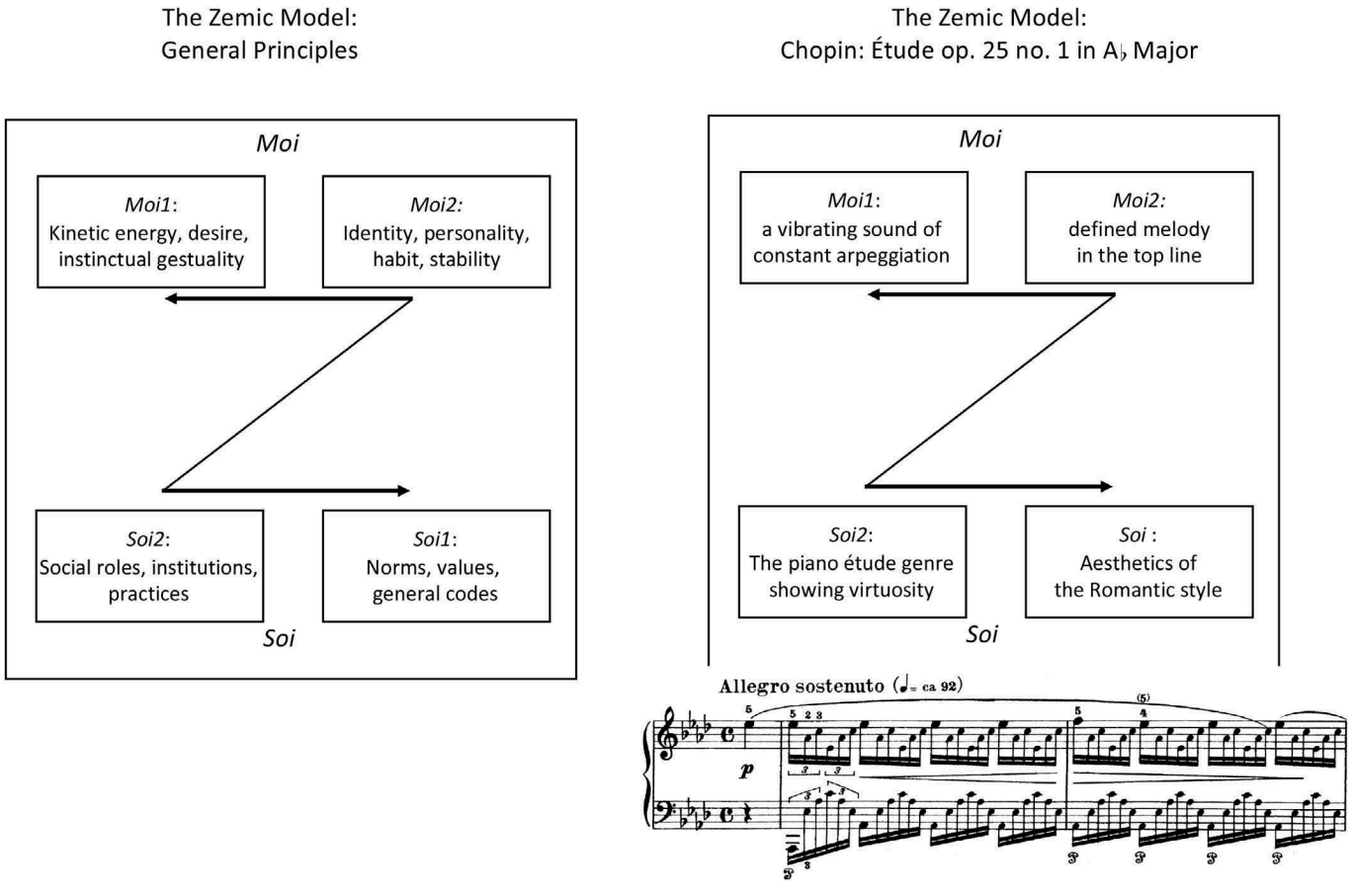


Figure 4.6 Chopin's Étude, op. 25, no. 1 in A♭ major, read as zemic

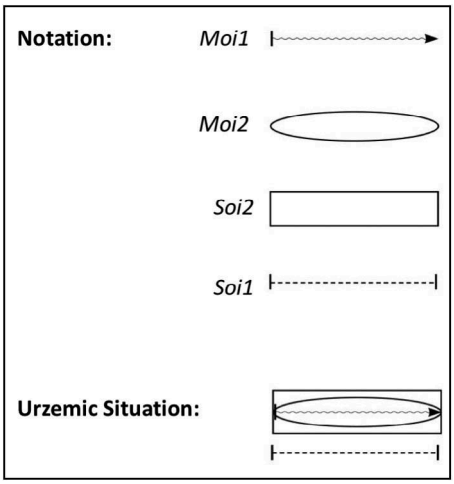


Figure 4.7 From Zemic to Urzemic

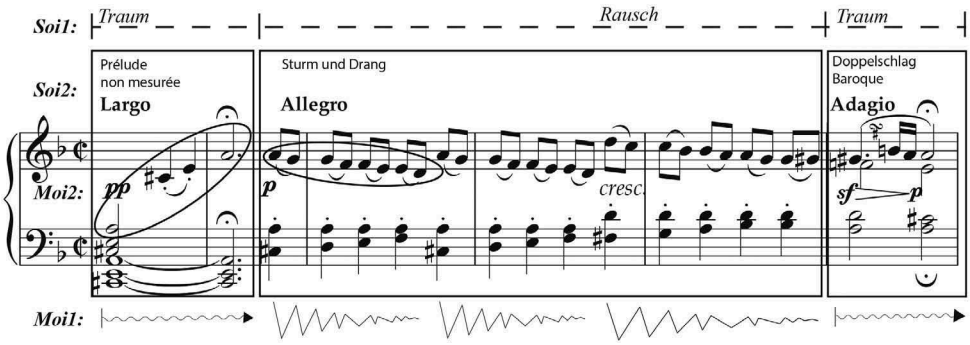
are in harmony with one another. Starting with a "pulsed" line to represent *Moi1* and combining representations of *Moi2*, *Soi2*, *and Soi1*, my concept of the *Urzemic* arises in music when all Zemic elements are unified, as in Figure 4.7.

How Zemic analysis works

1st mode: *Moi1*. We portray the unfolding (*Ausfaltung)* of the kinetic energy of a music by a line that resembles the diagram of bodily pulsation, either slow, fast, accelerating, or decelerating. Every musical composition—whether it be from the classico-romantic era or the most modern repertoire—has a pulse.

2nd mode: *Moi2*. The motives and themes in music that emerged from and are tied to *Moi1*, the preceding energetic field, are indicated through ellipses. For example, in the G-minor prelude of Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier*, book 1, a clear motivic profile emerges out of the energetic field of the initial trill in the upper voice, imitating a ribattutta vocal technique. Other examples include the rhythmic pulsations at the beginning of Beethoven's "Waldstein" sonata or the E♭ major sonority at the beginning of Wagner's *Das Rheingold*. In these cases, the growth of *Moi2* from *Moi1* is organic. In other cases, they may be separated—for instance, the largely march-like and festive character of Wagner's Prelude to *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* is dramatically contrasted by the Lutheran chorale that opens Act 1. *Moi2* can also appear directly, however, as a ready-made musical actor, as often appears in the opening themes of sonatas, and then it may extend its thematicity throughout the remainder of the work. In Beethoven's Piano Sonata, op. 31, no. 2 ("The Tempest"), for example, we are immediately presented with an arpeggiated triad motif that is followed by a descending series of eighth notes involving suspensions (these two elements pervade much of the following music). The *Moi1* profile, like the specific *Moi2* elements, is strongly contrasting: *largo* is pitted against a restless *allegro*. Indeed, it is not unusual for *Moi2* in Beethoven to create its own *Moi1* environment. Using the notation developed above (Figure 4.7), we may describe these elements as in Example 4.1.

3rd mode: *Soi2*. All of the elements of music as a social praxis, conventional rules and norms, such as a form, structural part, genre, or topic are indicated in the analysis by boxes.



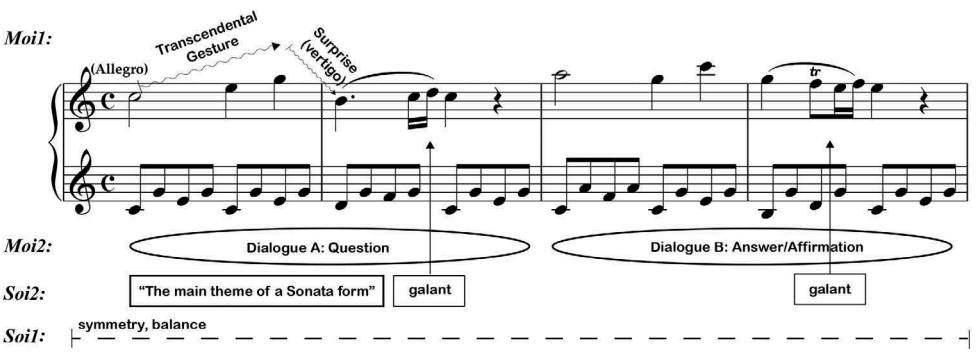
Example 4.1 Beethoven, Piano Sonata in D minor, op. 31, no. 2, mm. 1–6

4th mode: *Soi1*. This is the all-encompassing quality of music, which determines many of the choices on lower levels. Often *Soi1* is foregrounded, particularly when we are dealing with categories of aesthetic manifestation: the tragic, the comic, the graceful, the ecstatic (*Rausch*), the contemplative (*Traum*), the fragmentary, the mythical, the grotesque, and so on. *Soi1* interacts with the other modes, i.e., with the kinetic energy, its actors.

Another illustration of the interactions of the four modes can be found in a typical Bach fugue: there will usually be one type of kinetic energy (*Moi1*); the character of the subject defines *Moi2*; the contrapuntal texture and working out of contrapuntal principles are realizations of *Soi2*; and the world of musical values expressed by and in the fugue is *Soi1*.

The main theme of Mozart's Piano Sonata in C major, K. 545 (Example 4.2), is also amenable to a detailed zemic analysis.

Moi1 includes two qualities: first, the *Gestalt* of a rising gesture, and the second, an unexpected fall that creates a surprise vertigo. The four-measure phrase is *Moi2*, with two-measure divisions into an antecedent-consequent (question-answer) relation. *Soi2* is the function of these opening measures as the main theme in a sonata form, and the galant style gestures in the melody. *Soi1* represents the ideals of classicism, symmetry, and balance. To anticipate our discussion of suprazemic logical relations, we might say that there is a dialogue between the two-measure phrase members, but no transcendence. The rising



Example 4.2 Mozart, Piano Sonata, K. 545, mm. 1–4

interrupted gesture could be seen as a broken transcendental "gesture," a truncated transascendance, if you will. Moreover, the rhythmic similarity is challenged by the melodic difference between the two phrase members.

"Errors" as a catalyzing force in music

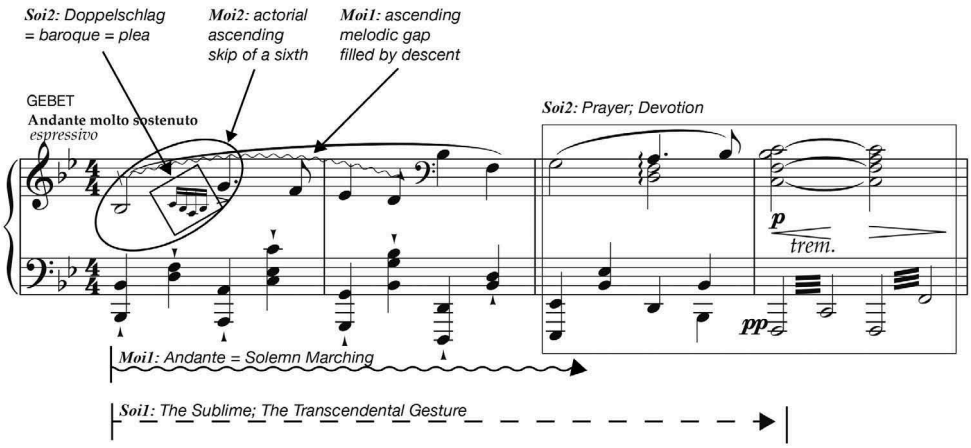
A musical work can be interpreted as containing a series of "errors" planned by the composer, from which we can infer the becoming of a work, or else the composition could not continue. In fact, "errors" advance or propel the music forward, since they need "correction" or resolution. For instance, in Mozart's Piano Concerto in E♭ major, K. 482, the E♭ shifts to a D♭ and articulates a new harmonic area (m. 14). The same is done by Bach in his E♭ major prelude from book one of the *Well-Tempered Clavier*. The turn of the E♭ major arpeggiated melody in the opening theme of Beethoven's "Eroica" symphony to a C♯ is a radical move that might be perceived as an "error," but it initiated, as Wagner said, the "modern."

What caused the "error"? The fact that the Me (*Ich*) of the musical subject or a Zemic profile of the Urzemic favors signs that are similar to it. Change suggests the start of a narrative. Difference is one of the four existential possible actions of the Zemic: (1) same/different, (2) the Z motion, (3) up/down, and (4) dialogicity; these four possibilities are compatible with Hegel's Essence. Why does the musical subject negate itself by doing something different? It has to do with the Proppian concept of an initial lack, Sartre's *manque*, Greimas's *imperfection*, and Plato's longing for a perfect form, the circle. Music is another illustration for such narrative forces.

In Mozart, this process is often expressed by a series of sequences. In the above-mentioned concerto in E♭ major, the "alien" notes that are introduced by sequences create a transcendence of the original Zemic into a new domain, advancing the musical material. The topicality of the concerto's opening doubles the process. The opening is a march, a corporeal *Moi1*, a topical *Moi2*, simultaneously signaling eighteenth-century musical praxis (*Soi2*). We expect the same to be repeated, but we hear a descending sequence that is also the topos of stylistic suspensions reflecting sigh-motives. The ostinato, combined with the Alberti bass gesture, points to a general playfulness articulating the ludological nature of *Soi1*. Therefore, surprises appear on both horizontal and vertical axes, creating a narrative development by manipulating similarity and difference. In any case, in music the original practices of *Dasein* are re-semanticized and re-contextualized. For example, horn calls, originally signals of hunting, are transformed into signs of pastorality. For instance, in Beethoven's Piano Sonata, op. 81a, "Les Adieux," the opening gesture transcends the "horn call" as a topical category by re-creating it as a symbol of romantic longing.

Dialogues inside music

An aspect or narrative of the suprazemic level needs our consideration, namely the principle of dialogicity. I have explored the Z movement and its transcendental shifts elsewhere (Tarasti 2012a). Here I address the nature of musical dialogue. In chamber music, the parts are engaged in a dialogue, which is led by an overall melos, or a leading idea, that lies on a suprazemic level. This dialogue is syntagmatic, taking part among separate elements. The dialogue between the individual and the collective can, for example, be between *Moi2*—the individual subject—and *Soi2*—the collective subject.



Example 4.3 Wagner, *Rienzi*, Act 5

In the Pilgrim's chorus from Wagner's *Tannhäuser*, *Moi1* is a melodically balanced andante. *Moi2* is a defined four-measure phrase. *Soi2* is Lied-like, but could serve also as a symphonic theme, except for the transition to its repetition, which is almost theatrically banal. *Soi1* is the almost religious devotion revealed later as an aesthetic standpoint between opposed poles: unscrupulous hedonism (*volupté*) and religious fervor (*Der Gnade Heil*). The existentiality, therefore, only emerges with the recurrence of the main theme, in the choir of the pilgrims. We can say that there is a negated dialogue between these two isotopies of religion and vice.

As another example, consider the eponymous hero's prayer (*Gebet*) from Act 5 of Wagner's *Rienzi*, which has a typically characteristic melody (Example 4.3).

It has as *Moi1* a typical *Gestalt* of an opening gap followed by a subsequent fill; the rhythm suggests a solemn march-like movement; and the chords are diatonically constrained, with each melodic note having its own chord. *Moi2* is based on a prototypical intervallic actor of a rising sixth (often heard in the *Ring* cycle, for example, and also characteristic of Tchaikovsky). *Soi2* is a *Doppelschlag* that refers to the learned style, and here is used to represent something like an appeal to Divine authority—a prayer, if you will. *Soi1* is *das Erhabene* or sublime, where the transcendental gesture is evident. Yet, an additional suprazemic level may involve the subject, too. Moments of similarity and difference appear in the wavelike form of the first measures, followed by a one-line melody. The zemic movement is not dramatic or conflictual. It is one of Wagner's Urzemic formulas, where aspiration for transcendence—trans-ascendance—is obvious. Dialogue is also evident in the sense that this is a message addressed to someone, but not as an internal dialogue.

Addressing music through the lens of the proposed zemic approach creates new ways of perception and interpretation. These views offer a deeper understanding of musical subjects, processes, and signification. More work still needs to be done to identify and specify the variety of new types of signs that may emerge from these explorations. A zemic approach—with its inclusion of an emphasis on the Urzemic—is the theoretical basis from which these explorations can soar.

PART II

Music signification and semiotics

5
THE MUSICAL SIGNIFIER

Lawrence Kramer

Does music signify? If so, what follows? What does musical signification encompass? Is there an aesthetic of the musical signifier?

These questions are posed in a very strict sense. They are not questions about musical meaning in general—I take it as a given that musical meaning is both real and robust—but about one particular subdivision of its means and ends. The reason for this concentration is that the sense of signification in question is the one that launched modern semiotics and that remains in force both within and beyond the semiotic enterprise. Even for someone like me, who favors a free-form hermeneutics over semiotics, the concept demands to be reckoned with. The reckoning here will begin in a critical spirit, but its aim is not to dwell on what the musical signifier cannot do but to find out what it can.

This essay is accordingly about signification as it is conceived, originally in relation to language, by Ferdinand de Saussure: a relationship between a definite signifier and a definite signified which is constitutive of the sign (Saussure [1916] 2011). The signifier is material, the signified conceptual. The elements of this relationship are well known. In Saussure's semiology, the relationship between signifier and signified is arbitrary, or, more properly, "unmotivated" by any natural connection; it does not derive from links between positive terms but arises as the product of a system of differences, and it represents a stabilization of the mobile independent orders of its two elements. The last point is especially important. As Roland Barthes explained in his *Elements of Semiology*:

> Saussure used the analogy of a sheet of paper: if we cut out shapes in it. … each of [its] pieces has a recto and a verso *which have been cut out at the same time* (A-A', B-B', C-C'): this is the signification. This comparison is useful because it leads us to an original conception of the production of meaning: no longer as the mere correlation of a signifier and a signified, but perhaps more essentially as *an act of simultaneously cutting out* two amorphous masses, "two floating kingdoms," as Saussure says. For Saussure imagined that at the (entirely theoretical) origin of meaning, ideas and sounds form two floating, labile, continuous and parallel masses of substances; meaning intervenes when one cuts at the same time and at a single stroke into these two masses.
>
> *(Barthes 1967, 56)*

Trouble begins when we follow the metaphors. How does the cut transform two amorphous masses into the recto and verso of one slice of paper? How does the shape thus cut out enter the system of differences that will join it to other shapes and build up the edifice of meaning? The simplest answer to both questions is: it doesn't. The system of relationships that supposedly governs the transition from the level of the signifier to the level of discourse is as purely theoretical as the origin of its meaning. At least no such system has ever materialized. There is no way one could. In relation to its elements, discourse in any medium is an emergent phenomenon. Actual discourse always exceeds any attempt to derive it from lower-level constituents.

And even those constituents are riddled with indeterminacy. The dream of a systematic semiotics based on the relationship of signifier and signified, grandly set forth in *Elements*, remains a mere dream (which Barthes soon abandoned) not only because the system to arrange the cut pieces is lacking, but also because the cut itself almost never happens. The stabilizing of the two masses is not a decisive cut but a temporary bulge that is changing shape even as it assumes one. Barthes stops just short of acknowledging this irrepressible mobility when he cautions, a few pages before celebrating the cut, that "the union of signifier and signified … does not exhaust the semantic act, for the sign derives its value also from its surroundings" (Barthes 1967, 56). This seemingly prudent codicil pinpoints the fatality that doomed the entire semiotic project. The so-called surroundings do not form a well-behaved context or supplement. Instead, they produce an incessant transformation.

The result is not a union but a friction, implicitly acknowledged in Lacan's famous inversion of Saussure's formula, S/s for s/S: that is, the signifier over the signified rather than the other way around (Lacan [1966] 2006, 418). The signified does not rule over the signifier but glides under it. This reversal does not actually need the psychoanalytic justification Lacan provided for it (though I am not averse to one). In place of Lacan's equally famous principle that the unconscious is structured like a language, we might say that the unconscious is simply an extension of the refusal of language to be structured. The same principle applies to non-linguistic media, including music. And if we refer signification to Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotics rather than to Saussure's, its fraternal twin and rival, the situation does not change. As Peirce was quick to recognize, his nearest equivalent to Saussure's signifier, the conventional sign, constantly exceeds itself in a sea of interpretants (for simplicity's sake, I will speak only of "the signifier" here). Even the simplest of signifiers—a hello, a hand waved in greeting—can and does exceed the common use to which it is put under the pretense that it is secure.

The failure of this security, which should be celebrated, not deplored, has theoretical explanations; one can find them, at a minimum, in Wittgenstein (1958, 13–49), Derrida ([1964] 1974, 157–62), Deleuze ([1969] 1990, 12–22), Cavell (2015, 1–40), and Lacan ([1966] 2006, 138–68). But the explanations would not matter were it not for the stubborn fact that the promised systematic accounts of meaning did not and could not appear. The signifier is not like a tile that fits together with other tiles to compose discourse as a mosaic. It is a nub, or, indeed, a kind of bulge, that stands apart from the proliferation of discourse and assumes its own value. Discourse incorporates signification, but neither starts nor stops with it. The language of semiotics is still alive and useful, to be sure (see Monelle 2000; Tarasti 2000; Hatten 2004, among others), but the dream of a system is dead. Signs and signifiers may still have a place in theorizing meaning, but that place is more modest than was once widely assumed. It needs to be re-described with its modesty in mind.

Rigid and fluid tropes

The musical signifier is a rigid trope, comparable to what modal logic defines as a rigid designator: it carries a fixed, definite, and exclusive meaning. But it is less like an element in a system than like an item in a catalogue. Most of the catalogue entries are so-called musical topics: formations for signifying a galloping horse, a pastoral pipe, a funeral procession, each one immediately recognizable. Other entries are context-dependent, nonce formations usually cued by a text or title and generally more evocative than decisive.

The rigidity of the signifier, musical or otherwise, severely limits its uses. Fullness of meaning—the rhythmic flux of import, value, and feeling—comes primarily from fluid, not from rigid, tropes. These cultural tropes, as I have called them (Kramer 1995, 33–66), consist of characteristic expressive practices that participate in a constantly changing, loosely regulated, open-ended process of becoming apprehensible. The process is never fully present in the individual instance. Its boundaries are indefinite. It cannot be distinguished from the verbal and expressive activities that conduct it. It opens out on all sides.

This opening-out is fundamental to the concept of the trope, which offers an alternative to the concept of the sign or semiotic system. A trope in the narrow sense (etymologically a "turning") is a linguistic detour. It is a turn from a given meaning that allows for a turn to other meanings not yet given. The river of time is not a river. The trope is the necessary detour by which meaning means.

A trope in the larger sense, that is, a trope that has entered a system of cultural circulation and exchange, is a potential rather than a finished turn. It is an action or event that calls for a turn from itself. Its formal or procedural element is appointed as a bearer of meaning and assumes a history of meanings, but at no time is its meaning simply fixed or determined or "saturated"; to understand the trope is to negotiate with its past and its possible futures. Many instrumental compositions from the late eighteenth- through to the late nineteenth-centuries contain a disruptive interlude, but no two interludes mean disruption in just the same way, and to interpret what any one of them means requires a discourse full of new turns.

Openness is what the musical signifier affirmatively lacks. The meaning of the signifier is fixed and unmistakable. The question raised by such semantic nuggets is what to do with them. What is their relationship to musical meaning in the wider sense, which is not tethered to signification in the strict sense and can be neither controlled nor constrained by it?

To answer that question, we need a series of case studies. Those that follow come from the genres of Western classical music from which the musical signifier took its origin as a means of description, imitation, or reference.

Portraiture

Like most of its era's overtures evoking the career of a tragic hero, Tchaikovsky's Overture-Fantasia *Hamlet*—a symphonic poem—assigns a strongly profiled motivic theme to its title character and a contrasting theme to his feminine counterpart (the likeliest models are Beethoven's *Coriolan* Overture and Wagner's Overture to *The Flying Dutchman*). Strings and brass dominate for Hamlet, and woodwinds, especially oboe, for Ophelia; the oboe harks back to similar themes in Beethoven (*Fidelio* and the second and third *Leonore* Overtures), Berlioz (*Symphonie fantastique*), Wagner (again the Overture to *The Flying Dutchman*), and Schumann (the Second Symphony).

These themes have a dual identity. They are context-dependent musical signifiers and they are components of a cultural trope constituted by the relationship between them. The trope is the familiar polarization of masculine dynamism and feminine stasis. But the polarization, typically for cultural tropes, takes several twists and turns in the course of the music.

The overture is usually, but dubiously, described as a sonata form without development. Its design is circular and reiterative, a study in tragic inevitability. The theme for Hamlet is frenetic, but it proves to be more static than dynamic; it broods on itself, even devours itself, much as Hamlet, in a familiar period interpretation, paralyzes himself by excess of thought (in Goethe's influential description, Hamlet "winds, and turns, and torments himself; he advances and recoils; is ever put in mind, ever puts himself in mind; at last does all but lose his purpose from his thoughts; yet still without recovering his peace of mind" (Goethe [1796] 1917, 217 [book iv, chapter xiv]). The theme is inapt for development, and Tchaikovsky gives it none; the episode based on it simply occurs twice. The signifiers here set up premises—a frequent role—and the trope prompts the interpretive activity that elicits meaning.

But not all of it. Something enigmatic follows the sequence of signifying themes, both in their first presentation and their return. This is a gracious lyrical theme passing from winds to strings—a melody of the kind that might well have taken on the feminine identity that has already been assigned. There is no one in the play to which the theme obviously corresponds. The ghost of Hamlet's father is frequently summoned up as a candidate on essentially no basis whatsoever. For the time being (but the time occurs twice) signification simply breaks down. The third theme is an extra, an external comment on the trope that precedes it. It is all the more strange for being easy on the ears. The theme is significant not for whatever meaning we might ascribe to it but for its enigmatic demeanor, which incorporates a demand that we work interpretively on the trope at hand in directions that could not be foreseen until the third theme sought them out.

So far, we have not met with a context-independent musical signifier. That happens only at the end, which returns to the beginning to fetch a signifier. The Overture opens with a glum, stern theme that evokes the aura of impending tragedy but does not signify anything in particular—yet (it is sometimes referred to as "Fate," as if that could tell us anything.) The closing measures retrieve this theme and refashion it as a funeral march. That, we may come to surmise, has been its identity all along, unrealized until the time comes to tap its potentiality as a signifier. The tapping is literal, in a way: perhaps the most arresting thing about the theme in its signifying form is the quiet beating of the timpani under the melody.

The music thus ends by dwelling on a signifier of the most decisive kind. But it is important to recognize that the signified here is not the idea of death in general: it is the death, in particular, of Hamlet. The signifier is independent of its context, but not immune from it. The signification becomes complete only when its signified becomes definite. The signifier becomes active when it is used. In this case, the activation of the signifier allows it to act as a conclusion in multiple senses: of the music, of the Shakespearean story, and of the character of Hamlet as the music conceives of him.

The result is a shift in emphasis from the signified content to the means of signification, or, in other words, from the semantic to the aesthetic. Used as it is here, the signifier becomes elevated, invested with the grandeur and pathos of a tragedy that it concentrates in itself. At least, it does so in aspiration; the listener has to consent to the transformation. That much granted, the signifier can be coordinated with the larger work of interpretation. But

coordination is not absorption. The active musical signifier's first level of import consists in its acquisition of a special sensory presence. The signifier becomes a virtual object saturated by the value of what it signifies.

Tchaikovsky elevates the signifier by inserting music of one genre into music of another. This kind of interpolation is a common device, but it does not always result in the production of a musical signifier, elevated or otherwise. In the finale of his Piano Concerto in E♭, K. 271, for example, Mozart inserts a foreign object: a minuet. Call this a topic if you like, but it is not a signifier. It has no fixed signified, and it certainly does not signify "minuet"—it simply is one. That it is an interpretive provocation—a hermeneutic window (see Kramer 1990, 1–20)—is not in doubt, but its logic is not that of signification.

No one device or technique is necessary or sufficient to produce the musical signifier. The available resources range from close mimicry to simple fiat. Tchaikovsky's introduction to the *Hamlet* Overture includes 12 stopped notes on a pair of horns marking the midnight hour (mm. 55–67) and a *fortississimo* stroke on the tam-tam (m. 68) that can only signal the arrival of the ghost. The insistence of the one timbre and the blaring of the other activate the sensory surplus of the signifiers. At the other extreme, the solo violin in Vaughan Williams's *The Lark Ascending* (1914) signifies the lark because the title says so; the solo violin in Rimsky-Korsakov's *Sheherazade* (1888) signifies the title character because the composer says so. The composers activate these signifiers by several similar means: reiteration, figuration, isolation. In doing so, they demonstrate that whether and how a musical signifier rises to the level of a numinous sign depends on its dual aesthetic-semantic relationship to the larger forces of meaning at work in the music.

Narrative

Tchaikovsky's *Hamlet* belongs to the genre of what we might call musical biography, in which the musical signifier forms a frequent resource; perhaps the only genres that rival it are battle music and landscape music (water in particular seems to positively demand signification). Liszt's tone poem *Mazeppa* (1851) offers a particularly revealing example, in part because it exists in two divergent versions and in part because it explicitly embeds its signifiers in a dense web of textual and cultural associations, bringing to the forefront the intertextual "circumstances" that break down the nominal integrity of the signifier.

Mazeppa is an intertextual mare's nest (the full appropriateness of those terms will soon become clear). It is based on Victor Hugo's poem "Mazeppa" (from his *Les Orientales* 1829) that is, in turn, based on a poem by Lord Byron that is, in turn, based on a historical legend. Its two versions, moreover, are different enough to turn the "it" into a "they." Liszt composed two compositions entitled *Mazeppa* at roughly the same time, one for solo piano, one for orchestra (the piano version, the fourth of the *Transcendental Etudes*, published in 1852, is a reworking of a score first entitled *Mazeppa* in 1840 but dating back even earlier). The two versions share basic musical material, but each evolves in its own way: each forms part of the other's intertext. An appended quotation from Hugo ends the piano score; a complete German translation of Hugo's poem prefaces the orchestral score, together with an epigraph from Byron's *Mazeppa* (1819): "Away! Away!"

The narrative concerns a wild ride. Mazeppa (historically, Ivan Mazeppa [1639–1709]), a Ukrainian nobleman, has been caught in an adulterous affair with a Polish countess. As punishment, he is bound naked to the back of a horse; set loose, the horse gallops furiously until it collapses back in Ukraine, where the Cossacks unbind Mazeppa and later make him

their commander. The fragment from Hugo that Liszt appends to the score celebrates this turn of events: "Il tombe! Et se relève roi!" (He falls! And he rises up a king!).

The endings of the two compositions, curtailed in the piano version, extended as virtually a separate movement in the lengthier orchestral version, strike differing balances of suffering and revival, virtual death and resurrection, and therefore project different attitudes toward the auditory spectacle of the suffering itself. "Spectacle" is the right term here, given the iconography of Mazeppa, which includes eroticized displays of his outstretched body in paintings by Géricault (1820; 1823), Vernet (1826), and Delacroix (1824)—the latter is a virtual depiction of a (feminized?) Mazeppa being raped by the horse.[1] The musical depiction retains the impulse to extravagant display but sublimates the emphasis. While Géricault and Delacroix make Mazeppa a kind of Promethean Ganymede, Liszt displays the hero's suffering by going to extremes in technique and instrumental color, firmly placing Mazeppa in the tradition of Romantic Prometheanism that finds defiance in endurance. In the piano version, the breathless coda endows the hero's release with an aura of wonder and near disbelief. Its extended counterpart in the orchestral version is a study in sheer triumph—or triumphalism.

The two versions also differ in their approach to musical narrative. Byron has Mazeppa tell his story in retrospect, whereas Hugo, in ballad mode, uses an anonymous speaker in the present tense. Liszt splits the difference. The introduction to the piano version consists of a series of declamatory chords followed by a rhapsodic passage in octaves (mm. 1–6); as if following Byron, it establishes a narrative voice before starting the story of the ride. The orchestral version, as if following Hugo, begins in medias res with a cymbal crash followed by frenetic strings signifying the furious pace of the horse (mm. 1–20). Both versions subsequently form signifiers for the horse's exhaustion and collapse. In the piano version, the music slows down and proceeds in spasms before coming to a halt (m. 189), as if the narrating voice were giving a dramatic recitation. In the orchestral version, timpani mimic the faltering steps; the signifier of collapse depends more on sonority than on process.

But before the fall there is, of course, a gallop. Although both versions signify it, the signifier of the gallop is especially strong and distinctive on the piano. The music revolves around a sharply profiled motto theme. The motto's combination of long notes with lurching rhythm and wide melodic leaps suggests, but never quite activates, the signification of Mazeppa's captive body. The piano version widely separates the melody and bass of the motto and fills the space in between with a series of rapid whooshing thirds (mm. 7ff). The "whooshing" figure is sometimes said to depict the dust thrown up by the galloping horse, as described by Hugo, and that is perfectly reasonable: certainly, it signifies the rapidly pounding hooves. But as we have already seen, such observations in themselves say little and accordingly get us nowhere. Rationalizing them as iconic signs or musical topics adds nothing but the illusion of system. We need, instead, to ask about their sensory force and its relationship to the larger forces of meaning that traverse the music and its intertexts.

In this case, we have a clearly demarcated melodic figure posed against an acoustic blur. The score, using three staves, marks the distance visually, with the thirds in the middle staff enveloped by octaves in the outer ones. It is important to note that these flights of thirds have nothing to do with the form or putative structure of the composition. They are unremarkable except for their speed, which is too fast for them to be apprehended clearly. The blur they produce is a purely material effect, or, more accurately, an effect of dematerialization, which is above all why they are there. This blur, moreover, is visual as well as auditory, since the pianist's hands cannot be seen performing the thirds, but only disappearing into a blur of motion as they do so. This kind of consideration is always

pertinent to Liszt, who took pains to make sure that his audience could see his hands, a practice he seems to have innovated.

The blur, in both its aspects, suggests that what is at stake for Mazeppa is not simply his individual life or death. His ride exposes the threat of a void in which meaning, memory, and history disappear—a void that the ride can escape but not close, but that the literary and pictorial and musical recounting of the ride can contain or defer. To this assemblage we should add the musical performance. With the piano version, probably the most difficult of the *Transcendental Etudes*, the virtuosity of the soloist is a match for the heroism of the rider. Each man (and the point is gender specific) is exposed and vulnerable, and each is to be admired for his capacity to make something sublime out of suffering. These implications interlock with Hugo's poem, which treats the story of Mazeppa as an allegory of the artist's struggle with the force of his untamed genius. Like a Pegasus with "wings of flame" ("ailes de flame"—Hugo, "Mazeppa" ii, verse 3), genius carries its captive across "all the fields of the possible" ("Tous les champs du possible") and exposes him to torment by throngs of angels and demons. This perspective is not possible in the orchestral version, in which the element of heroic virtuosity necessarily disappears. The heroic role passes to the orchestra as a cultural institution, which is one reason why *Mazeppa* is scored for one of the largest orchestras Liszt ever used.

In both versions, however, Liszt's musical treatment of Mazeppa resembles the treatment of movie superheroes a century and a half later—what one might call the John Williams mode. Liszt's versions are more complex, but the rhetorics are a close match. Mazeppa and Superman have intertextual links. The musical heroics, in other words, migrate over the course of time from high culture to popular culture, and what would once have been a line of continuity between the two cultural registers becomes a disparity. Lisztian-Promethean heroics had all but vanished from art music by the end of the first decade of the twentieth century, with the hammer blows felling the hero in the finale of Mahler's Sixth Symphony as a brutal last act. Some insight into why this happened, closing a circle, may be afforded by those contrary endings to Liszt's two versions of *Mazeppa*. In the piano version, the performer must act like Mazeppa and, so to speak, bind himself to the music's back. Like both Mazeppa and Prometheus, he is harried but unbound at the end. In the orchestral version, the music submits to the mastery of the conductor, whose whip hand holds the baton. The extended closing celebration becomes an official event which, as time goes by, is increasingly likely to meet with a skeptical response.

Opera

The musical signifier also has a role in opera, sometimes a prominent one. Often it serves to convey a sense of finality, especially mortal finality, as in the examples to follow. Other common uses include scene-setting and tone painting, which may or may not have wider import in particular instances. Uses as leitmotifs are less common. Wagner's leitmotifs, at least, only occasionally have fixed signifieds (a fact obscured by their familiar labels, which do not come from Wagner), and thus they only occasionally act as signifiers in the strict sense of forming the material half of a complete sign. Recurrent signifiers, similarly, do not always act as leitmotifs: they do not necessarily participate actively in the musical process. In Puccini's *Madama Butterfly*, for example, the use of "The Star-Spangled Banner" to designate the egregious Pinkerton is musically inert, the signifier as a label (not that we needed one). Mixed and ambiguous instances, however, are only to be expected. There are no rules of signification that are not routinely broken.

Consider the opposition between two kinds of music in the final scene of Verdi's *La Traviata*. The protagonist, Violetta, has arrived at the hour of her death when, languishing in her sickbed, she hears carnival music coming from the street. This diegetic music comes to her as a signifier of the life she is soon to lose. Shortly afterward, her beloved Alfredo unexpectedly appears, full of ardor, as if to personify that life. Their mutual song is ardent, too, but it is also hapless. Soon enough a funereal figure breaks out in the full orchestra and goes grinding inexorably on. Its initial tread subsequently acquires an upbeat to propel it forward; the death knell expands against the pleas of the voices for respite. The material weight of the signifier, reinforced by the brass, creates much of its signifying force, as if reality were smashing through the fantasy, not only of the characters but also of the audience.

This extradiegetic signifier bears heavily against both the fleeting carnival music and a second diegetic signifier which, however, we do not hear and barely see. This is a miniature portrait of Violetta that she gives to Alfredo as a memento. The portrait is Violetta's objectified self-reflection and hence the symbolic condensation of the whole opera. It is also the cue for the funereal tread. The portrait elicits fervent song from its subject, but in itself is a mere trace. It will soon be all that remains of Violetta, except in the sense that the opera is that portrait writ large.

But the portrait-as-signifier has little or no power to offset mortality, and neither does the opera. The funereal sound acquires a brutality that contradicts the tender sentiments expressed by Violetta's voice, and it overpowers the middle register to which the voice has receded. The signifier will simply not stop signifying. More than just a portent of the fatal conclusion, its insistence becomes the material force that precipitates the ending, as if to anticipate Lacan's notion that the signifier is the death of the thing. The funereal music *is* the portrait in its own definitive musical form. It becomes oppressive, palpably oppressive, by sounding out as a signifier. No wonder, then, that when Violetta, in its wake, sings out lyrically as if her life were returning, it is only to have her illusion, and her song, cut short by her abrupt collapse. Her final moment is another miniature portrait, but, so to speak, a portrait with two faces: one looking toward the particularity of her own fate, and the other reflecting on the fatality perhaps implicit in all signification.

It is at least suggestive that so many of these signifiers are mortal ones, but it is made manifest in another example. The final scene of Poulenc's *Dialogues des Carmélites* (1956) cuts down not one doomed woman but 15 of them, one woman at a time. The victims are Carmelite nuns sent to the guillotine during the French Revolution in the waning days of The Terror. Although the music for their execution depends, like Verdi's funereal interjections, on the insistence of the signifier, the series of deaths finds a symbolic condensation (as Violetta's death does in her portrait) in the fate of the last two victims, Constance and Blanche. Constance has had a premonition that she and Blanche will die together. Blanche, overwhelmed by fear of death, has been in hiding, and only makes the decision to reveal herself and voluntarily join her Carmelite sisters at the last moment, as Constance approaches the scaffold.

Poulenc's music signifies the sound of the guillotine for each offstage death. The pattern is precise in rhythm but indeterminate in sonority. The score indicates exactly where the musical blade is to fall, but it does not say how to produce its "dull and heavy" mixture of swish and thump ("bruit sourd et lourd," one measure before rehearsal 64). Each production must find the sound that will fit into the signifier and deliver its fatal meaning with brutal monotony. The result is to cut down the music as well as the nuns who sing "Salve Regina" as they go to their deaths.

The attacks of the signifier are irregular, sometimes on and sometimes off the beat. The nuns respond first as a group and then as individuals. At first they sing their hymn in unison, then in a mixture of unisons and octaves (the first split into octaves coincides, emblematically, with the first fall of the guillotine). But when their numbers dwindle to four, their singing turns to a four-part harmony, which then recedes one part at a time until only a monody for Constance remains. Left alone, Constance falters. She breaks off the hymn with a leap from C5 to a long, high A5 and falls silent. Then, catching sight of Blanche, she returns to C5 and continues the monody on the one tone until the swish of the blade stops her on the first syllable of "Maria." The monody then passes to Blanche, who in taking it upon herself comes to embody the winnowing of the larger group. The progression of the scene from all to one conveys the understanding that every death in a mass killing is the death of an individual, so that the death of one is the death of all—and not just of all those going to the scaffold.

The movement towards individuation climaxes in waves: with the reunion of Blanche and Constance; with the cessation of the minor-third ostinato pattern that has hitherto accompanied the nuns' death march; with Blanche picking up the thread of Constance's voice with the C5 that the guillotine cuts off; and with Blanche's change of the hymn from "Salve Regina" to the last verse of "Veni Creator Spiritus."[2] The change brings a return from monody to melody which conveys the glorification of Father, resurrected Son, and comforting Spirit invoked by the verse.

Blanche arrives at the hymn's concluding phrase, "in saeculorum saecula" (forever and ever), just before she dies under the final stroke of the blade. Her act thus recapitulates the founding event of Christianity: the death of one is the salvation of all. But, as in the third scene of act 1, where Mme. Croissy, the Prioress, dies in an agony that destroys her faith, here the sound of the guillotine in its raw materiality contests the affirmation of eternal life. The sensory force of the signifier rises to a nearly unbearable level as it returns to claim one victim after another. Poulenc's libretto makes it clear that he wants the listener to hear the hymn prevail, and so does Blanche's final solo transformation of one hymn into another, but nothing can erase the contrary possibility. Blanche dies without reaching the tonic key. She dies mid-sentence, as Constance has done mid-word; she is cut off after "saeculorum" while trying to repeat "in saeculorum saecula." Forever and ever are severed. A prolonged silence follows. The signifier of the blade becomes the blade.

Signification

What conclusions should be drawn from this re-examination of the musical signifier? First, musical signification is an aesthetic phenomenon as much, and perhaps more, than it is a semantic or semiotic phenomenon. When context or treatment activates the force of a musical signifier, the signifier undergoes a sensory enrichment. For a hospitable listener, it makes palpable the values that inform it.

The closest parallel in nineteenth-century terms, but with a cardinal difference, is the literary symbol, specifically in one of the definitions by Goethe that helped establish the concept: "That is the true symbolic, where the particular represents the general not as dream and shadows, but as a living instantaneous disclosure of the inapprehensible" ("Das ist die wahre Symbolik, wo das Besondere das Allgemeinere repräsentiert, nicht als Traum und Schatten, sondern als lebendig-augenblickliche Offenbarung des Unerforschlichen" Goethe [1833] 2016, 39; translation mine). The difference follows the medium. With music, insofar as it depends on expression rather than representation, the signifier does not disclose the

inapprehensible but instead sets the diffuse, hovering presence of the inapprehensible momentarily aside. The signified remains perfectly apprehensible while the signifier's qualities of vitality and immediacy envelop it. Music adds an extra layer of both by making corporeal what Goethe presents as conceptual.

Second, and accordingly, it is important to speak of the signifier in music—and elsewhere—with specific reference to signification as a particular subdivision of meaning rather than as the source of meaning in general. Meaning is not the product of signification. The meaning of music, like that of other cultural products, emerges from a network of dispositions, orientations, attitudes, affects, and models of action—lines of relationship that may work tacitly for extended periods before they find deferred and displaced expression in language. Such language, whether descriptive or interpretive, is indirect in principle. Head-on statements of "meaning" devour what they produce: meaning cannot be made commensurate to its sources by decoding a group of signifiers. The gap between meaning and signification is constitutive of both. The musical signifier does not close that gap but instead achieves its own force and import by making the gap more apparent.

Like the event as conceived by Derrida, meaning is not something that we command but something that falls in our path:

> The event as event, as absolute surprise, must fall on me. Why? Because if it doesn't fall on me, it means that I see it coming … and the event is that which can be said [*dit*] but never predicted [*predit*]. A predicted event is not an event. The event falls on me because I don't see it coming.
>
> *(Derrida 2007, 451)*

Just so, a signified meaning is not a meaning. The signifier works best when it gets in its own way. Significance begins where signification ends.

Notes

1 As Patricia Mainardi (2003, 194–97) has shown, this specific treatment of Mazeppa has roots both in the punishments for adultery prescribed by the Napoleonic Code and in tropes linking centaurs, the horses, and charioteers of the soul in Plato's *Phaedrus*, and untamed sexuality.

2 See the description of a similar process in Baker's essay in this volume.

6

BARTHES'S "THE GRAIN OF THE VOICE" REVISITED

Anne Kauppala

Introduction

Roland Barthes's "Le grain de la voix" (The Grain of the Voice), originally published in 1972,[1] has retained its viability, highlighting topics such as corporeality, sexuality, and desire, and affecting studies of performance, opera, and contemporary and popular music (see Dame 1998; Frith 1998; Välimäki 2005, 301–27; Szekely 2006). Dunsby (2009) engaged "The Grain of the Voice" with Schenkerian terminology to illustrate structurally significant melodic descents in Charles Panzéra's and Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau's interpretations of a Schumann Lied. Since its inception, "the grain of the voice"[2] has indeed acquired malleable meanings, some of them not clearly aligned with Barthes's original conception. Most often "the grain of the voice" is misunderstood as a vocal quality of a non-homogenous voice, or simply as the physical body producing a voice. The purpose of this essay, however, is neither to redress imprecise usages of the term nor to apply it to some vocal material; instead, it is to explore "the grain of the voice" as a concept, in the context of Barthes's semiology to clarify where it comes from and to what kind of networks of semiotic terms it is irrevocably bound. Beacons guiding this voyage are several of Barthes's paired terms, particularly "geno-song" and "pheno-song," denotation and connotation, signification and *signifiance*, pleasure (*plaisir*) and enjoyment/bliss (*jouissance*), as well as what he calls the "the third meaning." Barthes's concepts and aesthetic preferences are also shown to be deeply rooted in his personal character and biographic circumstances.

Although Barthes addressed voice as a topic in his numerous essays, he never had them assembled into a collection nor published a monograph on music. Several of Barthes's writings on music have posthumously appeared in *L'obvie et l'obtus* ([1982] 1992a), translated as *The Responsibility of Forms* (1991).[3] An early essay, "L'art vocal bourgeois" (The Bourgeois Art of Song; 1956), which contains the seeds of Barthes's aesthetic preferences regarding singing, appeared in Barthes's *Mythologies* ([1957] 2013, 190–92). In addition, voice is reflected in *S/Z* ([1970] 1974), *The Pleasure of the Text* ([1973a] 1975), *Roland Barthes by Roland Barthes* ([1975] 1995), as well as some in interviews (for example Barthes 1973b, 1976, [1981] 1985). Unsurprisingly, Barthes even gave a seminar on voice in *École pratique des hautes études* 1973–1974 (Barthes 2010b, 355–85; see also 82–83).

In the early 1940s Barthes took singing lessons from Charles Panzéra (1896–1976), which were abandoned due to Barthes's relapse of tuberculosis. The persistent lung problems also cut short his second attempt to study voice with Panzéra in 1956. It was during this second short-lived period of vocal study that Barthes published the above-mentioned essay on bourgeois vocal art, in the February (1956) issue of *Les lettres nouvelles*, in which he essentially dismisses Gérard Souzay's singing style by presenting his current singing teacher, Panzéra, as an idealized counterexample (Barthes [1957] 2013, 192).

Bourgeois pheno-song in the service of signification and denotation

According to Barthes, Gérard Souzay (1918–2004) was an exemplar of bourgeois vocal art because he stressed the semantic content of the words to the extent that it bordered on extravagance:

> To underline the word by the abusive contour of phonetics, to make the guttural of the word *creuse* (hollow) into the spade digging a grave, and the dental of the word *sein* (breast) into a penetrating sweetness, is to practice a literality of intention, not of description, it is to establish abusive correspondences … This kind of phonetic pointillism, which gives each letter an incongruent importance, sometimes touches on the absurd.
>
> *(Barthes [1957] 2013, 191)*

In Barthes's later "The Grain of the Voice" ([1972] 1991, 267–77), however, the aesthetically devalued party is no longer Souzay—his name is not mentioned in the essay—but the German baritone Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau (1925–2012). Like Souzay, Fischer-Dieskau is contrasted to Panzéra, to the latter's advantage. Barthes downplays a singing style that tries to communicate and express the content of the words. What is new is the term Barthes introduces to encompass this kind of vocal expression: pheno-song ([1972] 1991, 270–71). Pheno-song is characterized by clear text delivery in employing articulatory means that dramatize the words to draw attention to the semantic and lyric content of the poem (Barthes [1972] 1991, 271; see also [1957] 2013, 190–91). All of this contributes to articulation, which, according to Barthes:

> in effect, functions abusively as *a pretense of meaning*: claiming to serve meaning, it basically misreads it … *to articulate* is to encumber meaning with a parasitical clarity, useless without being, for all that, sumptuous. And such clarity is not innocent; it involves the singer in a highly ideological art of expressivity—or, to be even more precise, of *dramatization*.
>
> *([1977] 1991, 283)*

The binary opposition of pheno-song and geno-song, which only appears in "The Grain of the Voice," is Barthes's re-working of Kristeva's terms "phenotext" and "genotext" (Kristeva [1969] 1986, 220–28; [1974] 1984, 86–89). For Kristeva, a phenotext is a linguistic structure that contains not only grammatical rules but also the kind of textual practices that guarantee communication (Kristeva [1974] 1984, 86–89; 91); hence, it conveys signs and contributes to an effortless understanding of the message. Kristeva delineated between the two terms in her first published work, *Semiotiké* ([1969] 1986), which greatly impressed Barthes, writing in his "Kristeva's *Semiotiké*": "this discourse transforms us, displaces us, gives

us words, meanings, sentences which permit us to work and to release in ourselves the creative moment itself: permutation" (Barthes [1970] 1989, 170)[4].

Whereas Kristeva developed her terms for the analysis of literary texts, Barthes applied the terminology to a non-literary discourse: singing. In his influential *Elements of Semiology*, he defines signification, following Saussure, as a process wherein the signifier and the signified are united as a sign (Barthes 1967, 113). Denotation enhances literal meanings, the interpretation of which is readily at hand in a given culture. In two essays, "The Photographic Message" (1961) and "The Rhetoric of the Image" (1964), Barthes details how a photograph is an example of denotation. An un-manipulated photograph denotes analogously what it represents, without any requirement of an interpretative code; a photograph communicates or, rather, denotes what it has captured so clearly that it might be uninteresting for a semiotician (Barthes [1961] 1982, 194–210; see also the translation in [1961] 1977, 32–51). In his 1970 essay "The Third Meaning," he discusses symbolic messages embedded in photographs, which require decoding on the basis of a culturally shared code: for example, a photograph depicting a "rain of gold," as in the coronation scene of Eisenstein's film *Ivan the Terrible*, does not denote only rain but is also a sign of wealth (Barthes [1970] 1982, 317–33). This kind of "obvious meaning" (*le sens obvie*) is "taken from a kind of common, general lexicon of symbols based on culturally shared signification" ([1970] 1982, 319).

Signification and denotation are crucial to a subject's (re)constitution: a subject that applies the adjectives (signified) to describe music (signifier) always becomes strengthened and constituted. As Barthes observes,

> the predicate is always the rampart by which the subject's image-repertoire [*l'imaginaire du sujet*] protects itself against the loss that threatens it: the man who furnishes himself or is furnished with an adjective is sometimes wounded, sometimes pleased, but always *constituted*; music has an image-repertoire [*l'imaginaire de la musique*] whose function is to reassure, to constitute the subject, who hears it … and this image-repertoire immediately comes to language by the adjective.
>
> *(Barthes [1972] 1991, 268; for a somewhat different translation, see Barthes [1972] 1977, 179–80)*

As part of the subject's interpretation of the object, denotation, communication, and signification are central features in bourgeois vocal art, which aims at being understandable, producing pleasure (*plaisir*) and which is expressible in words ([1973a] 1975, 21). In order to be able to posit denotations and significations when hearing a song, it is essential that the enunciation of the singer is comprehensible. In a bourgeois singing style, it is recognizable signs of emotional states that are brought to the forefront. Barthes argues that this is exactly what Souzay does:

> having to sing, for instance, the words *tristesse affreuse* [horrible sadness], he [Souzay] is not content with the simple semantic content of these words or with the musical line which supports them: he must further dramatize the phonetics of the *affreuse* [horrific] must suspend and then explode the double fricative, releasing misery in the very density of the letters; no one can ignore the fact that it is a question of particularly terrible pangs. Unfortunately, this pleonasm of intentions muffles both word and music, and chiefly their junction, which is the very object of the vocal art.
>
> *(Barthes [1957] 2013, 190)*[5]

A phoneme, or a group of phonemes belonging to a word, simultaneously contributes to the semantic drama, producing a recognizable emotional content (for example, "terrible sadness"). Consonants, "the armature of the language," would be separated and emphasized to achieve a clarity of voiced text and its meanings (Barthes [1972] 1991, 272). For Barthes, this is not a virtue, because dramatic-expressive articulation disturbs the legato, and "the melodic line is broken into fragments of meaning, into semantic sighs, into effects of hysteria" (Barthes [1977] 1991, 283). Panzéra makes a similar point: articulation is the enemy of legato. In articulation, according to Panzéra, all the syllables—and therein all of the consonants—receive the same sonorous intensity, which is not only mechanic and insensible, but also destroys all the poetic and musical charm (Panzéra 1945, 73–76; cf. also, Panzéra 1967, 23).

Fischer-Dieskau's art is, for Barthes, "expressive, dramatic, *emotionally clear*." In this regard, Fischer-Dieskau's vocal delivery is articulation subsumed by the "tyranny of signification": it "corresponds perfectly to requirements of an average culture" (Barthes [1972] 1991, 273), a charge he also levels against Souzay (Barthes 2013, 190). Richard Middleton (1983, 263–64) points out that both Barthes and Kristeva continue a romantic-modernistic tradition where predictability and standardization, typical for mass culture (pleasure), are deemed less valuable than the dismantling of generally agreed-upon codes, which leads to innovations (*jouissance*). Indeed, Barthes, in his "Kristeva's *Semeiotiké*," openly proclaims that "communication is merchandise" ([1970] 1989, 170). In the 1971 interview for *Tel Quel* Barthes mentions how the indiscreet Fischer-Dieskau has abusively filled the recording market with his numerous LP-recordings while Panzéra had to abandon recording just before the arrival of the "microsillon" (Barthes [1971] 1998, 251).

Geno-song: a special case of *signifiance* and *jouissance*

It is possible, at least to some extent, to describe what pheno-song is, but the definition process becomes considerably more difficult when faced with the geno-song, *signifiance* and *jouissance*. Geno-song is a term that appears only in Barthes's "The Grain of the Voice," whereas Barthes's texts after 1970 are saturated by references to both *jouissance* and *signifiance*. It becomes evident that geno-song is a special case of *jouissance* and *signifiance*, which can, however, be achieved by other means. Although connected to "the grain of the voice," they are not synonyms.

I will first liberate geno-song from the web of the interrelated concepts to highlight its particularities, and thereafter I will proceed via *signifiance* and *jouissance* to the main issue of this chapter, "the grain of the voice." In the process, pheno-song, denotation and signification must be resurrected for contrast and difference.

For Kristeva ([1974] 1984, 86), a genotext is a process that "tends to articulate structures that are ephemeral (unstable, threatened by drive charges, 'quanta' rather than 'marks') and nonsigifying (devices that do not have a double articulation)." She gives several detailed examples of the genotext as well as of phenotext (see Kristeva [1974] 1985, 217–310). As Kristeva ([1974] 1984, 86) points out, genotext can be seen in language, although it is not necessarily linguistic by nature. In a genotextual space, the phonemes rise above their function as particles of a well-formed linguistic syntax (i.e., their phenotextual organization):

> in the text *the sounds* [sons] *of language are more than phonemes*. While the phonemes retain the phonematic function in order to guarantee the symbolic—commutative—function of the language, [in genotext] they recuperate [*reprennent*] what they have lost in becoming sounds of a given language; they recover topography of the body which produces them; likewise, what they prolong beyond the limits supported by the normative usage of the language and beyond the "normal" memory are the virtually limitless possibilities of the linguistic constituents (here: phonemic) applicable in generating ensembles (here: morpho-phonemics).
>
> *(Kristeva [1974] 1985, 222, translation mine)*[6]

In genotext, the sonorous dimension of phonemes becomes revitalized, and they regain their ability to be regrouped in unexpected ways that are pulsational and not grammatical. In "the topography of the body," oral cavities form a particular zone wherein language becomes sonorous. Kristeva describes how the liquids (/l/ and /r/), nasal /m/, and closed front vowels possess oral pulsation, whereas the open back vowels are connected by Kristeva to anal pulsation and the apical /r/ to erectile-phallic pulsation ([1974] 1985, 222–25).

In adapting the concept of genotext, Barthes retains its attachment to the oral topography of language. But unlike Kristeva's genotext, geno-song is not textual, but audible, and it works with the sounds of language. Reading is not enough; one must listen. Geno-song, according to Barthes, "is the volume of the speaking and singing voice, the space in which the significations germinate, 'from within the language and its very materiality'" (Barthes [1972] 1991, 270; Barthes most likely was citing an unmentioned Kristeva source). Under "Voice," the last entry of his *Pleasure of the Text*, Barthes elaborates the materiality of the language with another term, *writing aloud*

> [which] is not phonological but phonetic; its aim is not the clarity of messages, the theater of emotions [i.e., as in pheno-song and the bourgeois vocal art]; what it searches for (in a perspective of bliss) are the pulsional incidents, the language lined with flesh, a text where we can hear the grain of the throat, the patina of consonants, the voluptuousness of vowels, a whole carnal stereophony: the articulation of the body, of the tongue, not that of meaning [*sens*] of language.
>
> *(Barthes [1973a] 1975, 66–67)*

In geno-song, therefore, language is liberated from serving cultural meanings, and the materiality of the (French) language becomes vocally nourished (Barthes [1972] 1991, 270–71). French *mélodie* is an ideal breeding ground for geno-song, which Barthes regards as "a very special space [*genre*] in which *a language encounters a voice*" (Barthes [1972] 1991, 269). Undoubtedly, in his singing lessons with Panzéra Barthes has gained a perspective from within how the voice may become a sensual site for language. In his *L'art de chanter*, Panzéra (1945, 73–78) dedicates a chapter to pronunciation (dismissing articulation), ideas later echoed in Barthes's conception of geno-song (Barthes [1972] 1991, 271–73). In pronunciation, a consonant is not consistently the same each time it is produced; instead, its quality and color depend on context. Similarly, a syllable or groups of syllables are subordinated to their atmospheric ambiance. Occasionally, a consonant may be slightly more accentuated than the others, which brightens not only the spot where this takes place, but has a longer lasting influence: *un long moment* (Panzéra 1945, 76).

Barthes describes how Panzéra's vocal delivery retains the musical logic in the phrase without letting the dramatization of literary meanings to intervene and disrupt (as in

Fischer-Dieskau's and Souzay's singing); Panzéra pronounces, whereas Fischer-Dieskau and Souzay articulate. According to Barthes, Panzéra recommends that consonants are to be skated over, and occasionally some consonants become "patinated;" in other words, they are more likely to become landed ("*atterries*") than fallen, more "induced" (*amenées*) than marked (*marquées*) (Barthes [1977] 1991, 282; see also Barthes [1977] 1992a, 250).

For Panzéra, /r/ is the most beautiful and most indispensable of all the consonants in French. He describes how to produce /r/ inside the mouth by "a rapid repetition of the strokes where the tip of the tongue hits the palate," and he explains how "the air is put to vibrate twice, at first by the glottis and the second time by the movement of the tongue" (Panzéra 1945, 77–78). There are, however, bad pronunciations of /r/; most often they are too heavy because the back of the tongue (not its tip) touches the velum (not the palate). Barthes admired Panzéra's rolled /r/ as particularly elegant: without any heavy peasant-likeness or Canadian; instead the rolling could be so short—but still pure—that it would just give an idea of rolled /r/, which "was an artificial roll, the paradoxical state of a letter sound [*lettre-son*] at once quite abstract (by its metallic brevity of the vibration) and quite material (by its obvious implantation in the moving throat)" (Barthes [1972] 1991, 272; see also [1977] 1991, 282).

The notion of geno-song opens a door to Barthes's concepts of *signifiance* and *jouissance*. In *signifiance*, application of the adjective and the (re-)constitution of the subject become impossible; instead, the subject gets lost, as it misses the previously constituted significations and pleasures, and possesses no language to capture the sense produced in the *signifiance*, which affords *jouissance*. Under the entry "clivage" (split), Barthes characterizes the difference between pleasure and *jouissance* in the context of textual practices:

> Text of pleasure [*plaisir*]: the text that contents, fills, grants euphoria; the text that comes from culture and does not break with it, is linked to a *comfortable* practice of reading.
>
> Text of bliss [*jouissance*]: the text that imposes a state of loss, the text that discomforts (perhaps to the point of a certain boredom), unsettles the reader's historical, cultural, psychological assumptions, the consistency of his tastes, values, memories, brings to a crisis his relation with language.
>
> … he enjoys the consistency of his selfhood [*moi*] (that is his pleasure) and seeks its loss (that is his bliss [*jouissance*]). He is a subject split twice over, doubly perverse.
>
> *(Barthes [1973a] 1975, 14)*

Although *signifiance* is situated beyond the grammatical use of language, it does not equate to meaninglessness or nonsense. For Barthes, *signifiance* "is meaning [*sens*] *insofar as it is sensually produced*" ([1973a] 1975, 61). Barthes further hones this kind of practice when he speaks of the "third" or "obtuse" meaning: "the obtuse meaning [*le sens obtus*] is a signifier without signified, hence the difficulty in naming it" ([1970] 1982, 326)—therefore, no signification takes place. By way of an example, Barthes uses a still shot cut from Sergey Eisenstein's film *Ivan the Terrible*. It depicts a woman's face, and although the face is clearly visible, it is impossible for Barthes to decipher what the face expresses; hence, there is a signifier (the face) but no signified (its namable emotional content), and the disparity is evidence not of signification, but of *signifiance*. Like geno-song, the "obtuse" (third) meaning cannot be deciphered; it can only be located and sensed. This meaning does not validate a system of obvious denotations, but rather it subverts the entire practice of making sense (*sens*) (Barthes [1970] 1982, 328–30).

The friction between voice and language, or "the grain of the voice"

In "The Grain of the Voice," voice is always "languaged." It is situated in a language, it bears it and belongs to it. In fact, for Barthes there is "no place without language … or more precisely, everything is language" (Barthes [1981] 1985, 162). Hence, "the grain of the voice" cannot be situated *in* the voice alone, nor is it a vocal quality or a seducing body of a singer, as some of the most common misreadings of the concept hold. Instead, "the grain of the voice" is located in the uneven, *granular borderline between language and music*: "The 'grain' of the voice is not—or not only—its timbre; the *signifying* [*signifiance*] it affords cannot be better defined than by the *friction* between music and something else, which is the language (and not the message at all)" (Barthes [1972] 1991, 273). In another essay Barthes intertwines the relationships of language, voice, and music as follows: "Then what is music? Panzéra's art answers: a *quality of language*" (Barthes [1977] 1991: 284).

Listening to the exemplary voices identified by Barthes helps to get a sense of what he meant by "the grain of the voice." Both Panzéra and Souzay recorded a host of Fauré's *Mélodies*, which allow their vocal differences to be identified and interpreted. In "Aprés un rêve" Panzéra (geno-song) and Souzay (pheno-song) certainly sound divergent because they differ in both their voices and their interpretations.[7] But the object of listening *à la* Barthes is not by way of vocal timbre or projection of musical structure, but in how the language is voiced.

Indeed, the French language is articulated differently in their performances. Panzéra's long vowels are a continuous nuanced movement. For instance, in "Aprés un rêve," Panzéra sings on the last word, "mysterieuse," a miniature timbral slide within its long /ø/ that reaches beyond its phonetic value. Souzay's vowels in that song, on the other hand, are more straightforward, and he remains, on the same long /ø/, within a correct phonetic execution of the French language. Often Souzay lets his voice grow on a vowel without, however, producing any micro-variations within its phonetic value (for instance on the word *rayonnais*). Souzay softens certain words (or parts thereof), picking them out of the phrase (for instance *Je rêvais*; *ardent*), producing, in Barthes's sense, the bourgeois vocal art. Panzéra makes no such semantically motivated accentuations but lets the language glide in music, and indeed, after hearing Panzéra and Souzay sing this song, one may understand why Barthes considers that Panzéra trusts in his singing "in music's immediately definitive substance" (Barthes [1957] 2013, 192). Obviously, there are more nuanced differences between Souzay and Panzéra, but the point here is the examination of "the grain of the voice" as a concept. "The grain of the voice" may indeed work as an analytic tool in deciphering the vocal art of a singer. Such understanding would not, however, focus on the execution of tonal structures of a composition or on the timbre of the voice, but on how language is sung (see Gouiffès 2008; see also Klein 2009). This concept elevates aural appreciation of the double position of language and the enhanced voice: "That is what the 'grain' would be: the materiality of the body speaking its mother tongue: perhaps the letter; [*lettre*]; almost certainly … *signifying* [*signifiance*]" (Barthes [1972] 1991, 270).

While according to Kristeva ([1974] 1984, 86–89) genotext and phenotext (as well as semiotic and symbolic) work together in a textual praxis, Barthes separates geno-song from pheno-song (Dame 1998, 240). Barthes assesses Souzay's (bourgeois) way of singing in a similar fashion as Fischer-Dieskau's, whereas the vocal art of Panzéra is characterized by seductive demarcations between voice and language, its granular surface where "the grain of the voice" is produced and language rustles. If Barthes does not hear in the singing voice

anything except the impeccable articulation in a given language succumbing to its phonetic and phonological rules, no friction, no "grain of the voice" is realized. Likewise, there is no passage to *signifiance* and *jouissance* when a singer stops at the level of signification.

Language, therefore, in "the grain of the voice," rustles in the cavities of vocal tract, in vocal chords, and in the soft tissues of the mouth while the tongue is agilely changing positions, its tension and shape. In this rustling (*bruissante*), according to Barthes,

> … language would not thereby abandon a horizon of meaning [*sens*]: meaning, undivided, impenetrable, unnamable, would however be posited in the distance like a mirage, making the vocal exercise into a double landscape, furnished with "background" [*fond*]; but instead of the music of the phonemes being the "background" of our messages (as happens in our poetry), meaning would now be the vanishing point of *jouissance*.
>
> *(Barthes [1975] 1989, 78; modified translation from; Barthes [1975] 1993, 101)*

Desire, voice, and lung

Besides "The Grain of the Voice," *S/Z* ([1970] 1974), an elaborate analysis of Honoré Balzac's *Sarrasine* (1830), is another renowned study on voice by Barthes. Here and also elsewhere in Barthes's writings voice, desire and erotic attunement are inextricably present and intertwined, but what has been ignored, is Barthes's homoerotic sensibility. Samoyault, for instance, proposes that *S/Z* "is a plea for homosexuality and the utopia it makes possible, that of a reunion without opposition" (2017, 339). The events begin to unwind when Sarrasine, a promising sculptor, loses his senses after hearing the voice of the beautiful leading soprano, "La Zambinella" (actually a castrato) sing on the stage of Teatro Argentina in Rome:

> When La Zambinella sang, the effect was delirium. The artist [Sarrasine] felt cold; then he felt a heat … He did not applaud, he said nothing, he experienced an impulse of madness, a kind of frenzy which overcomes us only when we are at the age when desire has something frightening and infernal about it … Last, this agile voice … attacked his soul so vividly that several times he gave vent to involuntary cries torn from him by convulsive feeling of pleasure [*délice*] which are all too rarely vouchsafed by human passions.
>
> *(Balzac's* Sarrasine*, quoted in Barthes [1970] 1974, 238–39; its analysis in 115–18)*

Balzac's description on the power of voice is also shared by Barthes: "[t]he voice is a diffusion, an insinuation, it passes over the entire surface of the body, the skin; being a passage, an abolition of limitations, classes, names … it possesses a special hallucinatory power" ([1970] 1974, 110). Furthermore, *S/Z* offers an explanation for why Barthes strongly prefers a continuous musical line (Panzéra) to a discontinuous one (Souzay and Fischer-Dieskau). At issue is what Barthes calls "lubrication" and its opposite:

> This music's erotic quality (attached to its *vocal nature*) is here defined: it is the power of *lubrication*; *connection* is a specific characteristic of the voice; the model of the lubricated is the organic, the "living," in short, seminal fluid … singing

> (a characteristic generally ignored in aesthetics) has something coenesthetic about it, it is connected less to an "impression" than to an internal, muscular, humoral sensuality …
>
> The antonym of the *lubricated* … is discontinuous, divided, creaking, composite, bizarre: everything that is excluded from the liquid plenitude of pleasure, everything that is unable to unite with the *phrased*, a preciously ambiguous value, since it is both linguistic and musical, unites in the one plenitude both meaning [*sens*] and sex.
>
> *(Barthes [1970] 1974, 109–10)*

Panzéra's art of pronunciation with continuous musical lines obviously enhances lubrication and seminal fluid, whereas Souzay and Fischer-Dieskau, with their art of articulation, can be considered as representing its opposite, with discontinuous musical lines.

As for Sarrasine, also for Barthes, voice was a particular love-object. In fact, Barthes openly admits that he had "a lover's relation to Panzéra's voice: not to his raw, physical voice, but to *his voice as it passes over language*, our French language, like desire … " (Barthes [1977] 1991, 280; emphasis mine). Barthes uses phallic metaphors in describing Panzéra's voice, which "was always *secured*, animated by a quasi-metallic strength of desire: it is a 'raised' voice—*aufgeregt* (a Schumannian word)—or even better: an erected voice—a voice which gets an erection" (Barthes [1977] 1991, 283). Despite these erotically loaded designations, as a person, Panzéra was for Barthes one of his father figures (Bertolt Brecht being the other); a creative kind of figure, an artist (Barthes 1976; Gil 2012, 119–20).[8]

But since his late teens, Barthes indeed was involved in homosexual love affairs, and later in his adult life his homosexuality was an open secret among his friends and even among his students. Biographies (for instance Gil 2012; Samoyault 2017) based on Barthes's unpublished personal papers and letters reveal Barthes's sexual orientation and habits without a doubt.[9] During his lifetime, Barthes hid his sexual orientation from the public and, especially, from his mother (Gil 2012, 147; Samoyault 2017, 90–95). When Barthes wrote about his singing lessons with Panzéra, he left unmentioned that he had "a close friend," Michel Delacroix, to share his passion for voice and singing (Barthes [1977] 1991; see Gil 2012, 122); however, in a radio interview Barthes disclosed Delacroix's name and characterized him as a very dear friend (Barthes 1976, 23′45"). Due to this omission from his published texts, the homoerotic dimension of Barthes's vocal passion has remained concealed and unaccounted for. Barthes and Delacroix particularly admired two singers: Charles Panzéra and Pierre Bernac (1899–1979); they were seduced by their way of singing French *mélodies* to the extent that they wanted to learn to sing themselves. They wrote to Panzéra in 1940, asking his recommendations for a vocal coach. Panzéra offered to teach them for free (Barthes 1976; Calvet 1995, 42; Gil 2012, 119; Stafford 2015, 30–31; Samoyault 2017, 104). Unfortunately, in early 1941 the singing lessons took a dramatic turn when Delacroix was hospitalized after contracting tuberculosis. Barthes continued his lessons for about two years, until he, too, was hospitalized to cure his tuberculosis in January 1942. Barthes survived, but his friend did not. Delacroix's death in October 1942 devastated Barthes, who at that time was still hospitalized elsewhere (Calvet 1995, 42–44, 53; Gil 2012, 122–23, 148; Samoyault 2017, 104, 112–14). A love affair with singing turned into a horrible loss, not only of Barthes's personal relationship, but also of his health.

Barthes's second attempt to have singing lessons in 1956 was still clouded by his lung problems, and he was concerned about how his insufficient respiration might have affected his voice (Barthes 2015, 119). After only four months of tuition he had to abandon singing.

In both cases, the culprit was the lungs. In this context, it becomes understandable that Barthes mistrusts breathing—which takes place in the lungs—as the foundation of vocal art (Barthes [1972] 1991, 271). Here, Barthes clearly differs from Panzéra's authority because his singing manual begins with a chapter on breathing. Like many of his colleagues, Panzéra (1945, 15–24) considers air as a singers' prime material, and breathing as essential not only to singing but to human existence and welfare in general. But for Barthes, lungs and breathing have no access to the topography of the body that affords *jouissance*, the geno-song, and consequently they are excluded from "the grain of the voice." Symptomatically, Barthes deploys an erotic metaphor in his dismissal: "[t]he lung, a stupid organ (limpness of cats [le mou des chats]!), swells but does not become erect …" ([1972] 1991, 271 modified with [1972] 1992a, 240).

In his "Listening," written a couple of years later with Roland Havas,[10] Barthes explicitly excludes respiration from "the grain of the voice":

> The singing voice, that very specific space in which a tongue encounters a voice and permits those who know how to listen to it to hear… its "grain"—the singing voice is not the *breath* but indeed that materiality of the body emerging from the throat, a site where the phonic material hardens and decouples.
>
> *(Barthes [1976] 1991, 255, emphasis mine; translation slightly modified according to the French original; Barthes [1976] 1992a, 226)*

When listening (erotically) to Panzéra, Barthes did not hear him "*breathe*, but only *shape* the phrase," whereas in Fischer-Dieskau's performances he seems to "only hear the lungs, never the tongue, the glottis, the teeth, the sinuses," and disregards Fischer-Dieskau's particular way of using breathing sounds for expressive purposes, as upheavals of passion (Barthes [1972] 1991, 271). Fischer-Dieskau's style gives the lungs audibility beneath the language which Barthes heard as an intervention and a disturbance, as an antonym of the lubricated.

Barthes's main task in "The Grain of the Voice" was to explore how to change the musical object itself by shifting its point of contact to language in such a way that adjectives would be dismissed (Barthes [1972] 1991, 269). In French grammar, the adjective contributes in sustaining the binary opposition masculine vs. feminine (Barthes 1970, 900–07), whereas *jouissance* is atopical (*atopique*) and asocial (Barthes [1981] 1985, 176). For Barthes, adjectives represent stereotypes opening a passage to ideology (Barthes [1981] 1985, 174), which resides in the heart of the bourgeois vocal art, with its conception of art as an "additive series of accumulated … details" (Barthes [1957] 2013, 191). The listener who recognizes how these detailed meanings are voiced continuously becomes more confirmed as a (bourgeois) subject of pleasure. For Barthes, the loss of a bourgeois subject is politically and ideologically favored because it offers an escape from established cultural values. A new space is possible only by shifting things (*déplacer des choses*) in the matter of (bourgeois) language, creating a new typology of language through changes in its rhetoric, syntax, and its values for words (*ses valeurs de mots*; Barthes [1981] 1985, 162). This, in fact, he tried later to achieve in "Rasch" (Barthes [1975] 1991, 299–312), which focuses on Schumann's *Kreisleriana*. Barthes attempted to construct a relationship between music and language without adjectives. Although adjectives are banished from "Rasch," the essay is in fact full of descriptions, where Barthes portrays Schumann's body but uses only verbs: Schumann's body speaks, weaves, stretches out, rises, declares, strikes, beats, dances, etc. These corporeal designations, seasoned with several fragmentary music examples, suggest a musical discourse that is in a flow of becoming. Here Barthes approaches Kristeva's semanalysis and what he calls the "second semiology, that of

body in a state of music" ([1975] 1991, 312). Through this corporeally attuned analysis Barthes aims at reaching music's *signifiance* (geno-level) without the interference of the first semiology (the scales, notes, chords and tones that form the pheno-level). Accordingly, Barthes does not refer in "Rasch" to "the grain" or to "the grain of the voice"; since there is no overlap between the semiology of signification and that of *signifiance*, "the grain" would have been situated somewhere in the nebulous, granular borderline region between them.

Notes

1 "Le grain de la voix" was at first published in the November issue (1972) of the *Musique en jeu*, which collected essays on psychoanalysis and music. It has afterwards appeared in several other contexts and translations. The ones used here, in the order of relevance, are Barthes 1991, 267–77, 1992a, 236–45, 1977, 179–89.

2 "The Grain of the Voice" refers to Barthes's article; "the grain of the voice" refers to the concept.

3 Square brackets refer to the original French texts. In several cases, when quoting Barthes's essays translated into English it has been indispensable to consult also the original text and modify the translation accordingly. Only added emphases in the quotations have been indicated.

4 Barthes and Kristeva knew each other well. In the late 1960s Kristeva, an aspiring doctoral student, assisted in several of Barthes's seminars. Their collaboration included membership in the inner circle of the avant-garde publication *Tel Quel* (Kauppi, 1994, 122; 132–34). In addition, Barthes was a close friend to Philippe Sollers, Kristeva's husband since 1967 (Sollers 2015; Samoyault 2017, 346–54).

5 Barthes makes here a reference to Gérard Souzay's rendition of Faure's *mélodie*,"Tristesse." In his posthumously published *Mourning Diary* begun soon after the death of his beloved mother, Barthes comes back to his previous evaluation from a different perspective: "[Stupid]: listening to Souzay* sing: 'My heart is full of terrible sadness [tristesse affreuse],' I burst into tears. *whom I used to make fun of." (Barthes [2009] 2012, 47).

6 "[D]ans un texte, *les sons du langage sont plus que des phonèmes*. Tout en conservant la fonction phonématique pour assurer la fonction symbolique—commutative—du langage, les phonèmes reprennent ce que les sont ont perdu en devenant sons d'une langue donnée: ils reprennent la topographie du corps qui s'y reproduit; de même qu'ils prolongent, au-delà des limites supportées par l'usage normatif du langage et par la mémoire 'normale', les possibilités virtuelles illimitées des constituants linguistiques (ici: phonémiques) de s'appliquer pour générer des ensembles (ici: morphophonémiques)."

7 Charles Panzéra: *Singers to Remember. Fauré Songs*. Dutton laboratories, CDBP 9749. Piano: Magdeleine Panzéra-Baillot.
Gérard Souzay: *Gabriel Fauré—Intégrale des Mélodies*. EMI Classics L'esprit français CMS7640792. Piano: Dalton Baldwin.

8 His own father, Louis Barthes (1883–1916), had been killed in World War I by Germans, when Roland had been less than one year old. He was raised by his mother Henrietta Barthes (1893–1977) with whom he also shared a flat till her death. (On Barthes's family, see for instance Samoyault 2017, 27–47.) In World War II Barthes himself experienced strictures of the German military discipline with strongly rolling/r/sounds in the home front through the German occupation of France and the reign of the Vichy government.

9 In his posthumous essay "Evenings in Paris," Barthes describes how he, the autobiographical protagonist, wanders about Parisian streets and cafeterias looking for (paid) male sexual partners (Barthes [1979] 1992b, 59–63).

10 Barthes wrote this essay with his student Roland Havas, while nourishing passionate feelings towards him. Their unhappy affair induced Barthes to write his best-seller *A Lover's Discourse: Fragments* ([1977] 2010a). See, for instance, Samoyault 2017, 448–55.

7

BRITTEN AND STRAVINSKY'S NEOCLASSICAL OPERAS

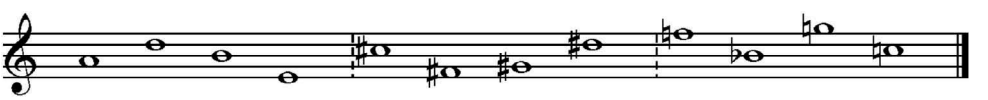
Signs, signification, and subjectivity

Nicholas P. McKay

Introduction

In the decade immediately following the end of World War II, Igor Stravinsky (1882–1971) and Benjamin Britten (1913–1976) laid two foundations of English-language neoclassic opera: *The Rake's Progress* (1951—hereafter *The Rake*) and *The Turn of the Screw* (1954—hereafter *The Screw*). Employing the scaled-down resources of a classical-sized orchestra and a chamber ensemble, respectively (both a neoclassic virtue and a post-war economic necessity), the works shared other notable commonalities: both were premiered at La Fenice in Venice; both had strong Anglo-American creative musical and literary pedigrees; both are quintessentially "English" tales about the corruption of innocence viewed against a countryside-city polemic; and both look back from a modern perspective to earlier times. *The Rake*—based on Hogarth's titular series of paintings—juxtaposes the corrupt vices of eighteenth-century London with the innocent bucolic countryside. *The Screw*, on the other hand, offsets a guardian's absence to isolate "innocent" children in a mid-nineteenth-century pastoral country setting. While both employ comic elements, they are fundamentally dark tragedies with demonic undertones.

Apart from wearing intertextual neoclassic signifiers on their sleeves, the two operas have in common a compositional presentation of dialogized genre types (see McKay 2014b).[1] *The Rake*—a work Stravinsky said is "deeply involved in *Così*" (Stravinsky and Craft 2002, 226), with a strong narrative relation to *Don Giovanni*—is stylized on an eighteenth-century Mozart opera buffa. *The Screw*, a work replete with references to topical types and styles (see Ratner's taxonomies [1980, 1991]), employs an eighteenth-century theme-and-variation form throughout, interlaced with a contrapuntal dodecaphonic "Screw theme" (Example 7.1).



Example 7.1 Britten, the Screw theme

The musical signification of the Screw theme operates by its repetitive pattern, cycling through all 12 tones in three tetrachords of alternating perfect 4ths and 5ths and by its leitmotivic associations, both as—to use Agawu's terms (1991)—a "structuralist," "introversive," "pure" sign, charting the tonal structure of each scene and variation, and as an intratextual, "semantic," "extroversive," "referential" sign of ever-tightening tension and corruption. Notably in its sinister, "dysphoric" purport (Monelle 2000, 62–63), it dialogizes what would otherwise be prototypically "euphoric" topical references (for example, church bells disturbingly peeling the notes of the Screw theme in place of their more natural tunings [Act 2, Variation IX] and Miles's "Mozartiana" salon "performance" supernaturally unfolding the Screw theme's contours alongside its neoclassic tonality [Act 2, Scene VI]).[2] While neither *The Rake* nor *The Screw* could be said to genuinely interanimate serial and tonal processes (i.e., mutually interact with, or influence, one another), what Hyde refers to in *The Rake* as "anachronistic impulses" of "dialectical imitation" are palpable in both works in their dialogical exchange between twentieth-century tonal harmony (both neoclassic and serial) and eighteenth-century genres (Hyde 1996, 220–22).

These two operas, then, are veritable compendiums of semiotic processes of music signification, typically associated with eighteenth- and nineteenth-century music, through which both composers construct extroversive and introversive layers of meaning. Typical of extroversive semiosis are countless examples of referential musical topics (Monelle 2006; McKay 2007; Mirka 2014a), dialogized language styles (McKay 2014b), and intertextuality (Klein 2005; Wiebe 2009; McKay 2014a). Typical of introversive semiosis are coded examples of more private idiolects ranging from syntactic, textural, orchestrational, and leitmotivic associations that construct complex hermeneutic webs of multiple subjectivities (Hindley 1990) and gender identities (Brett and Haggerty 2006). In a close reading of two excerpts from these works, this essay unpacks some of these networks of signification, articulating the similarities and differences between Britten and Stravinsky's semiotic strategies in these mid-century "English" neoclassic operas.

The Turn of the Screw

In Act 2, starting in Variation XIII through Scene 6 to the end of Variation XIV, Britten offers an intriguing case study in topical and intertextual references and the multiple subjectivities through which they unfold. Reading the manner and modes of signification in this extract builds on theories of semiotic neoclassical distortion of musical signs that I have previously developed (McKay 2010, 2012, 2014b). Here, I add to my semiotic model of distorted linguistic-syntactic and language-style signs (2010, 569–73), a third dimension of competing and conflicting subjectivities through which those signs are deployed and interpreted. Allied to these subjectivities, these three sections foreground a perceptual ambiguity in their balance of diegetic ("narrated") and non-diegetic ("narrating") music; notwithstanding the many critiques and limitations of those polemical concepts popular in much film music analysis (for example, Kassabian 2001, 43–47; Hagen 1971, 190).

Miles—the precocious, endearing, and possibly disturbed young boy left under the sole charge of a new Governess, intent on protecting him and his little sister, Flora, from the corrupting possession of the ghosts of former staff, Quint and Miss Jessel—beguiles and diverts the attention of the housekeeper and the Governess with a charming salon piano performance (Variation XIII). "O what a clever boy; why, he must have practised very hard," they whisper in contented counterpoint to Miles's opening eighteenth-century piano sonata pastiche and increasingly virtuosic playing (Scene 6). Miles's neoclassical divertissement, however, disguises

an elaborate network of troubling intra- and inter-textual allusions to themes, leitmotifs, and even nursery songs previously exposed in the opera—including the all-pervasive sinister, dodecaphonic Screw theme, unfolded in the melodic line across the opening 12 measures of Variation XIII and again in Scene 6, now transposed to start on C.

Following two opening soft arpeggiating flourishes, as Miles settles at the keyboard, the opening of his divertissement (rehearsal 84) is not too dissimilar from Stravinsky's much earlier neoclassic Piano Sonata (McKay 2010, 572). The passage is replete with stylistic references to eighteenth-century musical topics, principally a troping of *galant* and learned topics (Hatten 2004, 68), the latter by virtue of the linear contrapuntal unfolding of the Screw theme. The principal theme's over-coded use of classical syntactic archetypes (Alberti bass accompaniment and excessive ornamental melodic turns) belies its *neo*classicism in parodic "quantitative exaggeration" (Sheinberg 2000, 120): figuration so mundanely repetitive as to resemble a banal technical fingering exercise more than an engaging sonata exposition. Conventional melody operates here more as an "absent signifier" (i.e., something that is conspicuous by its absence), replaced by delicate, but ultimately hollow, legato fourths which might otherwise evoke "aria style" but for their excessively labored melodic elaboration of turn figuration.

Indeed, these fourths spell out a double intra- and inter-textual reference to the notion of "turn." Intra-textually, the notes follow the serial unfolding of the all-pervasive Screw theme, "turning" ever tighter as the drama intensifies (from the opening C to the final E♭ on the highest note one measure before the subsidiary theme at rehearsal 85); inter-textually, the notes themselves are embellished with melodic, decorative eighteenth-century melodic-elaborative turns. Miles's "clever" improvisation thus conflates tonal, as well as topical, references. His neoclassic faux eighteenth-century harmony (itself a dialogized tonal style conflating eighteenth-century diatonicism with twentieth-century "wrong note," cross-matched harmony) is dialogized with faux twentieth-century serialism. Like the "diatonicism," the "serialism" is "faux" because Britten merely cycles through all 12 chromatic pitches, rather like a mechanical passacaglia. It lacks any genuinely organic hallmarks associated with the Second Viennese School, and some notes are presented out of strict serial sequence as retrograde subsets interposed on the unfolding of the rows—another very Stravinskian technique.

Four ensuing bars of quasi *Sturm und Drang* scalar passagework, punctuated by staccato chordal accents, segues the principal theme to a march-like subsidiary theme (rehearsal 85). The increasingly sharp- and flat-inflected scales evoke the supernatural whole-tone and pentatonic sound-worlds, respectively, of Miss Jessel and Quint. Here, Britten again deploys a common intertextual tonal-style signification device familiar to Stravinsky: Glinka's "Ruslanesque tradition" (Taruskin 1996, 937), in which natural characters are signified through diatonic tonality and supernatural ones through overtly chromatic tonal stylization. The subsidiary theme itself presents a fanfare topic (bass accompaniment in C) with a subdued march-like, French overture style (dotted rhythm, repeated notes, triumphal style, despite its *piano* dynamic) superimposed above in E♭. The legato melody, appoggiatura gestures, and simple pedal point arpeggio accompaniment also suggest an aria-style topic.

Syntactically, *neo*classicism is signified in the subsidiary theme in the bi-tonal split: an E♭-melody versus a C-major accompaniment. Stylistically, the euphoric topical references become increasingly dysphoric, not only by virtue of the Screw theme antics, but also by an intra-textual leitmotivic reference to the haunting "Malo" theme (first sung by Miles at rehearsal 51 at the end of Act 1, Scene 6 Latin lesson), signifying a troubling and exotic otherness associated with Quint, to whom he seems hypnotically drawn. This plethora of

topical and leitmotivic references implies that Miles is performing/improvising what could have been a narrative overture built on the principal themes of the opera as much as he is performing an absolute piano sonata. If the main theme was cast in the evocative, lyrical style of Satz (a closed tone-pattern), the subsidiary one adopts a more Beethovenian conflation of Satz and Gang (an open, passage-like tone-pattern) as it progresses and evolves from one emotional state to another, becoming increasingly dark within the same subject (see Monelle 2000, 100–14] for a discussion of Satz and Gang, based on A. B. Marx's two types of music's temporalities). As the opening Haydn- and Mozart-styled sensibility gives way to this more Beethovenian world of the subsidiary theme at rehearsal 85, Miles's performance assumes a more nineteenth-century Romantic sense of melancholy and virtuosity (notably signified in the open octave textures in both hands) as the corrupting influences of the Screw and Malo themes take hold. Mellers aptly captures the musical "language styles" at play in this moment:

> The impact of Quint and Miss Jessel on Flora and Miles is comparable with the daemonic Beethoven's assault on an eighteenth-century drawing-room. There are more things in heaven and earth, not to mention hell, than are dreamed of in the governess's philosophy, or in Mrs. Grose's lack of one.
>
> *(Mellers 1984, 145)*

As the characteristic musical topoi and personified composers' voices of Miles's "innocent" eighteenth-century Mozart parody become increasingly more nineteenth-century Beethovenian, its semiotic shift serves as a musical "index" (Peirce 1931, 2.274–302; 2.305; 1955, 107–11) of "corruption." Yet, as Hindley argues, the sense and value of "corruption" may be in the eye of the beholder: what the Governess and Mrs. Grose perceive as a threat to their morality, Miles—influenced by Quint—sees as an enticing exotic alternative way of life (1990, 10–12). Hindley suggests that a quotation from Yeats' *The Second Coming*, "The ceremony of innocence is drowned" (referenced in *The Screw* by the Ghosts in their Act 2 colloquy and soliloquy) serves as a metaphor, not for the negative corruption of childhood innocence into a darker adult world, but for a positive emancipation from, and transcendence of, an inhibiting, claustrophobic morality to which one previously may have "innocently" (naively and unquestioningly) adhered (1990, 5–7).

Compounding the semiotic-hermeneutic implications of the syntax, style, and subjectivities of Miles's piano performance is its intriguing diegetic versus non-diegetic status: at times an overt, *narrated* performance commented upon by the Governess and Mrs. Grose; at others, an accompaniment verging on a *narrating* piano vamp from the silent movie era that amplifies every twist and turn of the action as panic sets in at Flora's disappearance. This shifting nature of the narrative function of Miles's performance is all the more remarkable for its preservation of the musical-dramatic double edge to the narrative. This ambiguity is enhanced from Henry James's novella, in which every action and sound can be interpreted as if the ghosts are either real or merely the product of the Governess's over-active imagination.

The fantasia-like opening C-major arpeggio flourishes of Variation XIII immediately bring the narrative subjectivity of Miles's "performance" into question. It conveys a quality of the juvenile "performer" needing to warm up with some arpeggio flourishes before commencing a performance *and* a sense of a freely extemporizing "composer," as if Miles were improvising a creative composition rather than performing from a finished score—parodying the Governess's and Mrs. Grose's perspective that "he must have practised very

hard." Both signifying codes are simultaneously perceptually cued. Like the veiled layers of the story itself, Miles's performance/improvisation posits ambiguity and demands interpretation from the diegetic performer (Miles) and audience (the Governess and Mrs. Grose) and the non-diegetic performer (the ensemble pianist in the orchestra pit) and the audience (the listeners to the opera).

Performers and audiences are thus, already from the outset, in dialogized, ambiguous, and contradictory subjectivities in this scene. Miles is both the dutiful juvenile performer and the more disturbing precocious improvising musical narrator. His two authority figures are the audience of a practiced performance, seemingly blind or deaf to the alternative subjectivity at play in his "performance," and a subjectivity for which the perceptual cues are progressively amplified as the performance continues. Only we (the non-diegetic audience) seem sensitized to the potentially sinister (in the context of the story) improvisatory cues. The diegetic audience remains oblivious until the moment they realize Flora has slipped away, and, in panic, the Governess retrospectively reinterprets Miles's performance as a deliberately construed distraction. When she acknowledges that "he's found the most divine little way to keep me quiet while she [Flora] went," she confirms that she was literally lost in the "evocative, lyrical time" of Miles's beguiling performance/improvisation, concealing the "progressive" time toward the "narrative" development of Flora leaving the scene (Monelle 2000, 84–114).

The opening flourishes, far from inconsequential, thus set up an "active composer" versus a "passive performer" ambiguity that itself mirrors the active-passive ambiguity of Miles's role in the hauntings as perceived by the Governess. To use Bakhtin's terminology, it "double-voices" the passage and raises interpretative questions about the conflicting subjectivities at play (see Bakhtin, [1929] 1984, [1935] 1981). Moreover, it challenges or blurs the conventional distinction between diegetic and non-diegetic music: Miles begins by diverting the Governess and Mrs. Grose with a salon piano performance/practice; its diegesis is confirmed as the two acknowledge how hard he must have practiced. Soon it morphs into something that ratchets up the dramatic tension, as Miles's role has changed from one of merely performing/practicing to one of live improvising to underscore the horror filling the Governess and Mrs. Grose at the realization that Flora has vanished to be with Miss Jessel. Although Miles ostensibly continues to perform the piano music within the narrative of the opera, the opening diegetic illusion (the control, poise, and galant-learned style topical interplay of the solo salon sonata world, performed by a young boy), along with Flora, soon vanishes from the scene, giving way to the romantic piano concerto of the concert hall and the angst-ridden tension of film music. The decidedly non-diegetic orchestral forces battle with and amplify the virtuoso fistful piano chords, dramatic tremolo effects, and increasingly "irrational" harmonies (Brown 1994, 148–74). While this process happens diachronically as Variation XII–Scene 6–Variation XIV sections progress, it also occurs synchronically from the outset through the kind of parodic double-voicing devices outlined above, fueling the performer/improviser ambiguity. This hybrid evocative and narrative signifying function of Miles's piano "performance" resonates well with Hagen's concept of "source scoring" (1971, 190); this kind of music falls between and blurs the distinction of what Kassabian calls "source music" (diegetic music) and "dramatic scoring" (non-diegetic music) (2001, 43–47).

Scene 6 brings this ambiguity into sharp focus. The final two measures of the preceding variation appear to trigger a recapitulation of the principal theme, but the scene opens by diverting the turn figurations through sixteenth-note alternations of the Screw theme to fixate on a dominant inverted pedal on G in the upper register of the piano (over the ever-constant

Alberti-bass figuration alternation of I^6 and "V^7"). The G is then rhythmically, texturally, scalarly overstated through empty passagework in another example of parodic quantitative exaggeration, before a much closer repetition of the subsidiary theme at rehearsal 86 follows. That theme subtly shifts, however, around the structuring contours of the Screw theme compounding the sense that in the scene, Miles is freely improvising to a greater extent than we heard in the preceding variation. Two measures before rehearsal 87, as the Governess and Mrs. Grose whisper about the letter they will send to the children's guardian, Miles suspends his "performance" as if eavesdropping on their conversation before resuming in earnest when cued to do so by the Governess.

Completing his first performance at rehearsal 89, Miles turns to another composition in his book, which he commences at rehearsal 90. Again, this has the feel of a technical exercise, but doubles as a diegetic accompaniment for Mrs. Grose's and Flora's "Cat's Cradle" duet (while all the time structuring itself around the Screw theme and continuing to allude to the Malo theme). As Mrs. Grose tires (at reh. 93) and Miles begins "showing off at the piano," Flora attempts to sing her sinister "Go to sleep" lullaby at rehearsal 95 (an intra-textural reference to her previous attempts to sing her doll to sleep) to Quint's E♭-B♭-D♭ chord/motif amplified by Miles in "Quint's" high register of the piano over Miss Jessel's F♯ pedal. At this point, Miles's use of two powerfully supernatural leitmotifs underscoring Flora's incantation suggests his piano "performance" has moved full circle to the dramatic scoring end of the source scoring spectrum. The Governess, realizing what she believes to be happening (as Flora disappears), calls out the children's names and attempts to wake Mrs. Grose as Miles's music moves clearly into the world of improvised piano vamping, even to that hallmark of the silent movie pianist era: *fortissimo* tremolo chords for heightened drama.

The trajectory of Miles's performance culminates in something akin to a twentieth-century Hitchcock-Herrmannesque angst-ridden frenzy of "irrational" harmony (Brown 1994, 148–74) in Variation XIV. The irrationality itself occurs on two perceptual levels. Syntactically, Britten employs the standard neoclassic gambit of juxtaposing tonal block chords in the right-hand with incongruous bass notes alien to the tonal triad (Andriessen and Schönberger 1989, 55–61); the bass notes here being derived from the passacaglia-like pedal notes of the unfolding Screw theme on C. Intra-textually, the variation represents a triumphant textural inversion of the Act 2, Scene 1 Ghosts' duet at rehearsal 20, in which the Ghosts sing a similarly-paced unison unfolding of the Screw theme (on A♭) over repeated block chords. These references to musical styles (which themselves unfold a diachronic narrative journey through music history: Rococo/Classical, Romantic, Post-Tonal) are further semiotically compounded by references to genres as Miles's controlled and graceful opening salon piece dissolves from a delicate eighteenth-century sensibility salon style into the concert-hall sound-world of a piano concerto warhorse, replete with fistfuls of chords battling against tutti orchestral interjections.

These subjective dialogizations exemplify what Cone refers to as multiple personae operating within the work (Cone 1974, 66). In Miles's piano playing, the introversive tonal-serial trope is mirrored on the extroversive level of musical topics: the trope of the diametrically opposed *galant* style and learned style contrapuntal weaving of the Screw theme. This trope, in turn, effects the perceived subjectivity of the musical moment. Are we hearing Miles offering a live extemporization on a theme or a performance of a pre-composed piano sonata in *galant* style? This is a question revolving around dialogization at the level of genre. Do we hear the pianist (distinct from the character of Miles-as-pianist) as an improvising live narrator of non-diegetic (sinister, leitmotif-inflected) music, or as

	(Linguistic) Syntax	(Language) Style	(Hermeneutic) Subjectivity
Minutia	"Wrong note" Alberti bass harmony: I^6 vs. "Surrogate stimuli" for V^7 (B to F tritone over a suspended E pedal)	Melodic turn motif vs. Over-coding through "quantitative exaggeration"	Miles entertains Governess and Mrs. Grose vs. Miles "hypnotises" Governess and Mrs.Grose
Model	Cross-matching of melody and harmony: a. Rehearsal 84: open 4ths of Screw theme ("absent signifier" for melody) and b.Rehearsal 85: open octaves variant of Malo theme in unrelated/bichordal alignment to harmonic accompaniment	18th-century classical gallant (sensibility style) Troped with 17th-century learned style contrapuntal unfolding of Screw theme	Model sonata or technical exercise (performance) vs. Improvisation; commentary on the narrative action (à la the cinema pianist)
Matrix	18th-century diatonicism vs. 20th-century neoclassical pandiatonicism and 20th-century dodecaphonic serialism	18th-century sonata style Satz and Gang vs. 17th-century contrapuntal passacaglia style and 20th-century contrapuntal serial style	Diegetic music; Evocative time; Innocence; "Clever boy"; "Practiced" vs. Non-diegetic music; "Dramatic scoring"; Narrative time corruption; "Manipulating boy" Live-extemporising

Figure 7.1 Syntactic, stylistic, subjectivity dialogized signification in *The Screw*, Variations XIII and XIV

a performer of pre-composed diegetic, supposedly "absolute," non-programmatic eighteenth-century piano sonata?

Figure 7.1 summarizes the interpretative dialogization in play during this scene using an extended tripartite model that I have previously employed for charting dialogized discourse in Stravinsky's neoclassic music (McKay 2014b, 181–82). The model adapts Eleanor Rosch's (1976) tripartite linguistic model of discourse, using the musical terms "matrix," "model," and "minutia."[3] Here I expand my earlier readings of Stravinsky's music (McKay 2010, 570), adding to the two domains of (introversive) linguistic syntax and (extroversive) language styles the third domain of *subjectivities at play*.

The Rake's Progress

Neoclassic syntax, style, and subjectivity operate in Stravinsky's *The Rake's Progress* in similar yet subtly different ways. Accounts of the work's extensive intertextuality abound (Hyde 1996; Wiebe 2009; McKay 2017) but, as with *The Screw*, less attention has been focused on issues of subjectivity that particularly arise in moments of musical diegesis. Tom Rakewell's

diegetic moment, equivalent to Miles's salon piano performance, comes in his Act 1, Scene 2 cavatina, "Love too frequently betrayed" (reh. 151), a lament prefiguring his own imminent betrayal of his betrothed. Set in London, the scene is framed by the contrasting pastoral setting of Scenes 1 and 3 in the country-house garden of Truelove (the father of Tom's "true love" Anne). *The Rake* thus reverses the geographic "loss of innocence" polemic expressed in *The Screw*: here the city of London is the backdrop for Tom's corruption, the pastoral country house—and by extension Anne's love for Tom—his potential savior. (In *The Screw*, the country house is the scene of the children's corruption of innocence while their Guardian in London is their potential, albeit reluctant, savior.)

The dramatic development of Act 1 is concise. Scene 1 presents Tom and Anne's love for one another before cueing the entrance of the Devil, Nick Shadow, who entices Tom to the city to claim his fortune. Scene 2 focuses on a corrupted Tom in a London brothel. Scene 3 sees Anne—much like the Governess in *The Screw*—agonize over whether an intervention will prevent Tom's corruption. Indeed, the dramatic parallel is striking in Anne's recitative (reh. 190)—"Tom is weak, and needs the comfort of a helping hand … O God, protect dear Tom … and strengthen my resolve"—seguing into her show-stopping Cabaletta, "I go, I go to him. Love cannot falter" (reh. 193).

Topical signifiers chart the stylistic way through Scene 1: the "ritiriton" (Monelle 2006, 166–67) call to attention rhythmic brass fanfare of the opening Prelude: pastoral pedal points and repeated bird-song fragments (reh. 4) in the lovers' duet; Tom's *buffa*-styled patter song (reh. 28); and simple folk-styled aria (reh. 31). Nick Shadow's devilish arpeggio cembalo entrance (reh. 47) even proffers an intertextual link with the textural flourish of Quint's ghostly celesta chord calling card (see Act I, Scene IV, rehearsal 26 and Scene VIII of *The Screw*): their relatively marked tonality and timbre offer neoclassic nods to the supernatural topic of *ombra* (McClelland 2014, 283). It is in Scene 2, however, where the music signification is more subtly intriguing, centered around Tom's song and the choruses' responses to it.

The diegetic pretense of Tom's cavatina is confirmed both by Shadow's introduction of Tom to the "Roaring Boys and Whores" assembled in the brothel ("it is my privilege to present to you a stranger to our rites who, following our custom, begs leave to sing you a song in earnest of his desire to be initiated" [reh. 150]) and by the chorus of the whores response ("How sad a song" [reh. 160]). The cavatina makes topical reference to aria style, despite being dialogized by Stravinsky's usual neoclassic twists. The occasional wide leaps in the melodic line result in some angular contours not prototypically associated with aria style. The characteristically simple broken-chord accompaniment is subject to textural stratification: the upper register arpeggios are rhythmically displaced off-the-beat asymmetrically by a sixteenth note (reh. 156); the middle texture proffers a curious, rapidly shimmering quintuplet thirty-second note pattern that shifts its onset around every conceivable beat of the measure through additive processes; and the bass lays a pedal point in a steady eighth-note motion (a signifier of Tom's country/folk pedigree). Also, and less typical of aria style, the minor key (albeit offset by the usual neoclassic "wrong-note" harmonies) suggests a lament, a quality underscored not only by the words Tom sings, but also by the accentuated quarter-note appoggiatura *pianto* gestures on "weeping" and "dying."

As I have argued (2010, 570–71), these kinds of Stravinskian neoclassic syntactic distortions (sign functions operating on the minutia level, as defined in Figure 7.1 above) dialogize a topical reference and its prototypical instantiation through the conflation of two language styles frequently found in Stravinsky's musical discourse: *stikhíya* ("elemental or

natural dynamism," expressed by splintered, fragmented, distorted, paratactic writing) and *kul'túra* ("civilized culture," expressed by organic, unified, balanced, hypotactic composition) (Taruskin 1996, 1678–79). These meta-language styles are inherited from Stravinsky's Russian traditions, as described by Taruskin (1996, 850). While earlier works, like *The Rite of Spring*, tend to valorize paratactic *stikhíya*, almost to the exclusion of any sense of *kul'túra*, Stravinsky's neoclassic works, like *The Rake*, tend to operate in simultaneous (synchronic) dialogized discourse between these two language styles. In such neoclassic environments, *kul'túra* is the natural home of musical topics while *stikhíya* is the home of the distorting syntactics to which Stravinsky subjects them.

If Tom's cavatina is relatively unremarkable from the perspective of its topical references—save for its dialogization of "model" level topical evocation with its "minutia" level syntactic ungrammaticalities cutting against the topical prototype—it finds its semiotic-hermeneutic interest in the trace it leaves, the response it motivates from the chorus. The chorus of whores respond intertextually through a trope of *prosopopoeia* (the personified voice of another composer and musical moment). Their "How sad a song" response (reh. 160) to Tom's cavatina foregrounds a marked intertext to Mozart's quintet "Di scrivermi ogni giorno," no. 9 from Act 1 of *Così fan tutte*. The chorus of the whores is marked by striking musical similarities, so overt as to be a deliberate parodic model: note the near-identical constant "um-pa-pa-pa" sixteenth-notes in a $\mathrm{I} - \mathrm{I}^6 - \mathrm{V}^4_3 - \mathrm{V}^7$ accompaniment over a repeating bass ostinato with a detached on-the-beat alternating melody, even though Stravinsky's more lamenting C♯ minor contrasts with Mozart's F major. In this respect, the intertext exhibits the quality of being in a relationship of musical iconic diagram (Peirce 1931, 1960, 2.274–302; also in 1955, 104–07).

Curiously, for Stravinsky—who more typically employs intertexts in ironic/parodic dialogization—this reference to *Così* is "strategically marked" (Hatten 1994, 117) by virtue of its aptness to the original dramatic situation, more than serving to make an ironic comment upon it. Mozart has Fiordiligi and Dorabella literally weeping as they sing. Stravinsky has the whores choir commenting upon "how handsomely" Tom "cries," inviting him to drown his sorrows in their arms. Mozart's quintet has three layers of subjectivity at play: the lamenting women, weeping at the prospect of their lovers leaving for war; the complicit men, deceitfully promising to write every day, knowing they are going to do no such thing; and the narrating Don Alfonso, stepping out of character in a *buffa* aside to the audience, acknowledging that "this really is too silly" as he delights in the subterfuge of his wager. Stravinsky's chorus, by contrast, has a unified voice, divided into sopranos and altos, at times in dialogical exchange:

Commenting upon Tom's song and signified by the use of the word "he" rather than "you," the subjectivity of the first three lines suggests that the women are either addressing themselves or the audience; perhaps in an aside akin to Don Alfonso's narrating role. As with the narrative function of the Greek/Attic chorus, the purpose is not just to narrate, but

Alti:	*Soprani:*
How sad a song.	But sadness charms.
How handsomely *he* cries.	
	Come, drown *your* sorrow in these arms.
Forget it in these eyes.	
Upon these lips.	

to actively comment upon the action. Here the implication seems to be that Tom's cavatina "really is too sad." Like Fiordiligi and Dorabella before him, Tom is guilty of an overreaction built on a naive understanding of "true" love that is as ridiculed by Don Alfonso as it is by Shadow and the whores. In a gender reversal of the *Così* model, the women adopt a patronizing tone of condescension toward Tom, who—like Mozart's sisters from Ferrara—is guilty of agonizing over a romantic ideal of love and fidelity that is imminently to fail at its first test. The last three lines, signified in the word "your," switch the subjectivity back to the women directly addressing Tom, inviting him to experience the pleasures of their brothel.

As Wiebe (2009, 18) notes, the analogy here is surely one of a shared deception: Tom mourns his impending betrayal of love for "some plausible desire," while in *Così*, the paired lovers contemplate their impending period of separation. In both cases, the men are complicit in their betrayals and deceptions. If there is a hint of irony in the intertext, it is perhaps one of Stravinsky subverting the gendered title of Mozart's opera into "thus do all men" (not "women," as *Così*'s title asserts), a critique that both men and women are susceptible to over-idealized notions of romantic love and fidelity.

In contrast to the initial intertextual *Così* response to Tom's cavatina by a trope of *prosopopoeia*, the ensuing response from the complete chorus of "whores and roaring boys" (reh. 163)—following Mother Goose's claiming of Tom as her prize—employs a trope of *ethopoeia* (the characteristic voice of a topical reference). Here prevails the unmarked norm of Stravinsky employing intertexts (whether through general topical reference or more specific allusion) for ironic/parodic meaning. "The sun is bright, the grass is green" chorus is styled as a pastoral siciliana (musette-like drone bass, $\frac{6}{8}$ time signature, and dotted rhythm lilt). Syntactically, the topic is "euphoric" (Monelle 2000, 62–63)—a celebration of the now-coupled Tom and Mother Goose as they ceremonially process to a bed chamber to consummate the infidelity. So euphoric is the spritely nature of this dance-like chorus that it is really better understood through the "troped topics" of a pastoral-gigue (Hatten 2004, 68–92). Semantically, however, it is "dysphoric." It subverts the topic's natural evocation of innocent love and nature (Scenes 1 and 3 framing the world of Anne Truelove) with the corrupted vices of the brothel—even if, to an extent, the low-class connotations of the topic remain apt for "whores and roaring boys."

In addition to dialogizing its euphoric countryside/folk/natural topical signification by dysphoric association with the corrupting influence and artifice of the city, this "Lanterloo" chorus—so-called after the repeated nonsense refrain, "lanterloo" and "lanterloo my lady"—again signifies through its encoded subjectivity. Akin to the Elizabethan "Hey nonny no!"—a phrase with euphemistic connotations, but no specified meaning, intended purely to impart rhythm, imply jollity, and to punctuate a song with a rousing unison choral refrain—the mere presence of the "lanterloo" refrain, combined with the chorus's processional-line game function, places this chorus firmly in the realms of diegetic music: a rousing folk-song chorus performed in celebration at the coupling of Tom and Mother Goose as they process to their bed. As with Miles's piano performance in *The Screw*, the diegetic function is brought into question, however, as the number concludes, retrospectively assuming a quality of "source scoring." Unlike Miles's performance, this is not achieved by the gradual morphing of allusive language styles and an increasingly flexible and improvisatory nature of the music. The lanterloo chorus in fact remains very much "in character" to its conclusion at rehearsal 176. Instead, it is achieved through the superimposition of Shadow's sinister non-diegetic music and comments at rehearsal 174: "Sweet dreams, my master. Dreams may lie, but dream. For when you wake, you die." This assumes a narrative function of directly

commenting upon the action and, though the final "lanterloo" refrain and instrumental accompaniment continue unabated to the end, Shadow's contrasting rhythmic language style (neutralizing the dotted rhythm lilt and adopting increasingly asymmetrical phrasing and notes of longer duration) applies something of a musical brake or suspension of time. As with the opening of the chorus of whores, the implication here is that Shadow—"raising his glass" in a toast from a distance as Tom exits the stage—is addressing not Tom, but the audience. His final phrase, again, evokes something of a *buffa*-styled, Don Alfonsoesque aside to the effect that "this really is too easy," smugly toasting his puppet-master success in manipulating events to progress the first stage of Tom's corruption.

Conclusion

Both *The Screw* and *The Rake*—archetypes of mid-twentieth-century English language neoclassic opera—present intriguing case studies in music signification and subjectivity that address semiotic nodal points of topical references, intertextual allusions, and diegetic/non-diegetic interplay. As with the essence of neoclassicism itself (a creative dialogue between the markers of classicism and of modernist distortions to which they are subjected), the dialogism between competing layers of syntax, style, subjectivity, and semantics invites and rewards a close semiotic reading of the central theme: the corrupted innocence that lies at the heart of both operas.

Notes

1 Dialogizing musical elements occur when different styles coexist within one musical utterance. The term is based on Bakhtin's idea of heteroglossia (Bakhtin, [1929] 1984), where one utterance seems to express two (or more) opposing subjective voices that do not merge in synthesis, but engage in a "dialogue" with one another. See Korsyn (1999, 55–72) for a discussion of the application of Bakhtinian dialogue to music.

2 See McKay (2007, 163) for a summary of Cumming's (2000) "semantic-structuralist," Jakobson's (1971, 125) "extroversive-introversive" and Agawu's (1991, 23) "referential-pure sign" semiotic dichotomies. See Howard (1985, 71–101) and Whittall (1999, 105–11) for the structural impact of the Screw theme.

3 Lakoff (1990, 39–57) offers a concise summary of Rosch's theory.

8

FUNDAMENTAL CONCEPTS FOR THE SEMIOTIC INTERPRETATION OF MUSICAL MEANING

A personal journey

Robert S. Hatten

Introduction

I first became acquainted with the term "semiotics" in 1976, just before returning to Indiana University to pursue a doctorate in music theory. The public library in Waco, Texas, had acquired a multi-volume set entitled *Current Trends in Linguistics*, and the 12th volume, "Linguistics and the Adjacent Arts and Sciences," provided me with an introduction to this curious term, "semiotics," along with the current "state of the art," as surveyed by Thomas A. Sebeok (1974, 211–64). Upon returning to campus later that month, I made my way to Sebeok's Research Center for Language and Semiotic Studies.[1] Sebeok gave me his copy of Jean-Jacques Nattiez's *Fondements d'une sémiologie de la musique* to review for *Semiotica*, (Hatten 1980), and my career as a music semiotician began.

Prior to beginning my doctorate, I studied piano with Charles Rosen. His book, *The Classical Style* (1972) was an important influence on my dissertation (and subsequent work). I also studied with Leo Treitler; his classes proved to be an equally strong stimulus for my research. On the reading lists were Gombrich's *Art and Illusion* (1960), Chomsky's *Syntactic Structures* (1957), and Kuhn's *The Structure of Scientific Revolution*s (1962). I initially thought that I would apply analogues of these theories to music, as modeled on linguistics, but fortunately, semiotics took the place of linguistics as the more appropriate model. And Leonard B. Meyer's first article on style in music (Meyer 1979) appeared in time for me to compare his approach, along with Rosen's, to my semiotic construal of style as competency.

Although the more general "doctrine of signs" (Sebeok 1976) was just what I needed to avoid the methodological morass of interpreting music as though it were a language, I continued to absorb basic semiotic principles as introduced for language (Saussure [1916] 2011; Trubetzkoy [1939] 1969; Hjelmslev [1943] 1953; Jakobson 1960) as well as those inspired by Peirce (Eco 1976; Shapiro 1976, 1983; Shapiro and Shapiro 1988). My goal, looking back, was far too ambitious—a working model for explaining musical expressive

meaning. After over 40 years of theorizing, I have made progress, but even after three books, my "comprehensive theory" is far from complete. I offer the following reflections on my intellectual journey because I still believe that a semiotic theory of musical style can be fruitful in grounding interpretations of musical (expressive) meaning, even in an age of postmodern relativism. Future scholars may pursue these lines, and may benefit from guiding principles that I describe below: my hope, though, is that this essay continues the pioneering work of the original "backwoodsman" (Peirce 1931, 5.488) in the field of semiotic, the American philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce.

Issues for semiotic approaches to musical meaning

One of the recurring critiques of semiotic approaches to musical meaning has been that it over-specifies expressive meaning, reducing interpretation to a simplistic decoding. Peirce never conceived of interpretation as the dualistic mapping of signifier to signified, but introduced "thirdness" to account for the interpreter. His various interpretants (a term coined by Peirce) were conceived pragmatically as going beyond a simple code mapping, typically implementing a process that he called abduction (a hypothetical inference), to reach the meaning for a given interpreter at a given time in a given context for a given purpose—and acts of interpretation might well involve multiple abductions. One of his examples I often expand upon, to introduce the complexity of semiotic interpretation, is the fictional episode in which Robinson Crusoe discovers a footprint in the sand. What series of inferences lead to his abductive conclusion, "I am not alone!"? The shape looks like a foot (iconic similarity), it is the trace of a contiguous pressure by a human's foot (indexical contiguity), and since it is not Crusoe's footprint, he can readily adduce that another human is likely to be on the island. Thus, when Crusoe realizes that he is not alone, his interpretation has gone through many stages of signification (including the additional abduction that since the tide has not had time to wash the print away, the other human is most likely still alive—although this is a "guess" that may well prove to be wrong). At this point, Crusoe has reached a "final" interpretant that adequately satisfies his needs in interpreting the "sign" of the footprint. His initial inferences (icon, index, argument as symbol) will in turn stimulate further inquiry (a search for this other human) and effort (to overcome his loneliness by establishing a bond of friendship with another person—however problematic that bond may appear to us today). The lesson from my development of Peirce's example is that even a simple sign can become a "hermeneutic window," to borrow Kramer's concepts (1990, 5–6), and a call for action.

There is an analogous process by which a listener (or performer) begins to address the "footprint" of a score—but the chain of interpretants is much more complex and subject to greater errors: we may misinterpret the notation and produce the "wrong" sounds, or play them in a way that reflects a misunderstanding of their gestural and thematic purport. Since this "trace" is intentionally produced, unlike the "unwitting" signification of the footprint, we are also compelled to interpret the plausible intentions of its creator (to the extent they may be inferred from the work). And yet, as an artifact composed within the context of a musical style, a work's potential for a stylistically warranted interpretation may lead us beyond what the composer might have thought. And there is the further problem in distinguishing between the expressive meaning implied by the score within the context (the grounding) of its presupposed style (as signifying system) and the actual emotions that given interpreters may or may not experience, whether or not they recognize the implied or expressed emotions of a musical work (see Hatten 2010).

All of this matters because it has impeded the systematic reconstruction of stylistically-grounded interpretants (especially those for expressive meaning, as opposed to basic formal or harmonic functions, for example). It should be possible, as one can produce a grammar for a language that is not written, to reconstruct not only functions but correlative meanings (at a general level) for a musical style, based on all kinds of evidence from which abductions (hypotheses) can be forwarded and debated, and for which significant intersubjective agreement can ultimately be established. For an example of the latter, even when attempting to make every inference explicit in my work on musical meaning in Beethoven, I took for granted an intersubjective agreement about one general stylistic meaning found in Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, as inscribed in the reception history of the work—its dramatic trajectory as a "Victory Symphony." But at the same time, I wanted to explore such trajectories that had not been as fully enshrined in the literature—as in the tragic-to-transcendent expressive genre of the slow movement of the "Hammerklavier" (Hatten 1994, 9–28).

The problems inherent in interpreting musical meaning, however, have not led to any consensus around a semiotic approach, or even a consistent intersubjective agreement about general meanings as opposed to more specific interpretations. Indeed, many disciplinary perspectives are dismissive of speculative and hermeneutic approaches altogether:

(1) Philosophers emphasize that expression is unique, and that semiotics is too reductive in its attempts to pin down meaning (e.g., Scruton 1983, 35). Others press the claim that music is ineffable and that language is not adequate as a metalanguage to describe music's unique kinds of meaning (Raffman 1993; Jankélévitch 2003).
(2) Musicologists emphasize the relativity of meaning—and the impossibility of ever recovering the past intentions of composers or the interpretations of listeners.[2]
(3) Ethnomusicologists go further in claiming that semiotics ignores social and cultural contexts in deference to a score-based interpretation, and that semiotics is blind to the transactional forms of musicking that (in semiotic terms) prioritize the pragmatic over the syntactic/semantic.
(4) Music theorists reject the structuralist and formalist aspects of some forms of semiotic analysis (for example, Cook 2001). Along with some poststructuralists, Lacanian-inspired theorists claim that meaning can never be controlled by the individual—indeed, that it is subject to forces beyond the individual (for example, Klein 2015).
(5) Interpreters (including performers and composers) often complain that the particular linguistic predicates semioticians may use to characterize expressive meaning are overly constraining with respect to the multiplicity of possible meanings.
(6) There is still a prejudice against program music among music scholars, stemming from nineteenth-century debates about absolute music, and reified in critical discourse from Hanslick to Schenker to Boulez. This bias extends to overtly "expressive" music (e.g., Italian opera), which is seen as less worthy of serious scholarly attention. Such a bias led Stravinsky to make the bizarre claim that music is inherently incapable of expressing anything (despite his many ballets and stage works).
(7) Finally, "scientistic" biases against speculative theorizing (semiotic or otherwise) may suggest that only rigorous empirical testing can secure any knowledge about what and how we actually hear (or process, and hence understand) music.

Indeed, from every point on the compass, semiotics can be dismissed as not "X" enough to be taken seriously—not philosophically sophisticated (simplistic binarisms), not historically

grounded, not empirically supported, not attuned to the subtleties of music's own meanings, and presumptuous in its prescriptive claims as to what music must—as opposed to might—mean. In the next section, I return to my own intellectual journey as I have attempted to meet these charges, with the hope that my provisional answers may encourage further semiotically-grounded yet hermeneutically speculative approaches to musical meaning.

From markedness to virtual subjectivity: an overview

In my music-theoretical career I have shared with visionaries such as David Lidov a quest to explain music more fully—not merely as intentionally organized structures of sound and form, but as exhibiting a flexible "semiotic" (omitting the usual pairing with "system" or "language") capable of extraordinarily wide-ranging and nuanced meanings.[3] My own approach began by conceiving of *style as competency*—as though we could reconstruct an analogue of literary grammar and poetics as the generative basis for works composed in any given slice of music history. I agree with Meyer (1979, 1989) that individual works may be understood as strategic deployments of a presupposed style, and that composers may be understood as drawing on a stable base of quasi-grammatical principles and quasi-lexical style types, manipulating them to produce creative expressions. The linguistic model was not far in the background, and indeed, Chomsky's (1957) pursuit of deep structure provided a compelling model for music-theoretical attempts to move away from naïve surface segmentations, as found not only in the distributional linguists Chomsky sought to surpass, but in the paradigmatic/syntagmatic analyses pursued by Ruwet in his early work, and by his followers, whose semiology was at first more Saussurean than Peircean.[4]

Oppositions could also be found underlying my own approach. For example, Meyer's style vs. strategy could be seen as analogous to Hjelmslev's ([1943] 1953) system vs. usage, or Chomsky's (1957) linguistic competence vs. performance. There is one kind of opposition, however, the *marked* opposition, that works in a very different way: it is not symmetrical, but instead features the productive power of *asymmetry*.[5] Markedness theory helps explain how opposition emerges as an imbalance between two terms. Consider the phenomenon with respect to Peirce's (1906) type-token distinction and my further development in Hatten (1994). Within a given type, a particular token may come to feature something of value that is not generally a feature of the overarching type. When a sufficient number of tokens appear with that distinctive feature, listeners may begin to generalize a subtype that is defined, at least in part, by its opposition to all the other tokens (of the original type) that lack the feature. The original type can then be construed as a more general "other," against which the subtype gains its more specific characterization. Hence, the subtype will take on a more specific meaning, as associated with the (unique, or foregrounded) feature that is not found in the more general type (or its other tokens). Thus, one answer to the issue of specification of meaning is found via markedness, and the advantage is that the marked term carves out its semantic niche only as precisely or narrowly as is warranted by the opposition.

For example, in the opposition between minor and major mode in the Classical style, the minor mode could best be understood as marked (with the "feature" in this case comprising not only the lowered third of the tonic, but the entire set of unique sonorities and intervals resulting from the harmonic and melodic forms of minor). As a result, the minor mode would be more narrowly specified as "tragic," as opposed to a more general "non-tragic" correlation for the major mode. According to this theory, marked members of an opposition would typically appear less often that unmarked, and indeed, minor mode works

do occur less frequently in the Classical style, and are typically recipients of marked expressive labels, like "Pathétique," "Tempest," and "Appassionata." But my use of the term "tragic" was meant as a general label (dysphoric might have been preferable) to embrace expressive regions requiring their own marked features to be further specified: from anger (fast tempo) to grief (slow tempo), or from mild melancholy to severe depression (opposing degrees of textural density and extremes of register), or from wistful longing to heavy grief (adding in the oppositional correlations of various topics and melodic figures). To specify expressive meaning more narrowly for the non-tragic side, on the other hand, one would in turn require further oppositions that could differentiate major-mode works into fields such as the pastoral, heroic, religious, and buffa (with topics playing a decisive role at the outset; see Ratner 1980; Allanbrook 1983, as well as Hatten 1994). And of course, composers could mix and match these oppositionally defined types, creating unique tropes (of which I will have more to say below).

Although initially developed by linguists, markedness is actually a general principle of all cognitive systems; as such, it is a dynamic principle that can help coordinate the systematic explanation of stylistic meaning as it interacts with style growth and change. As new features emerge, they further nuance expressive meanings that are already available in a style. Thus, markedness escapes the critique of naïve binarism often leveled against oppositions, in that it is constantly re-defining those oppositional fields that Saussure considered to be the basis of meaning, and that help us cognitively to advance beyond sensation to system.

But system is not everything. As I began to explore other kinds of meaning in my performances of Beethoven and Schubert, I soon realized I needed not only a model based on *discrete* oppositions (and discrete parameters, such as pitch), but also an *analog* model to account for music's more immediate and synthetic aspects—as "significant energetic shaping through time" (Hatten 2004, 1). And here, prior work on gesture by Lidov ([1987] 2005); later incorporated in 2005; Pierce (2007); and Cumming (2000) could be considered the "Derridean supplement" that my earlier systematic theorizing had implied but that I had yet to fully address. In the early 1990s, I began developing my own theory of gesture in close association with performance (and performance practice). And in the process of exploring a more synthetic approach, I continued to pursue several complementary syntheses: (1) musical topics—richly configured types, such as characteristic figures, genres, and styles, that are imported into new contexts (Hatten 2014, 514); (2) other established stylistic types, such as textural plenitude (Hatten 2004, 43–52), my term for the saturation of texture that can lead to a sense of thematic (and hence, expressive) fulfillment, and (3) musical tropes (Hatten 1994, 168–74)—creative syntheses that bring together, and often merge oppositional meanings, resulting in emergent meanings—interpretants that are not merely the sum of their component parts. In an essay for the *Oxford Handbook of Topic Theory* (2014), I elaborated my concept of musical troping by noting that the defining act of importing a topic is already potentially tropological, since we always interpret the import of a topic in the context of its host environment. Thus, not only oppositional topics, but the opposition between that which is imported and that which is ongoing, can serve to create an emergent meaning. Tropes remain a challenge for interpretation, however, since they do not reduce to a mere recognition of oppositions or a simplistic summing up of the potentially disparate meanings contributed by topics and various contexts. But despite their unruly nature, their interpretation is grounded in more stable stylistic correlations, and thus what one might consider to be a separate sphere of hermeneutic inquiry finds its roots in the reconstructed meanings of a musical style.

Theorizing gesture, however, also leads to a deeper consideration of temporality. I had already proposed *expressive genres* (1994, 74–90) as those distinctive trajectories of dramatic or expressive meaning that may occur in a variety of musical forms—sonata, fugue, variations. Expressive genres help explain some of the exceptions found in composers' manipulation of formal schemes—for example, the tragic to transcendent expressive genre in the slow movement of Beethoven's Piano Sonata in B♭ Major, op. 106 ("Hammerklavier"), which is in a somewhat exceptional, but nevertheless quite clear, sonata form. I had also begun to speculate on musical narrative, through the narrative agency implied by shifts in the level of discourse, and cued by such rhetorical gestures as a sudden shift in topic, or a suddenly foregrounded first inversion major triad (the "recitative" chord).[6]

But gesture also implies a gesturer: not just the performer, but the virtual agency that is implied as the source of the energy that is "in" the music. In my book on gesture I had briefly outlined some basic agential categories (internal/protagonist vs. external/antagonist, narrative agency, and performative agency), but I was prompted to go further by Monahan's helpful critique of the agential ascriptions I made in my interpretation of the first movement of Beethoven's String Quartet in A Minor, op. 132.[7] My book on virtual agency (2018) tracks the "source of the force" in virtual actants (initially unspecified), virtual human agents (with human characteristics as found in richer gestural syntheses), virtual actors (with roles in a dramatic trajectory), and virtual subjectivity (the interiorizing of drama as allegorized conflicts among "feelingful thoughts"), leading to further conjectures on narrative agency, and including the performer's agency in negotiating among virtual and actual sources. Ultimately, as Robinson (2005) has emphasized in championing the musical *persona* (Cone 1974), some kind of internal agency is presupposed if we want to consider musical emotion as expressed, and not merely represented (see Robinson and Hatten 2012). I would add that such expression is inherent in the work, not merely "pressed out" by a performer or imagined by a listener, and hence it is virtual even when it is actualized by a performer (in negotiation with her own sensibilities). A composer's staging of emotional development by an implied virtual agent or subjectivity is what impels a listener to identify with (or empathize with, or sympathize with, or simply recognize) such emotional development, typically by situating it in terms of his or her own experience (finding where such emotion would be warranted in her own life, for example). This is not unlike how one processes the emotions that issue from plays and novels, even though the situation motivating the emotion is typically more clearly specified in literature. Furthermore, it is not merely *empathy*, as caring for another, but *identification*, as virtually sharing another's experience, that marks such artistically staged emotional experiences in music, as in literature.

An example from Bach

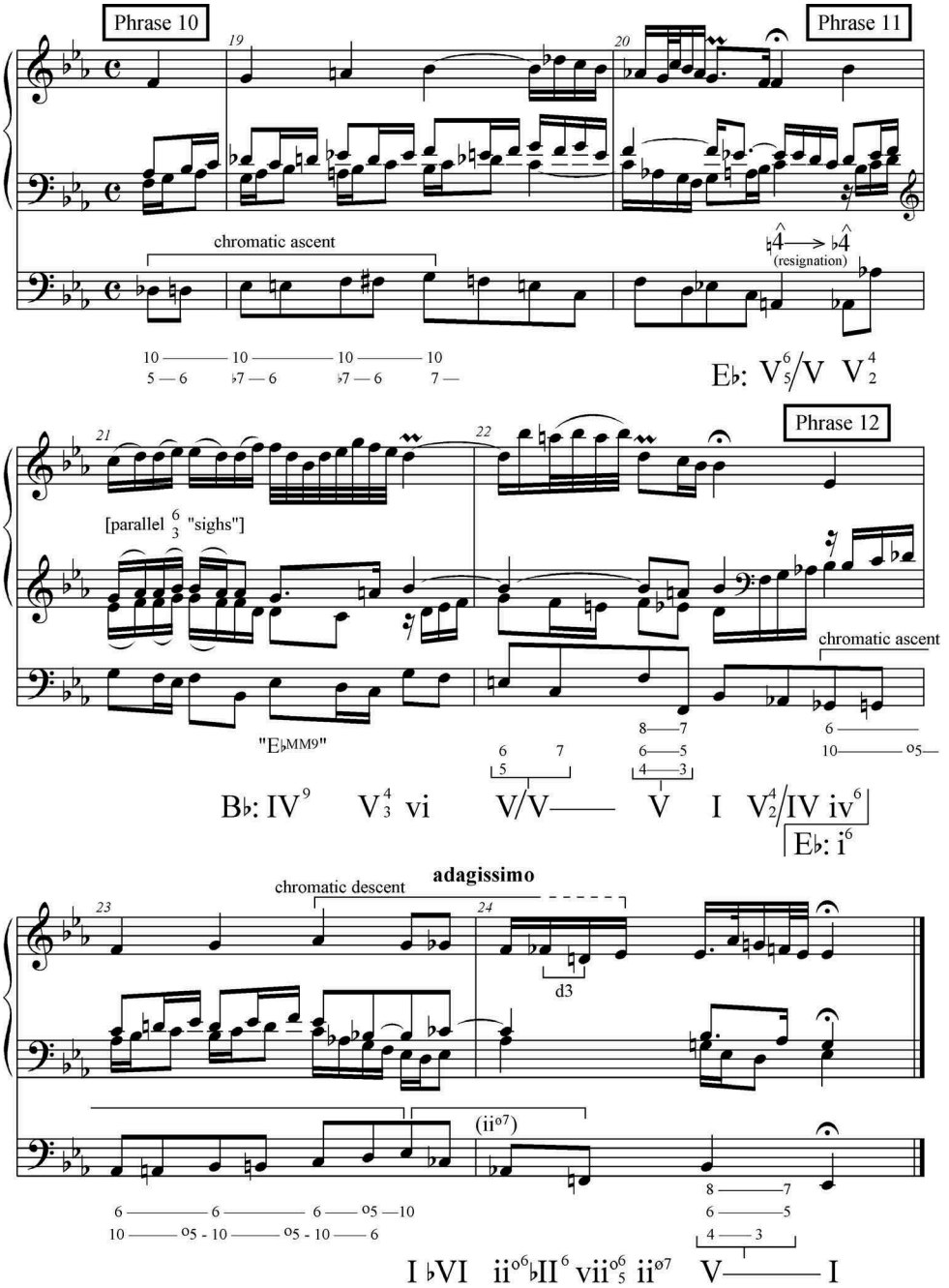
I close by considering how these various semiotic concepts support phases of interpretation with reference to Bach's memorable chorale prelude for organ, "O Mensch, bewein' dein' Sünde gross" BWV 402.[8] This powerful chorale prelude is a meditation on the Passion, but in the key of E♭ major. Since major mode is unmarked in the style, an initial interpretation would default to merely nontragic. The opening harmonic progression, however, (E♭: I–V^7/IV–IV) marks the nontragic major mode as pastoral, and the expanded chorale texture adds its religious inflection (Hatten 1994, 96; 2004, 55–67, 2014, 516). This "compatible" musical trope may be interpreted as inflecting religious reassurance (major chorale) with even greater serenity (pastoral reference to the subdominant).[9] Yet the chorale text recounts aspects of the Passion of Christ, and that suffering demands a more intense, more tragically-

inflected harmonization. Corresponding to the textual references to shedding blood (mm. 18^4–20^3) and suffering long on the Cross (mm. 22^4–24^3), we find, not the typical lament bass, but instead a strategically-marked inversion—bass lines that *ascend* chromatically and sequentially. These upward progressions, while built on the scaffolding of unmarked parallel tenths and sixths, are embellished with marked dissonances, and may suggest a virtual agent undergoing an arduous ascent, perhaps enacting (or empathetically identifying with) a *via dolorosa* (Hatten 2018).

Phrase 10 (Example 8.1) is left markedly incomplete with the fermata on V^6_5 in m. 20^3, and phrase 11 begins with a marked reversal in the bass ($\sharp\hat{4}$ is pulled down to the seventh of the V^4_2 in m. $20^{3–4}$ in a reversal that I have interpreted as resignational, even abnegational in Beethoven's Passion-like slow movement from the "Hammerklavier" (Hatten 1994, 9–28). The melody continues to climb from the B♭ that was left hanging in phrase 10 (m. $19^{3)}$, but now an untroubled diatonicism features (pastoral) parallel $^6_3$-chords in m. $21^{1–2}$, ascending with paired sighs into a higher register.[10] This troping of sighs with pastoral-diatonic $^6_3$ chords enacts a more positive anticipation of that which will transform suffering into salvation. At m. 21^3 a remarkable sonority (what today we would analyze as an E♭ MM^9) opens out with a rare arpeggiated elaboration in the melody. This moment of transformation is marked beyond any expectation (as appropriate to the Lutheran interpretation of the text: "took our sin's heavy burden") and the E♭ MM^9 gesturally releases the "weight" of the previous, impending sighs with a rare, wondrous sonority that can be tropologically interpreted as a moment of recognition that is simultaneously joyous and poignant. Through the chorale text, we may be led to associate that positive experience as the recognition of one's own salvation, but the music cannot reference that situation on its own. Instead, it enacts, through strategic play with stylistic oppositions, gestures, and topics, its own dramatic trajectory that can be "fitted" onto the prescribed text as one interacts with the chorale's message. The music, however, is also quite meaningful apart from the chorale text, and its internal drama may be associated with any number of personal experiences a listener might bring to the table.

The troping of an awareness of (and even empathy for) suffering (e.g., Bach's Lutheran congregation empathizing with Jesus's suffering on the Cross) is implied by the progression from this positive, expansive sonority (interpretable as subdominant in B♭ major) to the more somber vi chord (G minor) at m. 21^4 that undercuts a potential resolution to B♭, which was implied by the inner voice of A♮ on the last sixteenth of 21^3. But the ultimate, climactic breakthrough is yet to be achieved; it arrives with the audacious leap in the melody to a high B♭ after the downbeat of m. 22 (and not as a tonic B♭, but as the seventh of V^7/V in B♭). Ultimate affirmation is achieved with a perfect authentic cadence at m. $22^{2–3}$, but the cadence is in B♭, and even if interpreted as a transformative (even transfigurational) dominant key, it cannot substitute for ultimate resolution in the home key of E♭ major.

The B♭ in the bass in m. 22^3 fulfills the B♭ implied but denied at the end of phrase 10 (m. $20^{3–4}$). It is in turn undermined after the cadence of phrase 11, moving toward, as we might expect, a return to E♭ major, by a resignational transformation in m. 22^3 of the tonic B♭ into a V^4_2 of E♭. Note the parallelism with the previous resignational reversal, and the potential here for a pastorally-inflected coda: E♭ might initially be heard as IV of B♭ but instead the darkest rhetorical gesture occurs when V^4_2 resolves to E♭ *minor* (in first inversion) at m. 22^4, and for a moment all is cast into the depths of despair, as this tragic turn implies a near inconsolable suffering. Interpreted in terms of the Passion theme, one might construe the listener's sense of exaltation at the prospect of salvation as having been inescapably fused



Example 8.1 Bach, Chorale Prelude, BWV 402, measures 19–24

here with an awareness of the cost in human suffering. The returning chromatic ascent in the bass, transposed down a fifth, must struggle to rise from darkness to light, as the structural sixths (and tenths) occur this time on the off-beats: leading an ascent through C melodic minor (G–A♮–B♮–C) before ultimately reaching E♭ major in m. $23^{3–4}$.[11] Bach creates an analogue to the power of compassionate empathy by this extraordinary striving to pull out of despair.

The layers of virtual agency go still deeper. Having enacted a dual process of suffering and identification with suffering, Bach moves inwardly with yet another rhetorical gesture, to ♭VI on the last eighth-note of m. 23^4. This sudden jolt, marked by mixture, also marks a turn to the interiority of a virtual subjectivity that is experiencing further reflection on an extraordinary tropological fusion: interpretable in light of the text as a painful yet wondrous experiencing of the full meaning of Jesus's suffering.[12]

The melody finally provides the missing lamentation of the previously inverted lament bass, as it here descends chromatically (G–G♭–F–F♭) to the Neapolitan (F♭). The resolution of the Neapolitan F♭ is stylistically marked as a diminished third to D♮ (the typical dissonant voice-leading when resolving directly to the dominant). But this conventional voice-leading is *strategically* marked by Bach's novel contextualization that prolongs the dissonance. Whereas the melodic D♮ is apparently part of a dominant-functioning $\text{vii}^{\circ 6}_{5}$, the subsequent melodic resolution to E♭ turns out not to be a resolution to the root of the tonic, but rather a surprising dissonance—the seventh of an expanded $\text{ii}^{\circ 7}$ that expressively delays the expected cadence (note, as well, the bass line's descent in thirds that outlines this predominant harmony). And when the $\text{ii}^{\circ 7}$ eventually resolves to a cadential $^{6}_{4}$ at m. 24^2, we can experience an emergence into the Light of E♭ major, interpretable not as unmarked (non-tragic) major but now as a strategically marked reversal of the previous modal mixture: a positive arrival $^{6}_{4}$ that leads to the ultimate (perfect) cadence and thereby restores the positive assurances of Faith with which the chorale prelude began.

Bach has created a partial storyline that corresponds roughly to the progression of the text, but he goes much further. He develops the productive trope, already inherent in the Christian Passion, of suffering fused with ultimate salvation in a way that we can reconstruct through musical processes (as tragedy overcome by a transcendence aware of its cost). A semiotic interpretation focuses on what is stylistically warranted and intersubjectively available as a mode of experiencing. But a personal interpretation of that expressive trajectory and its virtual subjectivity is also available, whether or not one links the contours of that expressive journey to the Christian significance of the experience I assume it held for Bach's Lutheran audience. Any listener can find parallels to personal experiences of struggle and breakthrough, and ongoing reflections on that struggle. The musical development of a rich emotional journey is not restricted to a single set of emotional interpretants.

Bach, however, is able to create a continuously unfolding drama of experiences that is highly relevant to a personal experience of the Passion—not a mere representation of the Passion as a series of external events, but the enacted virtual subjectivity of a penitent experiencing mixed emotions and revelatory insights while contemplating and vividly recalling the events of the Passion. Strategically marked manipulations of stylistically marked and unmarked oppositions enable Bach to enact the inwardness of that virtual subjectivity; he not only expresses suffering, but *enacts an empathetic identification with that suffering*, by a virtual agent with whom the listener can in turn identify.

Conclusion

Gestures, topics, tropes, and virtual agency. Marked stylistic correlations and strategically marked interpretations. Although a semiotic approach drawing on these concepts can support generalized meanings, it can also lead to surprisingly sophisticated calibrations of emotional meaning, as we interpret marked events experienced by a virtual subjectivity within a coherent dramatic trajectory. These are exciting times for music signification, as scholars continue to refine semiotic approaches capable of *re*constructing musical stylistic meanings, and of guiding other interpreters in their own explorations of expressive meaning in music.

Notes

1 For an account of this Center, see Sebeok (1981).
2 But see Melanie Lowe's (2007, 91–98) historically annotated account of three fictional listeners' responses to a Haydn symphony.
3 See Lidov's essay on melody as representation in this volume.
4 Ruwet ([1966] 1987, 1972), Nattiez (1975; for his later, more Peircean perspective, see 1990b). Ruwet (1975) changed course radically from his initial surface-segmentation approach, inspired in part by his reading of Rosen's *The Classical Style*.
5 As developed for poetry and linguistics by Roman Jakobson (1971) and, more extensively, by Michael Shapiro (1976, 1983).
6 For early efforts at theorizing narrative cues and dramatic trajectories in music, see Hatten (1991) and Abbate (1991). Esti Sheinberg (2000) explores such shifts with reference to the theories of Mikhail Bakhtin.
7 For my initial categorization of agency, see Hatten (2004, 224–32). Monahan (2013) addresses my discussion of agency in the first movement of Beethoven's op. 132, as presented in Hatten (2004, 267–78).
8 Chorale text by Sebald Heyden (c. 1530): "Es sind doch selig alle, die im rechten Glauben wandeln," by Matthias Greitter (1525). Bach's is the only extant harmonization. See Dahn (2017, 158–59). Dahn also notes that "when the precise verse that originally accompanied a setting is unknown (which is the case for the individual chorales BWV 253–438), the first verse is included, a practice which accords with that of the editors of the *Bach-Gesellschaft Ausgabe*" (Dahn, ix). The first verse indeed appears to accord very well with Bach's expressive trajectory, especially in the passages I will examine.
9 Compatibility constitutes one of my four axes for interpreting tropes, along with degrees of dominance, creativity, and productivity (Hatten, 2014, 515–26).
10 Schweitzer ([1905] 1966, II: 69), characterizes this passage as "a series of sighs and groans" that text–paint the line "Trug uns'rer Sünde schwere Burd" (He bore the heavy burden of our sins). Later, Schweitzer lists such sighs, along with chromatic lines, as Bach's two principal "motives of grief" (105). He is half right about this passage; its sighs are clearly weighted with emotion related to grief, but the tropological interpretation I offer is based on the mitigating factors of clear diatonicism, pastoral parallel $^{6}_{3}$s, and higher register, which add an element of heavenly anticipation that climaxes on the E♭ MM^{9} sonority. The slurred sigh markings are not Bach's; they appear in parentheses in the Riemenschneider edition.
11 The earlier chromatic ascent in the bass (mm. 18^{3}–19$^{3)}$ also has an implied melodic minor ascent in G minor (D–E♮–F♯–G), but this is not as foregrounded, since diatonic tenths feature the D♭–E♭–F–G ascent occurring *on* the beat. The surface parallel sevenths, however, created with the overlapping motive in the alto, generate even greater dissonance than in the corresponding passage from 22^{4}–23^{3}.
12 The rhetorical turn inward is also marked by an extraordinary "adagissimo," which Schweitzer notes as a text-setting of "*long* he hung on the cross" (my italics). When we are tempted to such obvious interpretations that merely text-paint, we may miss the deeper resonances found in a composer's capacity to *create and enact* emotions as experienced by a virtual agent in a fictional dramatic trajectory.

PART III

Music signification and topic theory

9

PATTERNS AND TOPICS AS ELEMENTS OF SIGNIFICATION IN LATE EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY MUSIC

Lauri Suurpää

Natural signs and musical grammar

In the second half of the eighteenth century, communication was considered one of the cornerstones of music signification. Conveying precise and preferably conceptual meaning was viewed with such importance that many writers judged vocal music to be superior to instrumental music. Bernard Le Bovier de Fontenelle's famous remark "sonate, que me veux-tu?" (sonata, what do you want of me?), circulated by Jean-Jacques Rousseau, among others, epitomized this view; in Bonds's reading (2014, 74–77), Fontenelle's comment reflects the frustration over not understanding what music without words can mean. Yet at the same time, there were authors who sought to describe ways in which instrumental music could convey signification, albeit without a conceptual foundation. This essay examines two ways in which late eighteenth-century musicians addressed non-conceptual layers of music signification, layers that apply to instrumental as well as to vocal music: musical expression and musical grammar.

One way of approaching the relationship between music and expression in the eighteenth century was through the division of signs into two types: arbitrary and natural. Linguistic signs that consist mainly of words are arbitrary, because the connection between the signifier and the signified is based on convention. Natural signs, by contrast, can be referential without the mediation of words and concepts because they are based on physical sensations, creating a more direct association between the signifier and the signified. Many writers associated musical affections with natural signs and therefore did not seek the foundations of musical expression in concrete concepts (that is, in arbitrary signs). Rather, music was considered a "language of feelings," which communicates affections without the aid of concepts. It is natural signs as conveyers of signification that concern us here.[1]

Musical grammar, by contrast, defines the rules of "correct" musical composition; Heinrich Christoph Koch wrote in his *Musikalisches Lexicon* (1802, columns 677–68) that

musical grammar refers to "the rules according to which in the art of musical composition tones and chords must be connected" (translation mine).[2] An important layer of musical grammar, with direct links to language, was the idea of hierarchical punctuation. At least since Johann Mattheson's *Der vollkommene Capellmeister* ([1739] 1999), authors often made a connection between punctuation marks in language and different kinds of cadential closures in music—"resting points of the spirit" (*Ruhepuncte des Geistes*), as Koch (1787, 342) calls them. Both linguistic and musical punctuations were treated as hierarchical; in music, the final "resting point" was the closure we nowadays call a "perfect authentic cadence." In this chapter, musical grammar will primarily refer to cadential punctuation—to the "resting points of the spirit" that Koch speaks about.[3]

This article examines ways in which musical grammar (associated with harmony and cadential punctuation) and natural signs (associated with musical affections) indicate signification in late eighteenth-century music. I start by examining patterns and rules as well as musical topics. These two layers then provide the foundation for an analytical elucidation of the slow movement of Haydn's String Quartet, op. 71, no. 2 (Hob. III:70; 1793). The analysis addresses form (both local phrase structure and global sonata form), voice-leading structure (from a Schenkerian perspective), and musical topics. My discussion of form and voice-leading structure draws heavily on cadential punctuation, thus relating it to musical grammar; by contrast, my approach to musical topics closely resembles the ideas of natural signs. In other words, my modern analytical tools can be associated with the above-charted eighteenth-century aesthetic ideals.

Patterns and rules

In eighteenth-century aesthetics, the attitude towards rules, with which musical grammar is associated, was controversial. On the one hand, there were writers who leaned toward the rationalist and neoclassical aesthetics by emphasizing the significance of reason and rules as the guidelines for both creating and evaluating art. On the other hand, there was a growing emphasis on the creative powers of genius that transcended pre-established rules.[4]

Eighteenth-century descriptions of rules occasionally have a practical orientation, an attitude that is clearly expressed in Johann Georg Sulzer's entry on *Regeln* (Rules) in his *Allgemeine Theorie der schönen Künste*:

> True artistic rules must not be arbitrary, but rather necessary and practical consequences of a theory founded on the nature of arts … True theory [on which rules are based] is nothing else but *the development of that through which a work becomes complete in terms of its nature and ultimate purpose*.
>
> *(Sulzer 1792–94, vol. 4, 74, emphasis added)*[5]

Also, departures from rules, as well as from the syntactic patterns based on them, were seen to be valuable because they made it possible to create special artistic effects. Hill (2003, 22) argues that the literary *Sturm und Drang* aesthetics went so far as attributing "to the genius of the creative artist powers of judgement that transcend all traditional norms and expectations and specially the so called 'rules.'"

Writers on music, too, note departures from expectations created by conventional patterns. For example, Johann Adolph Scheibe, in his *Critischer Musikus* (1745), describes rhetorical figures that are based on uncertainty and departure from expectations; these

features are particularly notable in his explanation of two figures, *dubitatio* (686–87) and *suspensio* (694–95). Christian Friedrich Michaelis, in turn, argued that departures from conventions and patterns can lead to sublime effects through the "marvelous" (*wunderbar*) musical quality (1805, 105) or to humorous effects through whimsical and unexpected musical events (1807, columns 725–27). In summary, rules and patterns provided a conventional foundation from which a composer might depart in order to realize a special musical effect.

Meyer (1989, 5), among others, argues that the Classical style was strongly based on patterns: "Mozart could compose with astonishing facility partly because the set of constraints he inherited (and which he partly modified), the so-called Classical style, was especially coherent, stable, and well established." In recent research, the same view is suggested, at least indirectly, in the literature examining the role of schemata (Gjerdingen 2007) and partimento (Sanguinetti 2012) in eighteenth-century music; in these cases, musical structure is understood as largely consisting of sequences of conventional patterns that a composer uses and that a listener then recognizes. Therefore, patterns—in particular, adherence to or departure from them—help determine ways in which late eighteenth-century music signifies.

In modern music-analytical research that discusses music of the high Classical era, patterns feature prominently in examinations of form. When discussing phrase structure and theme types, the local level of form, Caplin (1998) distinguishes among three different ways in which a given theme may be related to patterns that define conventional phrase-structural types: the theme may be (1) tight-knit (follows patterns exactly), (2) loose (departs from archetypal patterns but retains the main characteristics), or (3) nonconventional (no recognizable conventional pattern). These three ways each affect music signification. Tight-knit phrase-structural units can be seen as representing a public mode of musical discourse. Such units do not depart from conventional patterns and are not interpreted as individualized utterances. In other words, the listener recognizes an uninterpreted, archetypal pattern. The more the music departs from conventional patterns (loose and nonconventional organization), the more individual it becomes. As a result, the musical discourse appears more private. The way in which a given composition either interprets the patterns, or omits them entirely, adds a personal characteristic specific to the given work. When examining sonata form, Hepokoski and Darcy (2006) discuss the dialogical nature of sonata form. They argue that we can understand form as a dialogue between established norms—patterns—and ways in which individual works either follow those norms or depart from them. The stronger the departure, the more private the musical discourse appears to become.[6]

Patterns also feature prominently in Schenkerian models of voice-leading structure. Archetypal voice-leading patterns govern deep levels, and then can be elaborated in numerous ways at more surface levels. Schenker himself emphasized the dramatic nature of such elaborations, which, in one way or another, obscure the governing deep-level framework:

> In the art of music, as in life, motion toward the goal encounters obstacles, reverses, disappointments, and involves great distances, detours, expansions, interpolations, and, in short, retardations of all kinds. Therein lies the source of all artistic delaying, from which the creative mind can derive content that is ever new. Thus we hear in the middleground and foreground an almost dramatic course of events.
>
> *(Schenker [1935] 1979, 5)*

All such "obstacles" and "disappointments" enhance the private quality of the musical discourse—in other words, the individual character of a given work.

Musical topics

Since the publication of Ratner's *Classic Music: Expression, Form, and Style*, topics have become one of the most widely applied analytical approaches to Classical music. For Ratner, topics were "a thesaurus of *characteristic figures*, which formed a rich legacy for classic composers," and they function as "subjects for musical discourse" (1980, 9). Fundamental to the notion of topics is the idea that specific, recurring, and identifiable features define each individual topic. To associate various musical utterances with each other, and thus to give them the same topical label, there must be commonalities between these individual passages. By their nature, musical topics are referential signs that can, for example, be associated with various rhythms (for example, dance topics), figures and affects (for example, *Seufzer*), or texture (for example, chorale). Thus, through resemblance, topics evoke the idea of something external, somewhat like the above-discussed eighteenth-century natural signs.[7]

In topic theory, as in the examination of patterns, one can draw a distinction between public and private layers. With topics, the public-private distinction is based on the nature of the object of reference (the signified), as opposed to adherence to, or departure from, expectations as with patterns. Public topics are those that have references that can be recognized without associating them with any specific individual. On the one hand, public topics may have a pictorial origin, and so their referentiality resembles tone painting; examples of these types of topics are *tempesta*, which is associated with storm, or fanfare, which refers to signal calls heard during hunting or in battle. On the other hand, public topics may be based on the listener's recognition of general and fixed social content, which is not dependent on any individual's feelings; examples of these types of topics are sarabande, which is associated with high style, or musette, which refers to the rural world. By contrast, private topics are based on the recognition of affections felt by an individual. The individual can be understood, at least with respect to instrumental music, as a "virtual musical persona" in the sense that Cone (1974) defines this concept. Examples of such private topics are *Seufzer*, which is associated with an individual's emotional sighs, or *amoroso*, which is correlated to tender feelings felt by lovers.

Intramusical and extramusical signification

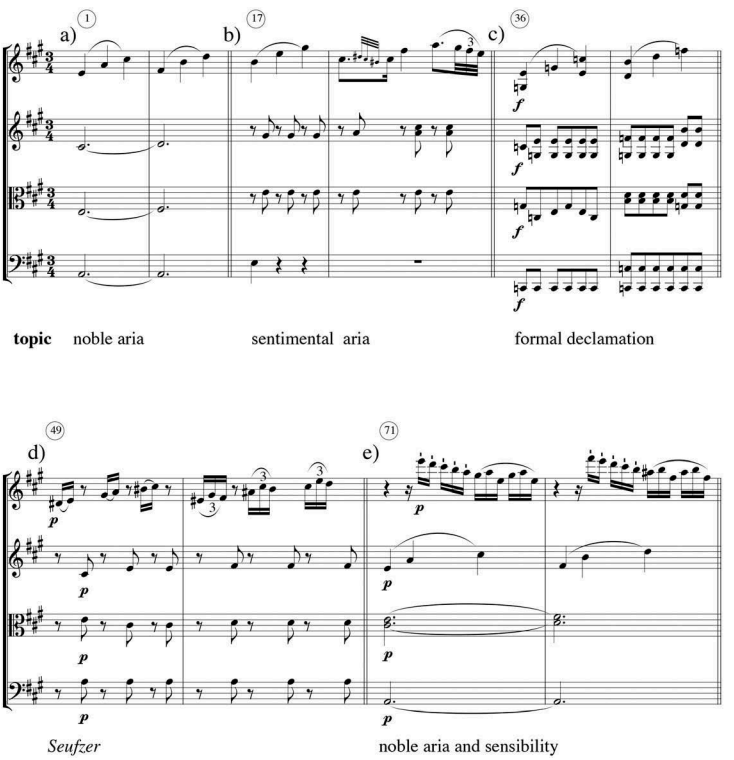
Musical grammar, associated with rules and patterns, differs in numerous ways from the signs associated with topics. One particular difference, though, relates to the way they signify. Musical grammar, patterns, and rules relate to intramusical signification; that is, they concern various kinds of purely musical conventions within which a composer works. Topics, by contrast, are to a great extent extramusical; that is, they refer, often indirectly, to something outside of the music.[8] This distinction features prominently in my argument, particularly in my discussion of private and public modes of musical discourse.

As previously noted, with intramusical patterns the difference between public and private modes can be tracked by the way the music either follows or departs from archetypal patterns. The less the music departs from the patterns, the more public the discourse. By contrast, with extramusical topics, the nature of the object of reference defines the topic's public or private quality. As patterns and topics construct their public and private layers of musical discourse on different foundations, there is room for play between those layers of discourse. My analysis of the slow movement of Haydn's String Quartet, op. 71, no. 2 concentrates precisely on this play.

Topical guises of the opening theme

The second movement of Haydn's op. 71, no. 2 is in sonata form. One characteristic feature of the movement is that its opening thematic material articulates the onset of each of the form's sections: (1) the exposition's primary theme (m. 1); (2) the exposition's secondary theme (m. 17); (3) the development (m. 36); (4) the recapitulation's primary theme (m. 49); (5) the recapitulation's secondary theme (m. 59); and (6) the coda (m. 71).[9] As Example 9.1 indicates, however, each occurrence of this thematic material assumes different figuration, texture, and topical identity. The first occurrence (Example 9.1a) starts with the first violin's triadic melody, accompanied by the other instruments in a stable manner. The vocal quality of the thematic material, in combination with the passive accompaniment suggests an aria topic. More specifically, owing to its stable quality, the thematic statement refers to a noble aria, reflecting a high social class and an aristocratic personality. In Hunter's words (1999, 139), arias suggesting nobility are "more consistent—even rigid—in their rhetorical and formal habits than any other category of aria." This suggests that the movement starts with a fundamentally public topic: we hear a statement of nobility rather than an expression of individual emotions.

When the same thematic idea returns in measure 17 (Example 9.1b), transformed to become the secondary theme of the form, its topical identity shifts. The stress on off-beats in the accompaniment and the melodic figuration in measure 18 lends a more personal tone



Example 9.1 Haydn, String Quartet, op. 71, no. 2, II, topical guises of the opening theme

to the topic; the aria quality still predominates, but it has been transformed from a statement of nobility into a sentimental aria. Thus, the topic becomes more private. The referential locus again changes with the onset of the development in measure 36 (Example 9.1c). We now hear the movements first *forte* supporting a texture that suggests a string-quartet equivalent of an orchestral tutti. As noted by Sisman (2014, 96–98), eighteenth-century orchestral topics were predominantly public. The topic that marks the development can be described as formal declamation, much like the ceremonious, but impersonal, "ladies and gentlemen" at the beginning of a formal speech.

At the recapitulation (Example 9.1d), the quality of the opening thematic idea again changes. The appoggiaturas, sighing motives, and rests between the gestures suggest a *Seufzer* topic, an inherently private expression of individually experienced emotions. (I discuss the topical quality in the recapitulation's secondary theme later, as the topic cannot be described without taking the formal and tonal context into account.) The opening theme's final appearance initiates the coda in measure 71 (Example 9.1e). The topical quality is now somewhat divided. The second violin, viola, and cello return to the initial noble aria, a public topic, but, by way of contrast, the first violin plays sixteenth-note triplets that can be associated with the private sensibility topic. So far, the movement's primary thematic material has assumed topical guises that can be labeled unequivocally as either public or private, but at the beginning of the coda, the public and private modes are merged.

This quick overview indicates that topics, whose mode of signification I have associated with the eighteenth-century view on natural signs, assume guises that can be connected either to a public or a private mode of musical discourse (or, in the coda, to their juxtaposition). To understand the role that these transformations play across the movement's overall trajectory, we must consider the music's formal and structural course—that is, how its musical grammar adheres to or departs from conventional patterns.

Exposition

In terms of its phrase structure, the primary theme (mm. 1–8) is a tight-knit "hybrid 3" (Caplin 1998) consisting of a four-measure compound basic idea and a four-measure continuation. There is one aspect of the theme, however, that subverts its tight-knit, public quality: its concluding cadence. The first violin, which is melodically primary, is strongly directed towards A at the downbeat of measure 8, suggesting a perfect authentic cadence. Yet, the melodically passive accompaniment-like D–C♯ progression sounded by the second violin (mm. 7–8) places the third of the tonic as the uppermost voice in measure 8, a feature indicative of an imperfect authentic cadence. As we have seen, in the eighteenth century various kinds of cadential punctuations, "resting points of the spirit," were associated with different linguistic punctuation marks. The uncertainty surrounding the quality of the cadence in mm. 7–8 creates ambiguity regarding the relative strength of the punctuation, therefore challenging the public discourse of an otherwise tightly knit theme at its very end. In addition to the imperfect quality of the closing cadence, the initial public mode is also challenged within the topical organization; after the opening public noble aria, the topic shifts in measure 5 to private sensibility, because of the figuration.

The primary theme lays a foundation for the movement's overall narrative. On the one hand, the tight-knit phrase-structural unit and the initial noble aria topic suggest a public mode of discourse. On the other hand, the sensibility topic and the uncertainty surrounding the quality of the cadence suggest a more private mode of discourse. The two modes of

discourse are thus introduced at the beginning, and their juxtapositions and tensions will in part determine the narrative path of the movement.

The uncertain quality of the primary theme's cadence infuses a private mode in the otherwise public musical discourse, and this conflict becomes more apparent in the secondary theme. The significance of a perfect authentic cadence at the end of the secondary-theme zone has been noted both in historical and in modern literature. In the eighteenth century, Koch (1793, 304–05) noted that in a symphonic first movement, the first main period (i.e., the exposition) ends in a *Cadenz* (i.e., a perfect authentic cadence). More recently, Caplin (1998, 97) writes that "a subordinate theme ends with a perfect authentic cadence in the subordinate key," while Hepokoski and Darcy (2006, 120–24) coined the term "essential expositional closure" to capture the idea that a secondary-key perfect authentic cadence functions as the goal of the exposition's harmonic trajectory. Ending the exposition on an unequivocal perfect authentic cadence was a governing pattern in the late eighteenth century: it thus represents a public mode of musical discourse.[10]

The onset of the secondary theme in measure 17 imposes a private mode upon the musical discourse. We have already seen that the governing topic is sentimental aria (ex. 9.1b). The two-bar "basic idea," first heard in measures 17–18, is played three-and-a-half times (mm. 17–23), as opposed to twice in tight-knit sentences or hybrids beginning with a presentation. The phrase structure thus turns out to be nonconventional; for the listener, the assumed stabilizing initiating phase turns out to be an active medial phase. The nonconventional phrase structure therefore enhances the private quality of the sentimental aria. In measure 24 the minor-mode coloration introduces a new private topic, *ombra*, that can be associated with a personal sense of foreboding. But *ombra* soon gives way to a standard cadential progression.

Because cadential punctuation is a significant feature in the eighteenth-century musical grammar, composers often wrote topically neutral music at important cadences like the perfect authentic cadence ending the secondary-theme zone. When discussing the exposition's closing cadence in the first movement of Mozart's Piano Sonata, K. 333, Rosen (1971, 72) emphasizes the conventional nature of the cadential musical material, noting that "less conventional, more thematic material will not do; thematic interest would distract from the essential—which is exactly what it appears to be: four bars of cadence."

Topical neutrality also seems to govern the essential expositional closure of the Haydn exposition; a Neapolitan-sixth chord (m. 26) in a public *tempesta* topic announces the onset of a cadential progression, and the arrival at the cadential dominant in measure 27 coincides with the onset of topical neutrality associated with emphatic cadences. It would seem that both the musical grammar (approaching a threshold of a significant punctuation) and topics (neutral topic associated with cadences) conclude the secondary theme in a public mode of discourse that displaces the private mode governing the theme. But this is not quite the case. On the downbeat of measure 28 the listener initially expects that the cadence has been completed, but the ensuing measure reopens the cadential progression. In other words, what we assumed to be a cadential arrival in measure 28 turns out to be a presentiment of a cadential arrival that has yet to be heard. This process is then repeated, and only the third cadential progression arrives at a definitive concluding cadence (m. 32). Schmalfeldt (1992) has used the term "one-more-time technique" for similar re-openings of cadential material.[11] It is clear, though, that this play with the listener's expectations imparts a private layer to the exposition's ending: we must twice re-evaluate our expectations of a cadential arrival as a result of the departure from archetypal, public patterns.

Development section

The development section begins with a public topic: formal declamation (ex. 9.1c). This public layer is counteracted by the remote key of C major (♮III). Koch (1793, 307–08) noted that development sections usually start with the movement's opening thematic idea (possibly with another idea) in the dominant key, after which the music modulates to a closely related minor key (he mentions VI, II, and III as likely options). Haydn departs from this pattern: the dominant key is abandoned immediately in favor of the vastly divergent C major. Thus, due to the appearance of the remote ♮III, the musical grammar exhibits a private layer of musical discourse.[12]

If the development begins by combining a public topic with a remotely related key, therefore suggesting private discourse in the musical grammar, the roles reverse as the development unfolds. In measure 40 the music returns to the thematic material first heard in measure 5, the sensibility topic. Measure 40 also starts a sequential passage, which in measure 43 tonicizes D minor, preceded by its dominant. In measure 45, it ends at the arrival at the home-key dominant, again preceded by its dominant. The harmonic progression is thus ♮III–V/IV–IV♮–V/V–V. From a voice-leading perspective, this progression elaborates upon a sequence consisting of a series of 5–6 progressions (shown in Example 9.3, to be discussed in more detail below). Such a contrapuntal series was a common pattern in the eighteenth-century partimento tradition (Sanguinetti 2012, 136–37; 141–42). The adherence to a commonly used sequential pattern suggests a public mode of musical discourse in the musical grammar, whereas the topics display a private mode. Topics and grammar are finally in agreement near the end of the development section, in the standing on the dominant starting in measure 45; the topic is a public *tempesta*, and a prolongation of the home-key dominant is the most common pattern to end the development section. The public mode of discourse thus seems to prevail.

Recapitulation and coda

Despite the presumed dominance of the public mode near the end of the development, its sway is temporary. In measure 47, at the end of the section, the topic changes to private sensibility, and the recapitulation begins, as shown in Example 9.1d, with a *Seufzer* topic, soon to be replaced by another private topic, sensibility. On a more general level, the private mode governs both topics and musical grammar throughout the recapitulation (Example 9.2). In the musical grammar, the primary theme has no concluding cadence, because the cadential arrival in measure 56 is evaded and the root-position tonic is replaced by a $^{4}_{2}$ chord. (The evasion is indicated in Example 9.2 by the expected bass-note A in parentheses.)[13] The departure from the norm also leads to a distancing from conventional formal organization: because there is no cadential conclusion in measure 56, there is no independent primary theme. As a result, the primary theme and the transition are fused with each other, as illustrated in Example 9.2 by a double-lined arrow, a symbol of a functional transformation, or the idea of "becoming" (in Example 9.2, the primary theme is abbreviated as P and transition as TR).[14] Following the evaded cadence in measure 56, the topic changes from sensibility into another private topic *ombra*; the combination of the minor mode and the impression of being formally displaced imply a sense of foreboding. The P⇒TR section is thus thoroughly governed, through both topics and musical grammar, by the private mode of musical discourse.

Form P ⇒ TR MC / S

(49 56 58) 59 64

Function medial concluding ⇒ medial

Phrase structure nonconventional

b.i. b.i. frag. cad. idea

$\hat{3}$ (=$\hat{5}$ $\hat{4}$ $\hat{3}$ $\hat{2}$

I IV♮ V I♮ ♭II^{6} V$^{6}_{4}$ — $^{5}_{3}$

Topics sensibility *ombra* cadence

Form ESC omitted coda ESC

66 70 71 74 76

Function concluding omitted initiating concluding

Phrase structure nonconventional

cad. idea

abandoned b.i. c.i. (one more) time

(o n e m o r e t i m e) N $\hat{3}$ $\hat{2}$ $\hat{1}$

$\hat{1}$)

P

(o n e m o r e t i m e) V$^{6}_{5}$ I V I

abandoned cadence perfect authentic cadence

Topics sensibility noble aria and sensibility cadence

Example 9.2 Haydn, String Quartet, op. 71, no. 2, II, recapitulation and coda, analytical sketch

A departure from conventional patterns is again found at the end of the transition. In measure 59 we hear a half cadence, the conventional medial caesura (abbreviated MC in Example 9.2) that ends the transition, clearing the way for the ensuing secondary theme (abbreviated S). Now, though, the onset of the secondary theme aligns with the medial caesura; moreover, when compared to the exposition, the secondary theme begins from the original theme's fifth measure. Thus, measure 59 functions neither as an untroubled closure nor as an unequivocal beginning—clear grammatical punctuation does not occur.

The secondary theme starts with the sensibility topic, whose private mode is enhanced by the above-described formal ambiguity. After the minor-mode *ombra* in measures 62–63, a cadential progression begins—an assumed indicator of the arrival of the essential structural closure. It is likewise assumed that the background voice-leading structure, the deepest-level tonal pattern, will close and arrive at the $\hat{1}$. Were the music to proceed as it did in the exposition, these expectations would have been fulfilled, and the concluding tonic would arrive after the parenthetical "one-more-time" additions.

Haydn, however, does something completely different. The parenthetical "one-more-time" additions do introduce V^7–I progressions, kinds of presentiments of the structural closure, but the ultimate cadential arrival is omitted entirely. In measure 70 an F♯–G♯ progression in the bass transforms the dominant into a $\frac{6}{5}$-sonority that no longer has a cadential function; the expected cadence is abandoned. At the same time, a D6 reaches over in the top voice where the *Kopfton* C♯5 is then regained. Thus, the $\hat{1}$ that arrives in measure 71 has been transformed into an inner-voice pitch. The recapitulation thus ends without a perfect authentic cadence—or any cadence, for that matter—and the essential structural closure (abbreviated ESC in Example 9.2) is postponed until the coda. The avoidance of several conventional patterns, combined with the governing sensibility topic in measures 66–70, generates an inherently private musical discourse.

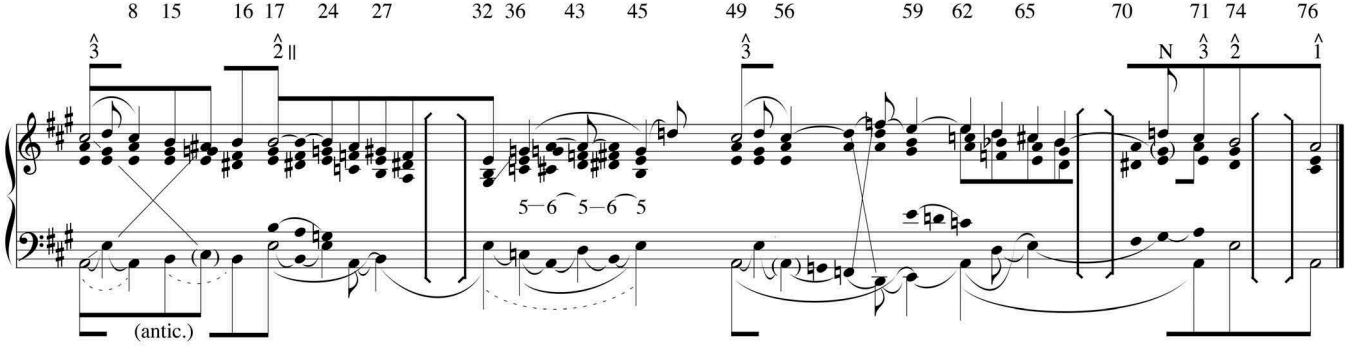
The coda brings the movement to a proper close. As seen in Example 9.1e, the public noble aria and private sensibility topics are combined. The form and tonal structure arrive at closures of significant patterns (essential structural closure in the form and completion of the *Ursatz*), which enhance the public mode of discourse at the end of the movement. Yet the "one-more-time" addition in measure 75 again imparts a private layer to an otherwise public closure. In all, in the coda both musical grammar and topics combine public and private layers.

Public and private modes: from conflict to pairing

The above analysis has traced ways in which musical grammar and topics create public and private layers of signification in individual sections of the Haydn movement. As a way of summary, I chart how these formal sections articulate a global trajectory extending through the entire work. To do this, I will apply the notion of "expressive genre," a concept developed by Hatten (1994). This notion refers to the overarching expressive course of a musical work. For our purposes, it is important to see how the dialogues, interactions, and tensions between public and private layers of musical discourse guide the overall trajectory of the movement.

Example 9.3 is an overview of the movement, aligning those features that have been thus far discussed with the expressive genre shown on the uppermost line. The beginning of the movement introduces public and private modes, but as discussed earlier, placed consecutively. There is no direct conflict between the two levels that are introduced as two

Expressive genre	juxtaposition of private and public	private governs	tension between private and public	victory of private over public?		private paired with public
Topics	noble aria vs. sensibility	sentimental aria / sensibility	formal declamation leading to sensibility / *tempesta*	*Seufzer* and sensibility / *ombra*	sensibility	noble aria & sensibility
Opening figure	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)



Stufen	I	II♯ V (=E: I♯—♮ ♭II⁶ V		♮III	V‖	I♯——♮	♭II⁶ V	V⁶₅	I	V	I
Form	exposition			development		recapitulation			coda		
	P	TR	MC S	EEC		P ⇒ TR	MC / S		ESC omitted		ESC
Cadences	I:IAC	V:HC		V:PAC		I:IAC omitted	I:HC		I:PAC omitted		I:PAC

Example 9.3 Haydn, String Quartet, op. 71, no. 2, II, an overview

options. When the medial caesura arrives in measure 16, a clear tension between the two layers occurs. In the grammatical sonata-form conventions, the half-cadential medial caesura forms an archetypal punctuation often executed through "several *forte* hammer-blows" (Hepokoski and Darcy 2006, 34) representing the public fanfare topic. Both grammatically and topically, the medial caesura usually represents public discourse. In the Haydn movement, however, an anticipation of B2 in measure 15 obscures the underlying chromaticized voice exchange; the dominant pitch occurs in the bass before the voice exchange preparing that dominant is concluded. Meanwhile, the dominant harmony is reached only in measure 16. The private layer thus interferes with the clarity of the generically public medial caesura.[15]

The ensuing secondary-theme zone shifts the emphasis toward the private mode of discourse. Most importantly, the "one-more-time technique" challenges the public quality of the concluding essential expositional closure. The development, in turn, features a direct conflict between the public and private layers; as we have seen, those passages that display public topics are grammatically nonconventional, thus representing the private mode. Conversely, the topically private passages are supported by grammatically conventional patterns. At this point, the conflict between the two layers becomes much more tangible.

The recapitulation seems to conclusively award primacy to the private level. All topics are private and both the local and global forms depart from archetypal patterns. When encountering the sighing figures and structural surprises, the listener may assume that the private mode has prevailed over the public mode. But again, the coda changes the situation. We now have a layered texture where the first violin's figurations refer to the private sensibility while the three other instruments play a texture associated with the public noble aria. In turn, in the musical grammar we globally hear an unequivocal structural and formal closure, whereas the local phrase structure is nonconventional. The two layers seem to coexist peacefully as opposed to challenging each other. The movement's expressive genre can be schematized as "public-conflicting-with-private → public-paired-with-private." At the end, the conflicts have been left behind and the two layers of musical discourse are in agreement.

Epilogue

This essay has traced music signification as an outcome of interactions between historical awareness and modern music-analytical methodology. My general framework of music signification is, to some extent, historically founded. In the eighteenth century, musicians addressed issues like natural signs, mimesis, expression, rules, and conventions. They did not, however, avail themselves of topic theory, form-functional theory, sonata theory, Schenkerian analysis, or expressive genres, the approaches I have used for elucidating interactions between public and private modes of musical discourse. My analysis is therefore thoroughly modern, and it does not aim at what Diergarten (2008) calls "historically informed analysis"—analysis that applies historical concepts in descriptions of music.

History thus both features and does not feature in my readings of music signification in Haydn's music. I do not find this situation contradictory. By using a general historical framework as one of the starting points I try to avoid what Christensen (1993, 11–19) calls "the presentist's myopia," in which music analysis may approach musical works as ahistorical objects, and whose historical context does not affect their interpretation in any way. Conversely, by using modern analytical tools, I try to avoid what Christensen (19–26) calls "the historicist's naivety," where a musical work is understood only through the norms of

the time during which it was composed.[16] If we wish to understand the complex ways of how late eighteenth-century music signifies, it is best to attend to both the contexts that historical understanding provides and to the rigorous analytical perspective offered by modern theoretical tools. Together, the two perspectives offer subtle, but revealing, ways in which eighteenth-century music signifies.

Notes

1 Eighteenth-century views on music's associations with natural signs have been discussed in Bonds (2014, 62–64) and in Rumph (2012, 53–54). Rudowski (1974) examines at a more general level the eighteenth-century distinction between arbitrary and natural signs. Hudson (1997) provides an overview of eighteenth-century theories of language, and places both arbitrary and natural signs within the framework of these theories. In the eighteenth century, however, non-conceptual signification was not limited to natural signs, but was also addressed in many texts that more generally discuss aesthetics. For example, Alexander Baumgarten, who coined the term "aesthetics," made a distinction between rational (conceptual) cognition and sensual (mostly non-conceptual) cognition. For him, "[a]esthetics … is the science of sensual cognition" (quoted in Hammermeister 2002, 7).

2 "Die Regeln, nach welchen in der Setzkunst die Töne und Akkorde an einander gereichet werden müssen."

3 Literature on punctuation and periodicity in eighteenth-century music is too extensive to be listed here. Vial (2008) gives a thorough overall picture of eighteenth-century literature addressing musical punctuation and its connections to language.

4 The tension between rationalist aesthetics and the emphasis on creative freedom can be clearly seen in the famous mid-century literary quarrel between Johann Christian Gottsched, who defended neoclassical and rule-based aesthetics, and Johann Jakob Bodmer and Johann Jakob Breitinger, who advocated a freer attitude toward literary creation. Beiser (2009, 72–117) gives a clear picture of the debate.

5 "Wahre Kunstregeln müssen notwendige praktische Folgen aus einer nicht willkürlichen, sondern in der Natur der Künste gegründeten Theorie sein … Die wahre Theorie ist nichts anders als die Entwicklung dessen, wodurch ein Werk in seiner Art und nach seinem Endzweck vollkommen wird."

6 For a concise discussion on the dialogic nature of form, see Hepokoski (2009).

7 The *Oxford Handbook of Topic Theory* (Mirka 2014a) is the most extensive treatment of topic theory. The book thoroughly charts the historical origins of the theory itself as well as of various individual topics. In her introduction, Mirka discusses the relationships eighteenth-century natural signs have with topics, and also elaborates on their semiotic status (Mirka 2014a, 25–27). Allanbrook (2014) thoroughly discusses the mimetic quality of topics, an aspect that associates topics with the age-old idea of imitation. Non-conceptual musical mimesis in many ways resembles the idea of natural signs; in both, signification is conveyed without the aid of words and concepts.

8 Agawu (1991, 26–79) offers a division that resembles my distinction between intramusical grammar and extramusical topics in applying Roman Jakobson's conceptual distinction between introversive and extroversive semioses.

9 I follow the sonata-form terminology of Hepokoski and Darcy (2006).

10 Only in rare instances have the composers decided to avoid a perfect authentic cadence at or close to the end of the exposition. The opening movement of Haydn's String Quartet, op. 20, no. 3 offers such an instance: preparation for a cadence seems to appear around measure 50, but the expected cadence is avoided several times and ultimately never arrives.

11 The situation in Haydn differs from that described by Schmalfeldt in that a root-position tonic is heard before the concluding cadential arrival, whereas Schmalfeldt refers to situations where the concluding cadential arrival is preceded by evaded cadences.

12 It is by no means unheard-of to start a development section directly, or with only meager preparation, in the key of ♭III. A notable instance occurs in the opening movement of Mozart's "Jupiter" Symphony (1788), and Haydn had himself adopted this same practice in the opening movement of Symphony no. 97, composed 1792, one year before the String Quartets, op. 71.

13 For a discussion on pitches that are implied by the context but that do not actually appear in the music, including evasions like the bass-note A in measure 56 of the Haydn movement, see Rothstein 1991.
14 The idea of functional transformation and the notion of becoming have been discussed in detail in; Schmalfeldt 2011.
15 Edward; Laufer (1999, 132–35) has discussed other instances where an anticipation in the bass interferes with a voice exchange leading to the secondary-key dominant.
16 In his essay, Christensen provides a general overview of music theory as opposed to analysis in particular. I believe that his arguments, however, may well be applied when discussing music analysis.

10

"MAD DAY" AND THE "MARCH OF BACCHUS"

Figaro in Mahler's Third Symphony

Lóránt Péteri

Literature provides radically different ways of (re-)constructing musical meaning in Mahler's music, especially in the first movement of his Symphony no. 3 (1896). Many Mahler scholars hold that signification lurks in the music and that uncovering the "meaning" of a work is tantamount to understanding the composer's thoughts and intentions (see, for example, Floros [1985] 1993, 92–93; Franklin 1999; Solvik 2011). The typical method is to collect and interpret sources in which the composer seems to have revealed something of the signification of the work verbally, on the one hand, and to track compositional decisions that can be positively identified as carriers of meaning, on the other. The argument, consequently, is based on primary sources, such as a composer's programmatic pronouncements, letters, markings in the autograph score, hand-written emendations, sketches, and recollections of friends and confidant(e)s. When returning to the score itself, the aim is to find *loci* that can be linked to meanings provided by biographical sources that offer a context for interpretation. Some commentators (for example, Floros and Solvik) explore the broader context of significations in Mahler's Third Symphony in contemporaneous philosophical thought, while others (for example, Franklin) seek to reconstruct the political dimensions of the work. More recently, partly following Franklin's suggestions, Kangas examines the first and third movements of the symphony as connected to the realm of politics (2015, 378). Referencing Ricoeur's hermeneutics, Kangas offers an analysis binding three types of "texts." The three types include (1) the programs written for the symphony; (2) the "allusions to pre-existing [musical] materials" appearing in the work; and (3) the "elements of Mahler's personal experience, especially in Vienna as well as in Hamburg and Steinbach." Kangas proposes "to unfold worlds in front of all of these texts simultaneously in order to explore the moments in which these worlds overlap and resonate with each other" (2015, 379–80).

Another approach to signification in Mahler's music is manifested by commentators who presuppose that the musical text (i.e., the finalized score), in itself, generates meaning. These analysts have learned from Gadamer "that the inexhaustible meaning present in a work 'surpasses its author not occasionally, but always'" (Gadamer 1960, 280, quoted in Micznik 1987, 49), and they apply theories of signification to formulate claims about musical

meaning (see, specifically with regard to Mahler, Samuels 1995; Monelle 2000). According to Micznik, musical signs, as opposed to those found in language, do not have a denotative level; thus, music "cannot refer to precise meanings outside itself, [and therefore] intertextual connotations account for most of what is perceived as 'extramusical meaning'" (1987, 55). If music cannot refer directly to the elements of the outside world, it can refer to other music and sounds. Thus, the threads of an intertextual web offer a wealth of significations. Micznik, in her later study devoted to the first movement of Mahler's Third Symphony, applies the concepts of "story," "discourse," "connotation," "intertextuality," and "musical topics" to the evaluation of "the narratives that 'music itself' presents" (2005, 308–09).

This case study in signification demonstrates how questions of musical meaning can be addressed by means of exploring intertextuality and genre. Samuels defines genre as "a code in a semiotic sense: a shared body of knowledge through which a community can create meaning from a text" (1995, 92). A musical genre is, indeed, a channel which "conditions the communication of meaning from the musical work to the listener" (Kallberg 1988, 246) as a "context for meaning production" (Pascall 1989, 235), and even as a "generator of meaning in a musical work" (Micznik 1994, 121). A notion of genre might be used as a particular regulative system that harnesses the analyst within the endless network of intertextuality (Pascall 1989, 236). Furthermore, genre, which is strongly linked to principles of "repetition" (Samson 1989, 213) and "instantiation" (Dahlhaus 1983, 149), can effectively question the composer's omnipotence in relation to any specific composition. While my argument does not exclude the biography and the symphony's program (La Grange 1974, 798–99)—it does not consider them as an aid to, or starting point for, musical interpretation. Instead, my goal is to interpret the cultural references included in the program on the basis of information gleaned from the musical score.

One of the oft-cited characteristics of Mahler's music is the influence of the march topic, and the fact that the distinctive features of the genre—periodic phrase structure, duple or quadruple meter emphasizing the downbeat, largely diatonic harmony consisting of primary chords, and orchestration typically highlighting winds and percussion—are frequently evident in his Lieder and symphonies. Explanations of this phenomenon can be interpreted through a psychological lens: as contemporaries recalled, Mahler, as a child, was obsessed with military music and the soldiers marching to the sound of music. The town of Iglau (today Jihlava in the Czech Republic), where Mahler spent his childhood years, had a permanent garrison (see Specht, in Floros 2012, 7). The military band was part and parcel of celebrations in the main square of the town (Fischer 2011, 25–26, 30). This biographical and psychological argument proposes that these early experiences—with all of their musical implications—left a musical imprint in young Mahler's psyche, which would later have an impact on his entire compositional output. That being said, others maintain that the persistent presence of the march harkens back to Hassidic folk tunes, and consequently, Mahlerian marches may be regarded as the composer's suppressed, but unconsciously surfacing, Jewish identity (Brod 1920; Berl 1923). There is, however, no evidence that Mahler, in his childhood and youth, had come into contact with Hassidic Jewish communities and their music.

But Mahler clearly drew first-hand inspiration from the characteristic sonority, instrumental apparatus, and the functional march repertoire of military bands that enjoyed a prominent place in nineteenth-century musical culture. In June 1895, he discussed "street music" in connection with the first movement of the Third Symphony:

> Straight away, I need a regimental band to give the rough and crude effect of my martial comrade's arrival. It will be just like the military band on parade. Such a mob is milling around, you never saw anything like it!
>
> *(Bauer-Lechner [1923] 1980, 40; see also 1923, 19–20)*

Apart from this decidedly direct first-hand connection, coupled with the fact that the march as a *topos* was inherited by Mahler as part of the symphonic tradition, there is an interpretative value in exploring other sources for Mahler's proclivity for the march topic. Between 1880 and 1909, the composer spent every fifth or sixth night in the orchestra pit of musical theaters and opera houses (see Martner 2010, 371). None of the late-eighteenth-century and nineteenth-century operas and operettas in his repertoire lacked marches or processional music of some kind. In these works, a march could be performed by the full orchestra or a *banda* playing on- or off-stage, it could be purely instrumental, or it could appear as the background to vocal passages. Given Mahler's uncanny ability to absorb and reconfigure musical models, we cannot underestimate how this influence—stemming from practical experience—shaped his compositional oeuvre.

The opening movement of the Third Symphony is monumental, even by Mahlerian standards. The 875-measure movement, lasting more than half-an-hour, owes its complex form to the combination—and, indeed, to a clash—of marches of different characters. In Micznik's analysis, the movement articulates three recurring musical *topoi* (urban, funeral, and pastoral marches). The culmination blends all three, followed by a victorious march (see Table 10.1). Micznik believes the march is only absent in three passages (mm. 57–131, 369–448, and 857–62), which jointly account for just eighteen percent of the movement (2005, 322–33).

I propose that this movement can effectively be read as one that contains multiple allusions to the march in Mozart's *Le nozze di Figaro* (1786), specifically the "Marcia" and "Scena XIV," that are played at the start of the finale of the opera's third act. Rather than employing a direct

Table 10.1 Topics (story/events) of the first movement of Mahler's Third Symphony

Measure	*Topics (story/events)*
1	Urban march
27	Funeral march
57	Lament, Klage recitativo/arioso
132	Light, pastoral march
164	Funeral march + lament
225	Pastoral march variations
369	Arioso lament (only)
411	Transformation scene
449	Pastoral march
530	Pastoral march "humorous," then grotesque
643	Urban march
671	Funeral march + lament
737	Mixed march
857	Catastrophic climax
863	Victorious march

quotation or a parody, Mahler creates an allusion that disassembles the music of the opera's march into constituent components, and then organically recombines the parts in the symphonic movement to serve expressive ends. The allusion remains recognizable, since it evokes—based on character, tempo, rhythmic profile, melodic elements, and orchestration—the Mozartian model. While I suggest that this is the result of a conscious effort on Mahler's part, I do not dwell on the composer's intentions or the conscious or unconscious elements of his compositional process. My objective is, instead, to address, as accurately as possible, the significance of the relationship between the two compositions.

Mahler conducted Mozart's *Marriage of Figaro* often—a total of 83 times (surpassed only by his conducting of Wagner's *Tannhäuser* and *Die Walküre*, see Martner 2010, 366–71). Mahler knew the *Le Nozze* intimately, and it had, I argue, a decided and profound impact on his compositional thinking when he was writing his Third Symphony. He performed it six times in Leipzig (1886–1888), four times in Budapest (1888–1891), and 15 times in Hamburg (1891–1897, see Martner 2010, 369). When the opera was revived in Vienna in 1906, Mahler restored the *secco recitativo*s, which in previous practice had been replaced by dialogues. Like the sung numbers, these, too, were translated into German by Max Kalbeck. In three *secco recitativo* passages Mahler felt that Lorenzo Da Ponte's text failed to adequately support the motivation of the characters, so he changed them by returning to Beaumarchais's original play (*La folle journée, ou Le mariage de Figaro* 1784). The most significant of these was Mahler's rewriting of the court scene of the third act (La Grange 1999, 330–31).

The musical relationship between the two works can be best seen through a comparison between Mozart's march and measures 1–60 in Scene XIV, with measures 247–362 in Mahler's movement (the latter is almost identical to the formal section Micznik refers to as "pastoral-march variations"). I begin by highlighting parts that have clear thematic and motivic connections, where both Mozart and Mahler build their $\frac{4}{4}$-meter marches on the marked beat in unison cellos and basses (see Examples 10.1 and 10.2).[1]

The differences between the two lie in notational and performance-practice changes, clearly demonstrated by the fact that, where Mozart uses a series of quarter notes, Mahler writes alternating eighth notes and eighth-note rests (reh. 25, m. 302). Replete with ornamentation, based on repeated motifs and dotted rhythm, the melodies of these marches evolve above their accompaniments. Mozart uses dotted rhythms for his theme; Mahler employs alternating sixteenth notes and sixteenth-note rests. The main key of Mozart's $\frac{4}{4}$-meter march is C major, from which the music modulates over and over to the dominant G. There are, however, A-minor passages that infiltrate the G-major territory. Mozart calls attention to these incursions through specific scorings, persistently sounding the fifth-scale degree (that is, Es in the woodwinds), and the use of melodic ornaments.

Mahler's march reaches the main key of F major (reh. 23, m. 273) from C major (reh. 20, m. 247), and in his final euphoria he forays into D major (reh. 27, m. 331). Both the C-major opening and the F-major main part contain A-minor incursions similar to *Figaro*, including the sustained Es and the ornaments (in the woodwinds). In one of his performance notes, Mahler simply calls these ornaments a *Vorschlag* (mm. 237–38).

Another compositional connection between the marches in *Figaro* and the first movement of the Third Symphony is the dynamic scheme. Both works unfold an unbroken, broad-spanned arch of *crescendo*. In Mozart, the dynamic sequence is *pianissimo* (m. 1), *piano* (m. 9), *un poco crescendo* (m. 22), and eventually *forte* (m. 28); the clarinets enter only when the music has reached the loudest dynamic level. Mahler begins with *pianississimo*—even quadruple *piano* in some instrumental groups (m. 247)—and the music builds, fluctuating through dynamic levels, to a *fortississimo* climax (11 measures after reh. 27, m. 341).

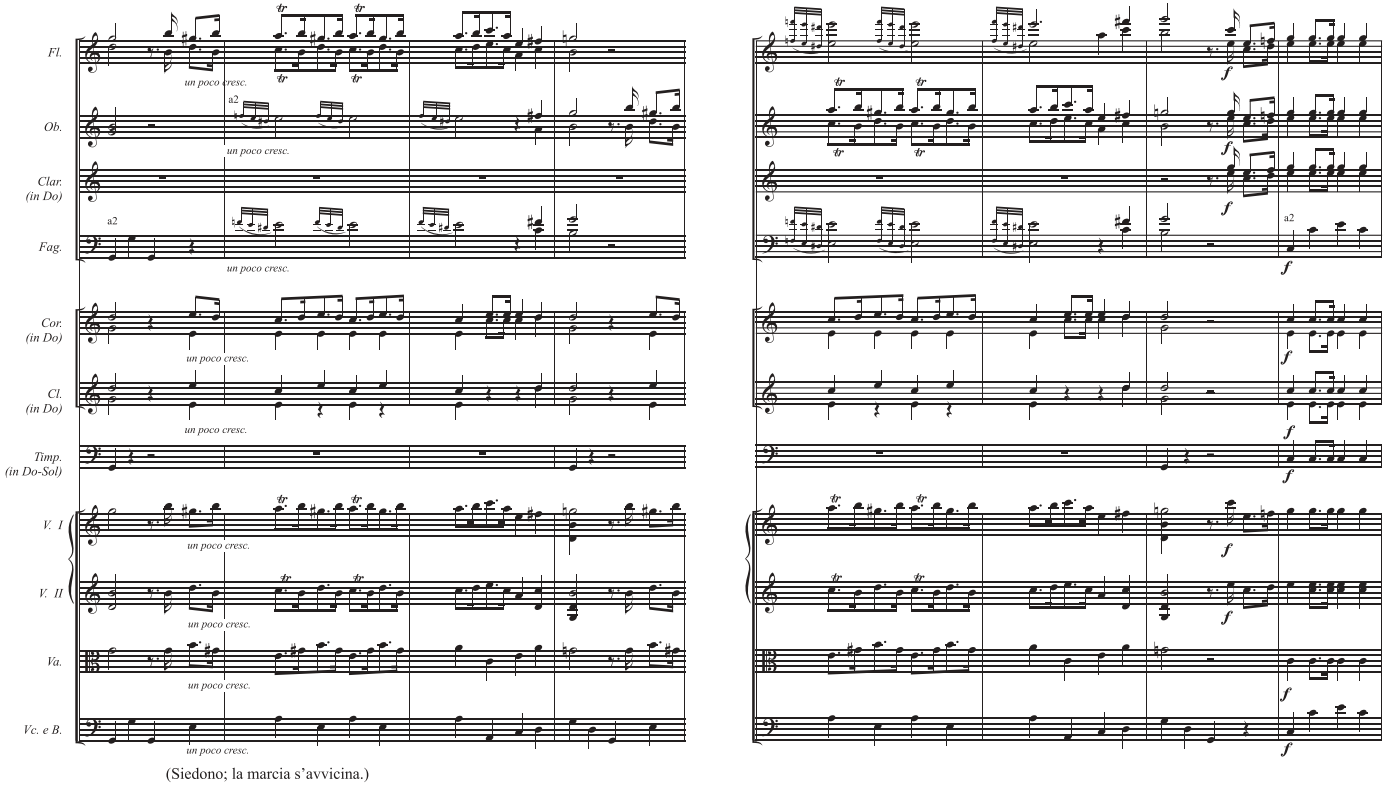
Both Mozart and Mahler were concerned with the perspective generated by sonorous space, and with creating musical and acoustic planes independent from each other, but all simultaneously perceptible to the listener. Mozart's score contains the following performance directions, written under the (not coincidentally incomplete) measure of the recitativo preceding the first measure of the Marcia: "a march is heard in the distance" (*s'ode la marcia da lontano*). The march begins on the dominant, that is, *in medias res*: in other words, the march occurs during a *recitativo secco* as a metrically independent topic that suggests a degree of spatial, and topical, separation. Mozart maintains the duality of musical and spatial planes in the march movement: Figaro, Susanna, the Count, and the Countess foreground a recitativo-style dialogue, while the orchestral accompaniment suggests the looming march music. The juxtaposition of a march and a recitative was unusual, and Mozart was clearly intrigued by the possibility, given that he worked out the details in a separate sketch (Mozart [1784] 1973, 637[2]).

Mahler accomplishes a similar effect by different means at the start of his march. In connection with the first movement of the Third Symphony Adorno wrote, "the formal impulse is the idea of a spatially moving source of music. Like much recent music, the movement, in its inner structure, has a shifting, not a fixed, frame of reference" (Adorno [1960] 1992, 79).

According to Mahler's written instructions in the score, the orchestra has to play as if it could be heard "from a great distance" (reh. 20, m. 247: *Wie aus weiter ferne*). While the strings and the oboe (playing an ornamented sustained note) sound the march theme *pianississimo*, a shrill piccolo plays *forte* and *piano* triad arpeggios respectively. In distinguishing between "far" and "near," Mahler does not content himself with simply differentiating between dynamic levels. He indicates that the piccolo plays *poco accelerando*, but to be on the safe side, he stresses that the instrumentalist has to play this passage with disregard to the time (*Ohne Rücksicht auf den Takt*, mm. 251–52). In other words, Mahler establishes the same kind of "clash" in meter between the two sonorous planes as it is found at the start of Mozart's march, where the rather free recitativo is simultaneously imposed on the rigidity of the march topic.

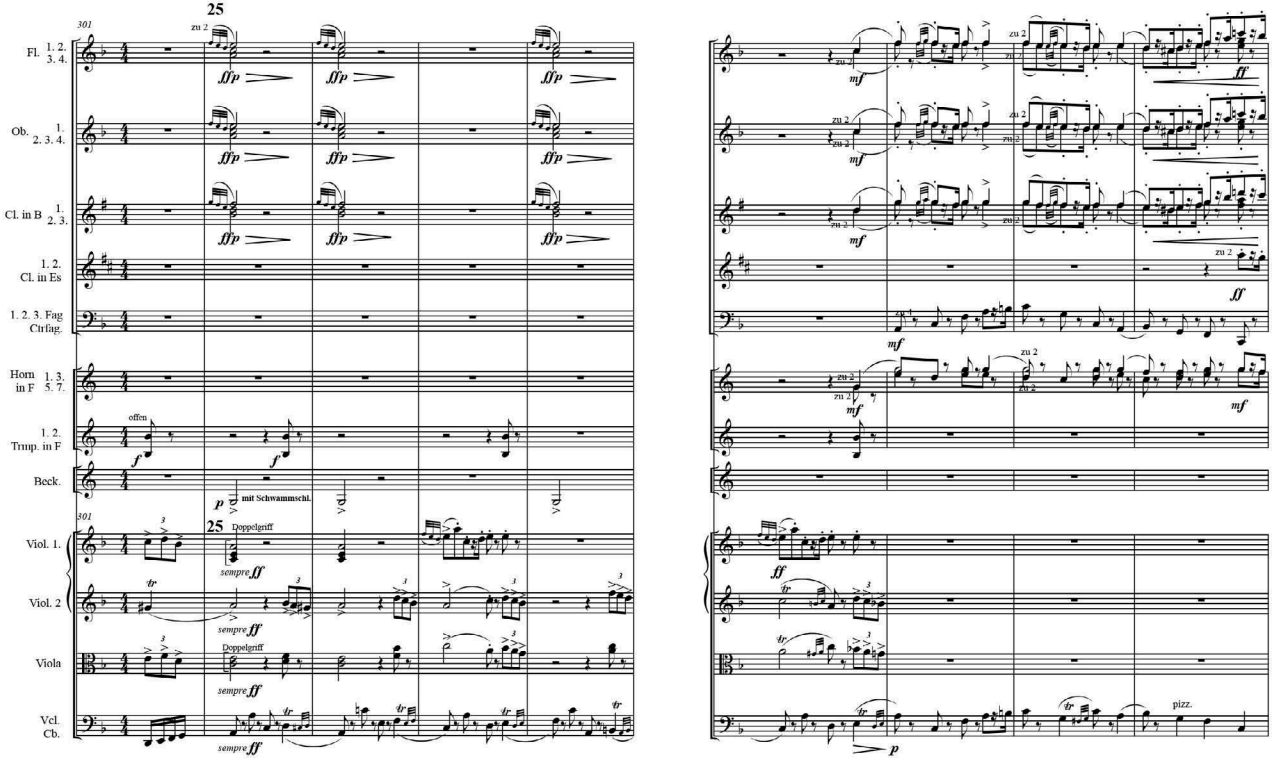
Mozart is specific about the unification of the "far" and "near" sonorous planes, that is, the gradual shift of the march from the background to the foreground. "The music of the march approaches" (*la marcia s'avvicina*), the instruction reads at the start of the *un poco crescendo* section; then the dialogue of the Count and the Countess ends (see Example 10.1). Clearly, the *forte* section marks the arrival of the march and the crowd coming to see the aristocratic couple (m. 28). Figaro and Susanna return, and with them Marcellina, Bartolo, Antonio, Barbarina, hunters with guns, the authorities, and peasant boys and girls. Two young women bring a wedding *capellino* with white feathers, two others a white veil, and another two gloves and a bouquet.

By contrast, Mahler does not maintain the simultaneous presence of two sonorous planes for long. He is more interested in a gradual approach of the march and the escalation to its elementary climax. Of course, as opposed to Mozart's opera, it would be impossible to correlate a one-to-one list of the "characters" entering the scene in the purely instrumental opening movement of the symphony. The final version of the symphony—like Mahler's other symphonic works—lacked any kind of program or explanation. Nevertheless, the Third Symphony constitutes a curious chapter in the ambivalent relationship of Mahler and program music. While he retrospectively offered a program of his first two symphonies, years after completing them, the "program" of the Third Symphony evolved parallel to that of the formal concept and the composition itself. Earlier versions of the program betray an



(Siedono; la marcia s'avvicina.)

Example 10.1 Mozart, *Le nozze di Figaro* Act III, Finale



Example 10.2 Mahler, Third Symphony, first movement

influence of Nietzsche, in particular of *Also sprach Zarathustra* (1883–1884, an excerpt from which appears in the text of the symphony's fourth movement); *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft* (1887); and, most importantly, the essay reinterpreting ancient Greek influences, *Die Geburt der Tragödie* (1872; see Micznik 2005, 304–06; Celestini 2006, 57–59). After having completed the draft of the opening movement, Mahler explained the beginning of the movement as "Pan Awakens" (*Pan erwacht*), and the passage in question as "Summer Marches In (Procession of Bacchus)" (*Der Sommer marschiert ein [Bacchuszug]*; see La Grange 1974, 798–99; Floros 1993, 94).

The triumphal march of Bacchus, that is Dionysus, is indeed a long procession. After mentioning in chapter 1 that "The chariot of Dionysos is laden with flowers and wreaths; beneath its yoke stride panther and tiger." (Nietzsche [1872] 1999, 18) at the end of *Die Geburt der Tragödie*, he invites the reader to join in this mythological event:

> Yes, my friends, believe as I do in Dionysiac life and in the rebirth of tragedy. The time of the Socratic man is past. Put on wreaths of ivy, take up the thyrsus, and do not be surprised if tigers and panthers lie down, purring and curling round your legs. Now you must only dare to be tragic human beings, for you will be released and redeemed. You will accompany the festive procession of Dionysus from India to Greece! Put on your armour for a hard fight, but believe in the miracles of your god!
>
> *(Nietzsche [1872] 1999, 98)*

Perhaps it is not entirely unjustified to establish a relationship between Dionysian abandon, Dionysian action, and the "mad day" (*La folle journée*) created by Beaumarchais, Da Ponte, and Mozart. In the third act of *Figaro*, the Count faces pandemonium caused by mixed and mistaken identities and interpersonal relationships, and in his shaming, at the end of the fourth act, he could, perhaps, identify with the goat, torn apart and eaten raw as a sacrifice to the god. Hearing the march of the third act, only his conscience is agitated, for the time being, from the inconceivable turns. Marcellina, who just recently wanted to marry Figaro, is in fact Figaro's mother. Figaro, whom even the gardener Antonio deems unfit to marry his niece Susanna because of his unknown background, is the son of Doctor Bartolo. Bartolo is revealed to be marrying his housekeeper Marcellina, mother of his child. Wearing a bride's veil, Susanna hands the Count a letter asking to meet him, which is part of the plot she devised with the Countess to punish him. At the same time, the Count watches with growing suspicion the relationship between the Countess and her godson, Cherubino, sabotaging the start of his service in the army. The gardener's daughter, Barbarina, whose budding charms have escaped neither the Count's attention nor his hand, has just cornered the Count by repeating his irresponsible promises before the Countess, openly demanding Cherubino's hand in marriage. In exchange, she generously promises the Count to love him like she does her kitten. Next, the two young women sing a song of praise to the Count, as the guardian of chastity. It is easy, therefore, to sympathize with the Count's exasperation and bewilderment when he declares, in the *recitativo secco*, just before the march (at the end of Scene XII): "I don't know what man, demon or god turns every occasion to my disgrace" (*Non so qual uom, qual demone, qual Dio rivolga tutto quanto a torto mio*).

We might venture to identify this demonic power with Dionysus. The Count's relationship with the Dionysian principle is, of course, as paradoxical as the deity himself, who is both prey and hunter, cause and victim of madness (Dionysian madness is thoroughly discussed by Nietzsche in chapter 4 of *Die Geburt der Tragödie*). Tearing apart the animals sacrificed to

Dionysus echoes the tearing apart of the deity. While the Count embodies Dionysian impetuosity, his foes cast upon him Dionysian madness on that "mad day."

Characterized by subverting existing hierarchies, but also boasting some egalitarian features, Dionysus has to meet with resistance and persecution because he threatens a whole lifestyle and value system. A late nineteenth-century encyclopedia, which most likely reflects a standard vision of contemporary Austro-Hungarian bourgeoisie, states: "where D[ionysian] cult struck root, everywhere the triumph of democracy followed suit. D. happened to be the god of the land-working population" ("Dionysos," 1893—my translation). It should be remembered, too, that Bacchanalian women assume a key role in his cult. Perhaps it is not an exaggeration to connect this to the political message of *Figaro*, that is, to the emancipation claims of the bourgeoisie. This message is highlighted in Beaumarchais with his "agitprop" tirades, while Da Ponte and Mozart convey the message by means of the personal relationships of the protagonists.

In 1906 the Viennese Court Opera staged a new production of *Figaro*, with Mahler conducting and Alfred Roller directing. During the march in the third act, a silent mass of people gathered ominously outside the Count's palace, standing around watch-fires. Verbal tradition has it that Mahler's orchestra played Mozart's dotted rhythms in the march with the sharpness of a *guillotine* (La Grange 1999, 332), thus suggesting that the production left no doubt as to the political orientation of the work. But can the political dimension be re-projected on Mahler's symphonic movement, evocative of *Figaro*'s march?

Richard Strauss said that the opening movement of Mahler's Third Symphony conjured up images of workers marching in the Prater on May Day (Franklin 1999, 175). In the 1904 Zurich performance of the work, the anonymous critic of the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* praised the composition as being "the symphony of the people" (*Volkssymphonie*) that painted a musical portrait of "the life of the present generation" and of the "social movement" with its "almost threatening demands for justice" and its "fierce battle against the State and its military forces, its victorious jubilation on winning freedom" (quoted in La Grange 1995, 659). The political resonance of the opening movement seems to be confirmed by the fact that the main theme of the movement, which appears in many guises, is itself an allusion to August Binzer's student-song "Wir hatten gebauet ein stattliches Haus" which, from the time of its writing in 1819, became an expression of pan-Germanic nationalism and various anti-establishment sentiments (Johnson 2009, 247–48).

More recently, Kangas analyzes the Third Symphony in the context of *fin-de-siècle* mass politics. In his analysis, he points out that during the time of composing the symphony, Mahler twice visited Vienna (in the summers of 1895 and 1896) *en route* from his workplace in Hamburg to his holiday home in Steinbach. These travels coincided with Lueger's anti-liberal, populist, anti-Semitic Christian Social Party gaining influence in Vienna's municipal council. Lueger's appointment as mayor failed, causing considerable frustration that led to rough political demonstrations in the streets of Vienna just a few days before Mahler's arrival. The Christian Social Party representing the withering lower-middle classes went on to build a real mass movement to match that of the Social Democrats. It is this context in which Kangas interprets the subtitle, which Mahler added to the passage beginning in measure 539 of the first movement in his autograph fair copy, dating from October 17, 1896: "The Mob" (*Das Gesindel*, in Kangas 2015, 380–89). For Mahler and his contemporaries, then, the *Figaro*'s march chiefly might have conveyed plebeian power and passion. Recognition of this possible allusion to Mozart helps us reconstruct, from the score itself, social and political connotations of the opening movement of the Third Symphony.

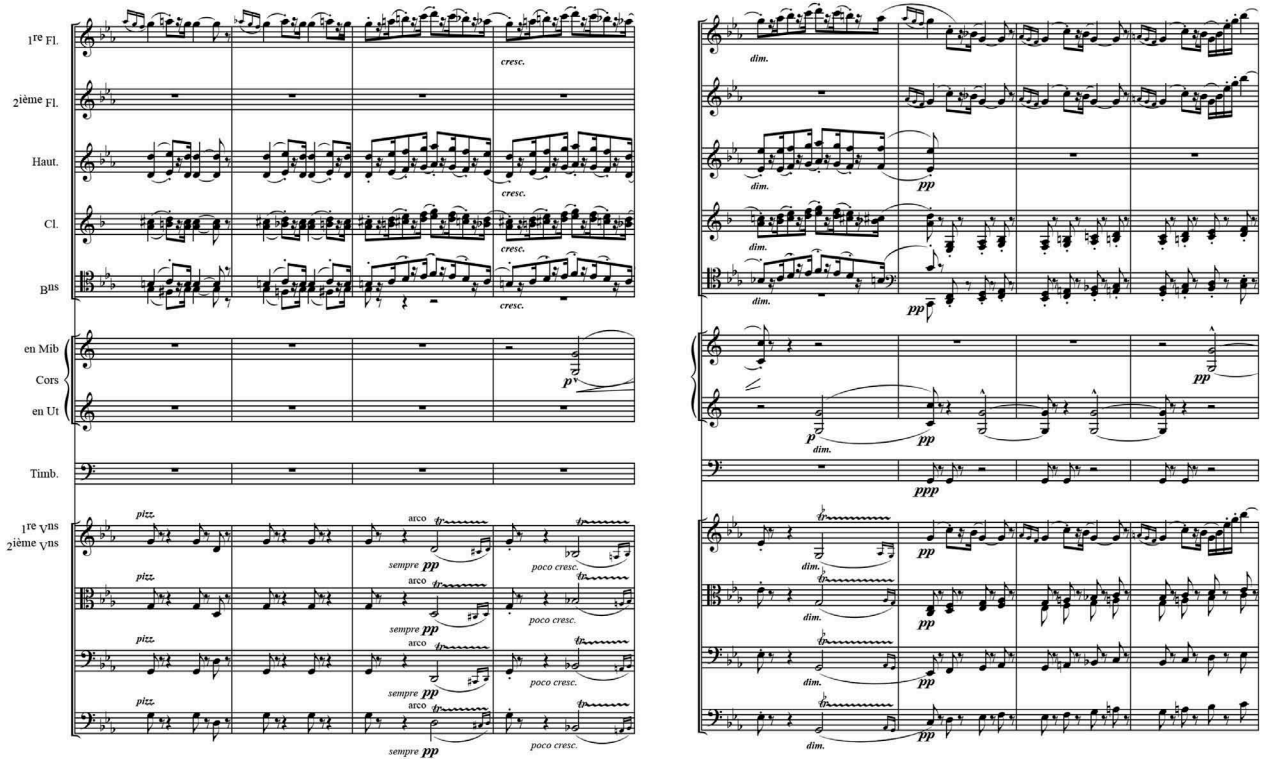
If one had to name a musical composition that constitutes a generic link between Mozart's and Mahler's march, chronologically situated between the two, it would be the smugglers' march, that is, the Sextet and Chorus in the third act of Bizet's *Carmen* (no. 19, see Example 10.3). Some characteristic patterns appearing in its orchestration and rhythmic profile, as well as its consistent application of specific ornaments resemble both Mozart and Mahler. This music was familiar to Mahler while composing his Third Symphony, since he conducted the much-admired opera on numerous occasions (La Grange 1999, 862; Martner 2010). Possibly, then, the marches of the two operas, both based on plots by French authors and both set in or near an "exotic" Seville, stuck in Mahler's mind as representations of the Spanish *couleur locale*. There are other signs that allude to Spanish, or even distinctively "Spanish-Gypsy" musical characteristics in the Third Symphony. The tambourine, a key component of Carmen's sonority, assumes an important role in the first three movements. That its exotic timbre, a "firm introduction into orchestral works [of the nineteenth century] was occasioned by the need for special effects of a Spanish or Gypsy character" (Montagu, Blades and Holland 2001). This is the instrument that sounds at measures 343–51 of the first movement. How does this coloration contribute to the discussed contexts of the movement?

Gypsies were perceived, in contemporary popular culture, as an elementary, exotic and threatening force, coming from a rejected periphery and seeking socially acceptable recognition. The ominously gathering crowd outside of Almaviva's palace fits this popular perception of a "gypsy threat." Similarly, the late nineteenth-century notion of Dionysus was identified, in public thought, with the alien god, whose cult immigrated from Asia minor subverting Olympian order. In a letter dating from 1900 or 1901, Mahler said that Dionysus was none other than "the instinctive, procreative force" (*die treibende, schaffende Kraft*, Solvik 2011, 210). Having read his friend Siegfried Lipiner's *Adam* in 1899, Mahler wrote in a letter to the author:

> It seems to me, by the way, that what Dionysus personified to the ancients was precisely the *inner drive*, in the grandiose mystical sense in which you have captured it! There, too, those in ecstasy are driven forth to the animals with which they become *one*.
>
> *(Solvik 2011, 213)*

It would seem that the outlandishness of Dionysus, representing the sphere of instincts, held symbolic meaning for Mahler. It expressed the inherent tension fostered in Western culture toward the irrational dimension of existence. If we delegate the irrational (the instinctive, "madness") to the sphere of the "other," the "alien," we renounce its integration into our civilized world, which is based on structured thought, form, and order. Nietzsche believed that the ancient Greeks successfully achieved this integration, even though they struggled to cope with the assumed strangeness (in fact, estrangement) of the "Dionysian." Chapter 4 of Nietzsche's *The Birth of Tragedy* describes the situation as follows:

> The Apolline Greek, too, felt the effect aroused by the Dionysiac to be "Titanic" and "barbaric"; at the same time he could not conceal from himself the fact that he too was related inwardly to those overthrown Titans and heroes. Indeed, he was bound to feel more than this: his entire existence, with all its beauty and moderation, rested on a hidden ground of suffering and of knowledge which was exposed to his gaze once more the Dionysiac. And behold! Apollo could not live without Dionysus! The "Titanic" and "barbaric" were ultimately just as much of a necessity as the Apolline!
>
> *(Nietzsche [1872] 1999, 27)*



Example 10.3 Bizet, *Carmen*, Act III, Sextet and Chorus

We should be reminded, however, that the remaining five movements of the Third Symphony, on the one hand, complement, and, on the other, override the events in the first movement. The entire composition is crowned by the hymn-like slow movement dominated by a string sonority, to which Mahler, in the above-mentioned program of August 1896, gave the title "What Love Tells Me" (*Was mir die Liebe erzählt*). Once again, this references *Figaro*. Plunging down into an abyss of shame, the Count is given a helping hand: the Countess forgives him. The protagonists then sing their own hymn of love:

Ah, tutti contenti	Ah! All happy
saremo così.	We shall be, just so.
Questo giorno di tormenti,	This day of torments,
di capricci, e di follia,	Of whims and folly,
in contenti e in allegria	Into pleasure and joy
solo amor può terminar.	Only love can resolve.

They begin *sotto voce* in G major, but finish in a confident, roaring D major, the key in which Mahler ends his Third Symphony. Both composers round off their works, which articulate social conflicts, with the image of reconciliation. As a type of utopia, this reconciliation was only possible in art.

Notes

1 Similar thematic and motivic material can be found in Mozart's measures 9–14, 37–42, and 51–56, and in Mahler's measures 256–72, 741–61, 772–76, and 791–800.

2 Mozart, W. A. [1874] (1973) *Bühnenwerke: Le Nozze di Figaro*. Ed. by L. Finscher. Kassel – Basel – Tours – London: Bärenreiter (Neue Mozart-Ausgabe II/5/16/2). Available at http://dme.mozarteum.at/DME/nma (Downloaded: 1 October 2017).

11

TOPICS AND STYLISTIC REGISTER IN RUSSIAN OPERA, 1775–1800

Johanna Frymoyer

In his monumental study *Scenarios of Power* (1995), historian Richard Wortman argues that Western symbols of monarchic power formed an important complement to social, political, and military reforms adopted by Russian rulers in the eighteenth century.[1] Beginning with Peter I (r. 1682–1725), Russian tsars and tsarinas introduced European-styled coronations, weddings, funeral processions, military parades, and rules of etiquette. These symbols of European courtly prestige served to transform the image of Russia into a centralized state ruled by an autocrat vested with the secular welfare of his or her people and surrounded by ennobled elites committed to state service. Naroditskaya (2012) has recently extended his work to the musical spectacles under Catherine II (r. 1762–1796), interpreting court theater as the simultaneous display and enactment of monarchic power. Whereas Naroditskaya, like Wortman, largely focuses on visual and textual imagery, one might also ask how composers, both foreign and Russian, adapted Europe's *musical* semiosis to the dramatic social environs of Russia in the late eighteenth century.

Ratner (1980) and Allanbrook (1983) demonstrated that late eighteenth-century music presented rich opportunity for composers and listeners to engage with the representation, prescription, and critique of social power in opera and instrumental music through musical *topics*. These musical symbols drew on the familiar "sounds" of everyday life, such as dances and marches; their evocations in concert and stage music provided a rich intellectual and imaginative engagement for listeners. A key to topical interpretation is their correlation with broader cultural paradigms such as social register. Ratner distinguishes topics by degree of "dignity" while Allanbrook (1983, 66–70) and Hatten (1994, 74–82) further clarify these modes to include: an exalted or noble high style; bourgeois and urban middle style; and rustic, rural, and/or exotic low style. Rumph goes so far as to describe topics as enabling an "imaginative capacity" through which eighteenth-century "audiences orient[ed] themselves within their social world, with its divisions, hierarchies, and possibility for mobility" (2012, 94).

Given that topics formed a central semiotic system through which composers and listeners navigated the complex social world of late eighteenth-century Europe, it is not surprising to find a wealth of musical topics in Russian opera by the last quarter of the eighteenth century.[2] This century was one of radical change and social redefinition in Russia brought on by Westernization, territorial expansion, and civil and legal reforms

designed to implement clearer social divisions between nobility, clergy, townspeople, and peasantry. The question for topical analysis in Russian opera is not whether topical semiosis transferred from Western Europe to Russian audiences; there are ample examples of topics in Russian opera by the end of the century.[3] Rather, the question this essay explores is the transformations of stylistic register that European topics underwent in their incorporation into Russian operatic contexts. Western topics interact in Russian opera with domestic and folk music traditions in a manner that redefines their typical stylistic correlations onto high, middle, and low social registers. This remapping serves to articulate the unique social experiences of Russian listeners during the reign of Catherine II, particularly with respect to social reforms, the conquest and settlement of frontiers in the Crimea and the Caucasus, and an emerging sense of Russian national identity.

Ceremonial music

Many topics in Ratner's lexicon are derived from "real world" exemplars or functional music, such as fanfares, hunt, military signals, and courtly dance. Mirka explains that an important facet of topical signification is that these musical styles are "taken out of their proper context" in their original functional uses in the field or the ballroom and placed in the listening environment of a symphony or opera (2014b, 2). As a preliminary to topical identification and interpretation in Russian operatic contexts, one must first investigate the familiarity of Russian audiences with the functional referents of topics.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that the sonic world of the Russian court and urban centers transformed along with increasingly westernized etiquette, rituals, and pastimes. The diary of Friedrich Wilhelm von Bergholz (1699–1765), a member of the Duke of Holstein's entourage at the Russian court during the reign of Peter I, is particularly insightful. Bergholz makes numerous references to ceremonial music and fanfares like those of European courts featuring "timpanists, trumpeters, singers, oboists and drummers, in indescribably great numbers" at ceremonial processions, banquets, and weddings (Sander 2007, 35 and 92–94). Other functional music such as marches, military signals, and hunt were firmly entrenched over subsequent rulers. Hunting became an important pastime during the reign of Anna, who not only popularized the sport but also extended the diversion to both men and women (Anisimov 2004, 95–96). Jakob von Stählin, a German historiographer who published in 1770 one of the most descriptive accounts of music and ballet at the Russian court, describes at length Waldhorn music in Russia ([1770] 1982, 175–78). Military parade occupied a special place for Peter I who maintained "toy regiments." Both Peter III (r. 1762) and Paul I (r. 1796–1801) also kept personal regiments for endless drills and ceremonial parades around court compounds fashioned after Prussian military exercises.

Given this transformation of ceremonial, military, and leisurely life at the Russian court, it is not surprising that among the most frequently encountered topics in Russian opera we find hunts, fanfares, and marches. For example, both Bortniansky (Venice, 1778) and Paisiello (St. Petersburg, 1780) composed operas on Metastasio's libretto *Alcide al bivio*. Where the libretto (Vienna 1760) in Scene 4 calls for a martial interlude to herald the arrival of Aretea, goddess of virtue, both composers write similar music. Bortniansky's interlude for two horns in Act II scene 1 is marked Maestoso. Paisiello's analogous passage in Act I scene 4 (I-Nc Rari 3.3.22, p. 108), indicates a "Marcia" tempo in $\frac{2}{4}$, with dotted rhythms, triadic figurations, and similar "hunting horn" intervals. The presence of hunt and military topics to signal the arrival of the goddess in both compositions suggests: (1) Russian

and Ukrainian composers such as Bortniansky absorbed topics and their conventional associations during study abroad; and (2) foreign composers such as Paisiello acculturated Russian audiences, already familiar with the functional analogues, to their conventional usages on the opera stage.

The audience's familiarity with both the functional music and normative topical strategies in opera enabled composers to also "play" with topics for ironic or comic effect in much the same way that Allanbrook observes in Mozart's operas. One such example can be found in Pashkevich's *Skupoy* (*The Miser*, 1781), which features the common *buffa* trope of social class "cross dressing." The servant Marfa is dressed like a countess to deceive the miser, Skryagin. Prolaz, Skryagin's servant, is in love with Marfa and is privy to the deception. In his aria "Yeyë derevni … govoryat, ikh mnogo" (Her villages, they say, are many), Prolaz describes for Skryagin the vast monetary and land holdings of the "countess." The maestoso tempo, unison scoring, ascending triads, and dotted rhythms impart on the orchestral opening a high style appropriate to the description of a countess. Pashkevich's play with stylistic register here, however, is not unique: Mozart frequently employs high-style topics for lower-class characters to create comic or subversive scenarios (see Allanbrook 1983, 79–82, 123–25). What is more important is that the scene suggests that Russian audiences by the late eighteenth century were familiar not only with European topics but also their stylistic associations; as a result, composers could also deploy them ironically, as in a lower-class character singing in a high style as he outwits his unscrupulous social better.

Skupoy, consistent with *buffa* trends, may reflect the broad tastes of the ticket-paying audience at the Knipper Theater where the work premiered. At more exclusive court theaters, catering to Catherine II's intimate political and social circles, topics seem to engage in more complex dialogue involving Russian national identity. *Fedul s det'mi* (*Fedul and his Children*, 1791), which premiered at the Hermitage Theater and featured a libretto by Catherine II and music by Martín y Soler and Pashkevich, provides an interesting example. The plot features Fedul, a recent widower who has decided to remarry, much to the dismay of his 15 children. A secondary plot in the opera concerns the marriage pursuits of Fedul's daughter, Dunyasha. Wooed by the nobleman Detina, she relates the events to her family in "Vo sele, sele Pokrovskom" (In the village of Pokrovskoye), attributed in the 1895 vocal score to Martín y Soler.

Dunyasha's song employs several interesting narrative devices. The song is adapted from several important folk collections in circulation among the urban populace at the time. The text of the song is drawn directly from Chulkov's folk song collection *Sobranie raznykh pesen* (1770), while the melody and harmonization resembles strophic settings of the text in Trutovsky's *Sobranie ruskikh prostykh pesen s notami* (1776) and Lvov and Prach's *Sobranie russkikh narodnykh pesen* (1790).[4] This verbatim incorporation of a pre-existing song was not unusual for Russian operas of the time, and one could speculate that many audience members, recognizing the folk song text or setting from these collections, would hear Dunyasha's aria as a kind of diegetic performance of the folk song within the opera. And yet, the song takes on a distinctly narrative function as it serves to relate earlier events of the opera to Dunyasha's family.

Enhancing this narrative effect, Martín y Soler makes an interesting choice to depart from the modified strophic setting of the folk song when Dunyasha directly quotes the nobleman's offer of marriage. The textual and musical framing here is enhanced by a sudden shift to B♭ major (m. 71) in contrast to the previous G minor tonality (Example 11.1). Dunyasha's dotted and double-dotted rhythms are underscored by an accompaniment that plods along with deliberate chords on every beat, introducing a march topic. The

67 71

Он и зо - ло - то су - лил. По-ез-

74

жай со мной Ду - ня - ша, По-ез-жай он го - во - рил, По-да-

81

рю те - бя пар - чо - ю. И на ше - ю жем - чу - гом: Ты вде - рев - не здесь кре -

86

стьян - ка, А там бу - дешь го - спо - жа, И во всем та -

91

ком у - бо - ре, Бу - дешь вдво - е хо - ро - ша. Бу - дешь

98

вдво - е хо - ро - ша. Бу - дешь вдво - е хо - ро - ша.

105

Я ска - за - ла, что по - е - ду, Да о - пом - ни - лась о - пять,

Dunyasha: He promised me gold. /
Come with me, Dunyasha, / Come, he said, /
I'll give you brocade. / And pearls around your neck: /
You are a peasant here in the village, / But there you'll be a noblewoman, /
And in all of that finery / You'll look even more pretty. /
I said I would go / But then I came to my senses, /

Example 11.1 Martín y soler, *Fedul s det'mi*, no. 9 "Vo sele, sele Pokrovskom," mm. 67–112

descending octave leap on "he said" (*on govoril*) provides a comical aping of the incantation gesture typically reserved for superhuman characters in eighteenth-century opera (Buch 2008, 49; 353). The learned style in mm. 89–94 that underscores the description of a noblewoman's attire (*ubore*) calls attention to the "finery" of composition with an overwrought sequence, and the text then repeats with fanfare calls on fourths in the vocal line in mm. 97–98 and mm. 101–02. This dense succession of high style topics is over-coded, creating a mocking parody of Detina's "noble" words. Indeed, "Detina" itself translates as "Big Fellow," casting this urban noble in a pretentious light in contrast with the idyllic simplicity of village peasantry. When Dunyasha narrates her response to the nobleman, the folk melody returns along with the shift back to first-person narration (m. 105):

Ya skazala, shto poyedu	I said I would go
Da opomnilas' opyat',	But then I came to my senses,
Net, sudarik ne poyedu	No sir, I will not go
Govorila ya yemu:	I told him:
Ya krest'yankoyu rodilos',	I was born a peasant,
Yak ne l'zya byt' gospozhoy;	So I cannot be a lady;
Ya v derevne zhit' privykla,	I am accustomed to life in the village,
A tam budu privykat'.	And that is where I will remain.

She rejects Detina's offer on the grounds that she is a peasant (*krest'yanka*) who prefers village life, thus further highlighting the expressive gap between Dunyasha's "authentic Russian peasant" voice of the narrator/Dunyasha and the ostentatious Westernized march topic used to quote the nobleman's words.

Whereas *Skupoy* makes general comedy of the high style through typical *buffa* methods of social class cross dressing, *Fedul* is involved in a more earnest process of orienting Russian culture vis-à-vis European symbols of high style. By mocking the count's noble mannerisms, the song's idealized portrayal of village peasantry, symbolized through folk song, emerges as more authentic than affected aristocratic life. Of course, this is an idealized view of folk, and Taruskin has problematized the distinctly aristocratic drive to identify a unique Russian spirit (*narod*) in idyllic images of the Russian peasant (1997, 4–12). In a similar vein, we can observe a reordering of stylistic registers in the setting of "Vo sele, sele Pokrovskom" in *Fedul* in which symbols of European high style are presented in an inauthentic, exaggerated light in contrast to a celebrated folk idiom, casting the Russian *narod* above signifiers of European high style.

Minuet

Among the musical symbols and rituals imported from Europe, courtly dance, and in particular the minuet, deserves special treatment. From its origins at the French court, the minuet represented the epitome of aristocratic grace and physical comportment. By the end of the eighteenth century, the minuet was one of the few French courtly dances still in practice; at public balls such as those held at the Redoutensaal in Vienna, the highest-ranking couple in attendance performed a minuet before the dance floor opened to the general (middle class) patrons (Allanbrook 1983, 33–36; Lowe 2002, 175–78).

In Russia, the minuet appears as early as the reign of Peter I. In his diaries, Bergholz describes the minuet, along with "English" and "Polish" dances, at courtly celebrations including weddings, banquets, and other festivities.[5] At Peter's court, however, social dance

took on a distinctly political subtext within westernizing reforms. As recently as the seventeenth century the sexes were strictly segregated among the Russian aristocracy with women playing little role in public life. When Peter formally abolished the *terem* (separate living quarters for women) in 1718, courtly dance provided a visible opportunity for implementing this particular social reform. During the reigns of Anna and Elizabeth, dance became a more frequent activity with the appointment of French and Italian dancing masters at court. Balls and masquerades were held several times a week, either at court or (imposed upon) hosts from among the nobility. Larger balls held at the court theater were open to a paying public, though separate entrances and other behavioral codes nonetheless served to reinstate social class divisions (Keenan 2013, 106–13). By 1770, Stählin recounted the following story in his history of dance at the Russian court:

> Under the tsarina Elizabeth's reign, one of the first French ballet masters, Mr. [Jean-Baptiste] Landé, was not afraid to say publicly: if one wants to see a minuet quite regularly and freely danced, he must see it at the Russian Imperial Court. Lest this saying seem to stem from flattery, it is well known that the tsarina Elizabeth was one of the most beautiful and perfect dancers, whose example the whole court was careful to follow and dance nicely.
>
> *(1982, 9)*

In summary, by the end of the eighteenth century, social dance was a well-ingrained component of upper-class life in St. Petersburg.

Nonetheless, in the transport of social dance to Russia there emerges an element of disorder that runs contrary to the ideals of physical decorum, dignity, and hierarchy embodied in dance at the French court. Stories emerge of Peter I's courtiers receiving beatings and other punishments for not dancing well or failing to keep up with the grueling, extended evenings of dance. Furthermore, dancing, particularly at weddings, followed elaborate toasting rituals and compulsory drinking in which men and women alike consumed large quantities of alcohol (Zachar'in 2001, 150–51; Sander 2007, 90–92). Western courtly dances even became exclusionary, as nobles without access to dance masters would have been unable to perform the foreign dances at court (Zachar'in 2001, 165–67). And unlike in Europe, where the minuet took on a special role in the performance and symbolization of aristocratic grace, in Russia the "Polish" seems to take pride of place over the minuet as the initiating dance in many of the performative rituals at court (Sander 2007, 99–104). Even later in the century, Catherine II, in her *Memoirs*, recounts one particular tradition at Elizabeth's court, in which Tuesday evening balls required attendees to come dressed as the opposite sex, resulting in a raucous pileup as dancers tripped and fell over the unfamiliar attire (Catherine II 1955, 78). Thus, the place of social dance at Russian court is ambiguous. The unique rituals of the Russian court chip away at the decorum and social signification of courtly dances and the minuet in particular.

This subversion of the minuet's high-style register transfers to opera, where the minuet topic often seems to satirize "performances" of high style. In Bortniansky's *Le Faucon* (*The Falcon*, 1786), composed for the ducal court of Catherine's son Paul, the wealthy widow Elvire, preoccupied with her son's ailing health, calls two doctors to attend to her son's illness. Elvire's servant, Marine, privately remains convinced that the son's only problem is maternal overindulgence. When the doctors, named Dr. Promptus and Dr. Lentellus, arrive in the finale to Act I, Marine pretends to be the sick patient. A squabble erupts as the doctors argue over the diagnosis of the perfectly healthy Marine. Elvire then enters upon the scene and the music dramatically shifts from *buffa* comedy to high style. Elvire's chastisement of Marine with

a fanfare topic (m. 159) both establishes her social position over Marine and the doctors, yet also serves to "announce" pretentiously her own arrival on the scene. This stiff manner continues as Elvire launches into an explanation of her son's condition. The music shifts to a slow triple time in the new key of E♭ major (m. 179) with an unambiguous, unadorned minuet topic. On first reading, the topic seems ideally suited to Elvire's high social status and the noble sentiment of maternal love. And yet, given Marine's critique of the situation and the doctors' own posturing (the score instructs that the doctors assume a "very important and august expression"), Elvire's high style is recast as bathos. This shift to high style is thus cast as affected and insincere, throwing a humorous lens over Elvire's supposedly tragic circumstance.

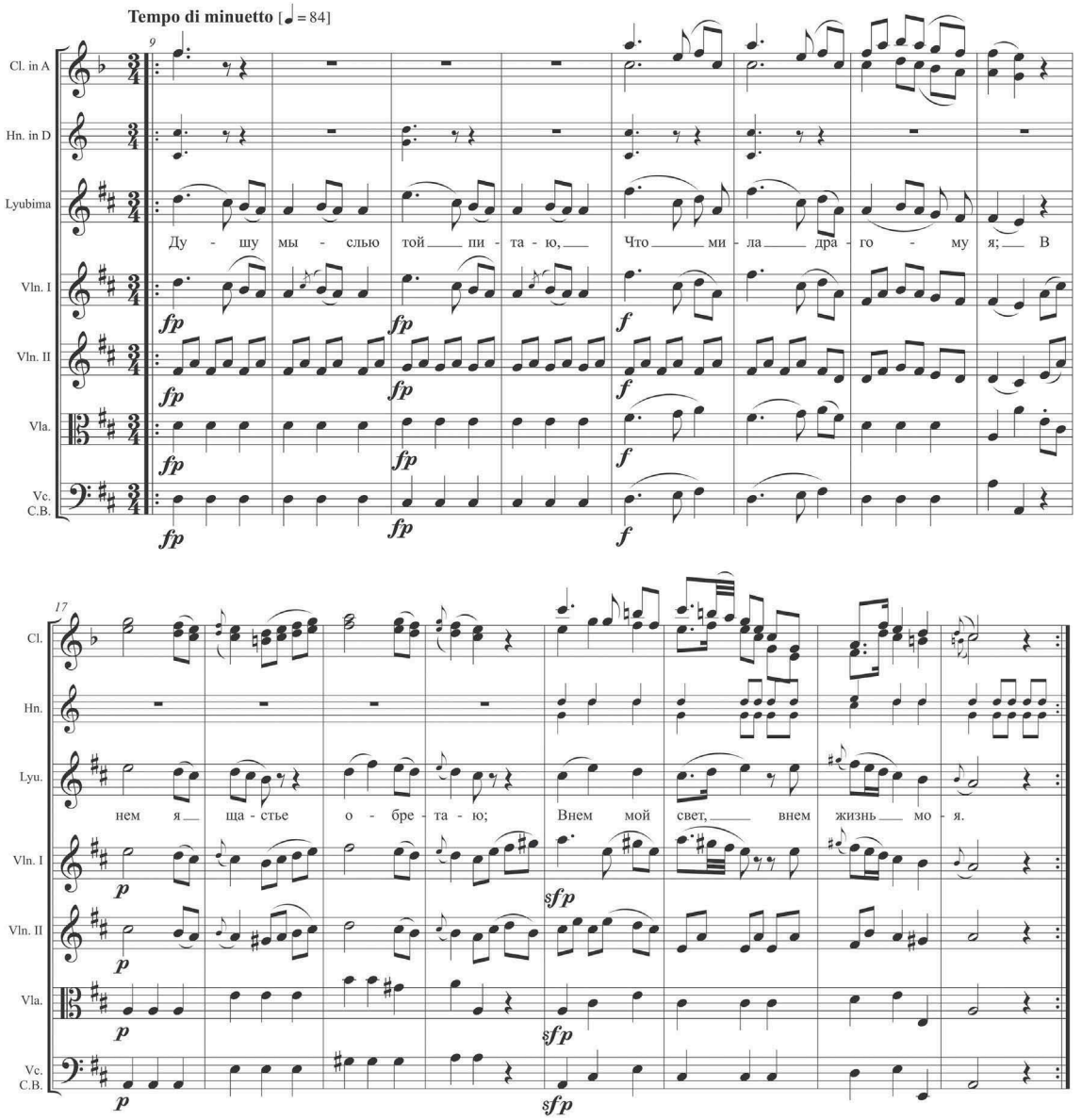
There is another level of complexity to how audiences may have heard the minuet in Russia. Beyond balls, weddings, and masquerades, the minuet permeated urban life through sung media in Russia, first in the genre *kanty* and later in the genre *rossiyskie pesni*. Both Ritzarev (2006, 44–52) and Findeizen (2008, 152; 221–25) describe the importance of these genres in Russia for familiarizing broad urban audiences with Western idioms through domestic music-making. The *kanty* were spiritual songs for three voices and first appeared in the seventeenth century. By the mid-eighteenth century, the songs took on increasingly sentimental texts and Italianate characteristics such as minuet and siciliana dance rhythms. Ritzarev describes this process of "minuetization" of the *kanty* as an important step in exposing those outside the immediate cultural sphere of the imperial court to Western musical tastes (2006, 44–46).

Rossiyskie pesni, or Russian songs, emerged later in the eighteenth century, first popularized with Teplov's collection *Mezhdu delom bezdel'ye* (1759).[6] The collection shows links to the *kanty* not only in their scoring on three staves, but also in their importance for communicating Western musical tastes through domestic, urban music-making. Unlike the folk songs found in collections by Trutovsky and Lvov-Prach, *rossiyskie pesni* display a remarkable influence of Western topic types, as indicated by the songs' frequent use of *siciliana* or *menuet* for tempo marking and attendant metric and gestural characteristics of these dance meters. The topical associations of *rossiyskie pesni* seem an important part of their advertising, as in this description in *Sanktpetersburgskie vedomosti* from 1795:

> *Magazin muzykal'nkyh uveselenii* [The store of musical entertainments] or a Complete collection of the very best and most recent vocal works of every kind, containing Russian and Italian arias, newly translated, tender, theatrical, pastoral, allegorical, military, Little Russian [region roughly corresponding to Ukraine], spiritual, and rustic folk songs, arranged in the best taste …
>
> *(Findeizen 2008, 230)*

If topics are styles and genres taken out of their proper context, the minuet in Russia then acts as a kind of topic "twice removed," moving from aristocratic social dance to *kanty* and *rossiyskie pesni*, and then from these genres of domestic singing to the opera stage. This additional layer of signification leads to a stylistic re-encoding of the minuet topic from the high style of aristocratic dance to the *middle* style of urban domestic singing.

The implications for this semiotic re-encoding and registral shift of the minuet are evident in Pashkevich's *Skupoy* in the first aria of Lyubima, the opera's sympathetic female protagonist. Lyubima has just had an argument with her treacherous guardian, the miser Skryagin, and she sings a tender aria "Dushu mysl'yu toy pitayu" (I cherish the thought) of her love for Milovid, whom she is eager to wed (Example 11.2). The aria is marked *Tempo di minuetto* and follows a loose binary structure. The equal emphasis of beats within the measure and use of the minuet motto rhythm in mm. 22 and 24 further point to a minuet topic. Other features, however, are more akin to the



Example 11.2 Pashkevich, *Skupoy*, no. 4 "Dushu mysl'yu toy pitayu," mm. 9–24

middle register *Deutsche Tanz*, such as continuous eighth-note accompaniment in the second violins and frequent ornaments in the melodic line. Lower-style urban and rustic incursions on the minuet are frequently encountered in Europe, notably in Haydn's symphonic minuets (Lowe 2002, 182). But whereas Haydn's expressive aim is often one of irony or topical play, in *Skupoy* this troping serves to emulate the middle style of urban genres such as *kanty* and *rossiyskie pesni*. This evocation of domestic sentimentality presents a topic with which many urban listeners in Russia would be familiar, thus casting Lyubima in a sympathetic, rather than aristocratic, light.

Another example features the minuet topic employed by the peasant class, though here the effect is again ironic rather than sincere. In *Fedul*, the third scene follows a rather formulaic structure in which the children, one by one, attempt to dissuade their father from remarrying, with each dialogue followed by choruses sung by the children together. These choruses exhibit features of the Russian choral style for which Pashkevich was particularly well known. But as the scene progresses and the children's plea grows more urgent, the choral style becomes increasingly Western in topical content, introducing elements of a French overture style (no. 6) and learned style (no. 7, mm. 30–36). When the children finally address the father directly and beg him not to marry, the music shifts for the first time to triple meter, a striking contrast in an opera almost entirely in $\frac{2}{4}$ meter up to this point (Example 11.3). The heavy downbeats in the first two measures and continuous eighth notes (mm. 95–97) suggest a *Deutsche Tanz*. By measure 104, however, the passage simplifies to a dignified minuet with homophonic texture, motto rhythm, minor inflection, and even elements of learned style in the sequences and imitation between the voices.

The play on the minuet topic here hints at the clash of values, realized in Dunyasha's final aria. The children's plea to their father, expressed through European topical gestures, feels decidedly foreign in an opera where the dominant musical style is a folk idiom. Furthermore, the plea falls on deaf ears: in the opera's final scene, the bride arrives and the wedding proceeds as planned with the children having a change of heart. The opera thus upholds the ideal of village life and obedience to one's parents. One detects here a hint of conservatism at the court of Catherine II in this example from *Fedul*. The modern, Western sensibility expressed by the youthful children is cast in opposition to the more traditional social values expressed in the folk idiom. In summary, the minuet remains an expressively flexible topic open to play: at times it reflects the secular world order centered on courtly ritual; at other times it embodies the sentimental, middle-class ethos rooted in secular song; and it can even represent foreign values intruding on Russian national identity idealized in village peasant life.

Alla turca and style hongrois

Beyond the urban life and courtly intrigue of St. Petersburg and Moscow, the eighteenth century was a formative period for Russia in positioning itself both with respect to Europe and to its own borders, frontiers, and cultural others. Catherine II sought to impress upon foreign dignitaries, heads of state, and her literary and philosophical correspondents a view of Russia not as Europe's Eastern, exotic other, but rather as the model of enlightened, absolute monarchy. Part of this conceptual reorientation, Dickinson argues (2002, 5–6), involved reorienting Europe's west-east axis onto a north-south polarity casting the civilized, urban Russian "self" against religious and ethnic difference in the south, namely along the frontier regions of the Crimea and Caucasus.

As Wortman (1995, 2014) has shown, staging ethnic difference, particularly within coronation ceremonies, was an important means by which Russia displayed her national prestige for European observers, but similar parallels arise in the musical life of the Russian court. Stählin (1982, 152–53) includes a lengthy description of Turkish music in Russia and locates the trend beginning in 1739 under the reign of Empress Anna when German court musicians imitated Janissary bands to celebrate the conclusion of the Russo-Turkish War (1735–1739). Lavishly-staged operas and pageants at the court of Catherine II also played into this staging of difference. *Fevey* (1786) and *Nachalnoe upravleniye Olega* (*The Early Reign of Oleg*, 1791) both premiered at the Hermitage Theater for international audiences of both Russian courtiers and foreign dignitaries; these performances are particularly notable as they

92
Эхь, эхь, эхь, мы все пес - ню од - ну по ем;

98
эхь, эхь, эхь, мы все пес - ню од - ну по - ем!

104
Ах, не же - нись о - тец наш род - ной,
Ах,не же - нись о - тец наш род - ной! Ах, не же - нись о -
Ах, не же - нись о - тец наш род - ной,

110
1. 2.
тец наш род - ной, ной, о - тец наш род - ной,

Fedul's Children: Eh, eh, we sing a single song, / Eh, eh, we sing a single song, /
Ah, do not marry dearest father, / Ah, do not marry dearest father,

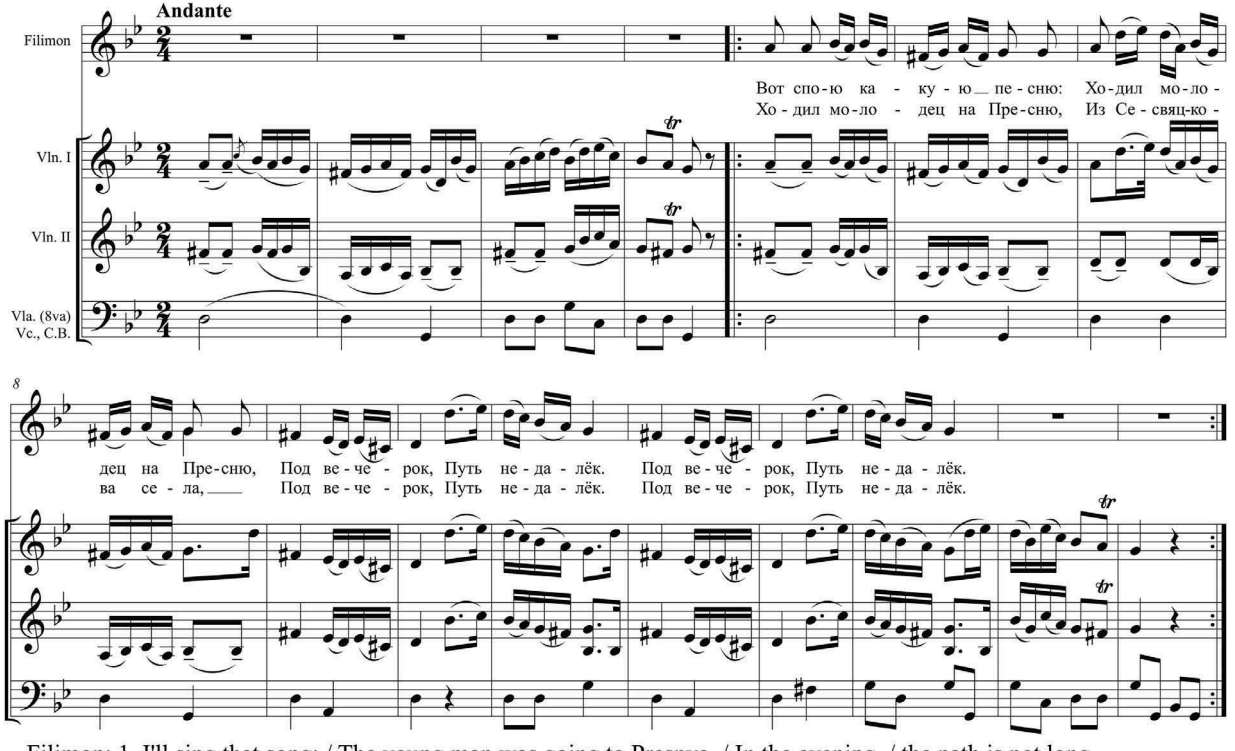
Example 11.3 Pashkevich, *Fedul s det'mi*, no. 7 "Ekh! Ekh! Delo idet k piru," mm. 92–114

roughly span the Russo-Turkish War (1787–1792), waged in close collaboration with Emperor Joseph II's own war against the Ottomans. The "Kalmyk Chorus" of *Fevey* and the fourth chorus in Act V of *Oleg* both feature instances of Turkish march and *alla turca* style, which are all the more remarkable for the ethnographic *inaccuracies* of these signifiers in these works.[7] Token uses of exoticism at the Russian court thus tap into an international trend of musical othering that reflects both Russia and Austria's political conflict with the Ottoman Porte in the late eighteenth century.

Perhaps more interesting, however, are the subtle uses of exoticism beyond the immediate sphere of courtly influence in which musical othering is used to articulate Russia's complex social relationships between the large urban centers and those who populate the frontier. *Mel'nik–koldun, obmanshchik i svat* (*The Miller–Witch, Cheat and Marriage Broker*, 1779), music by Mikhail Sokolovsky and libretto by Aleksandr Ablesimov, is set in a small village where a local miller/magician helps Filimon win the hand of Anyuta. Anyuta's father is a peasant, while her mother is an impoverished noblewoman. Both want Anyuta to marry into their respective social classes. In the opera's dénouement, the miller declares Filimon the ideal suitor because he belongs to the *odnodvortsy* class.

The social designation of *odnodvorets* here carries no parallel in European social structure, because the class developed within the unique demands of frontier settlement and the institution of serfdom. Beginning in the seventeenth century, the Muscovy government offered privileges traditionally reserved for the nobility to non-nobles in return for military service and settlement in Russia's expanding frontiers. These privileges included land and serf ownership and exemption from paying taxes. By the eighteenth century, very few of these settlers actually owned serfs, and both Peter I and Catherine II restricted and rescinded the privileges originally promised to the class (Kollman 2017, 359–64). The *odnodvortsy* did not receive these restrictions quietly; the group formed a vocal, if disorganized, constituency at Catherine II's Legislative Commission (1767–1768), constituting 42 of the commission's total 567 delegates (Hartley 1999, 78). Filimon's social status in this opera thus points to a contemporary social concern, yet the opera's portrayal of an *odnodvorets* as an idealized blend of high and low, land-owner and laborer, is a far cry from the political reality of *odnodvortsy* by the last quarter of the century.

If the *odnodvortsy* had no parallel in Europe, it begs the question of what musical language and stylistic register Sokolovsky chose to represent this social class in Filimon's music. Interestingly, Filimon's first aria "Vot spoyu kakuyu pesnyu" (I will sing that song) in Act I is coded with signifiers of Turkish and *hongrois* styles (Example 11.4). The accompaniment features drone-like sustained notes on D, harmonic and modal ambiguity between G minor and D major, acciaccatura accents, close scoring in thirds, and "hopping" thirds. These characteristics all draw on features of *alla turca* style (Hunter 1998, 46). More telling, however, is the move between F♯ and E♭ in the melodic line (mm. 9 and 12). Raised leading tones are frequently encountered in Russian folk songs, but the *adjacency* here of the raised seventh immediately followed by a lowered sixth, creating an augmented second in the melody, is quite unusual. Adding to the "exotic" coloring of the passage is the raised fourth on C♯ (mm. 9 and 12), which implies another augmented second between the third and fourth scale degrees. Bellman (1993, 120–21) has identified this harmonic minor scale with a raised fourth as the "Gypsy" scale, an important feature of *style hongrois*. Combined with features of *alla turca* style, the song mixes Western signifiers of Turkish and Eastern European otherness, instilling a sense of difference that calls attention to Filimon's unique social status tied to a frontier far removed from audiences in Russia's urban centers. There is perhaps even the insinuation that Filimon himself is Muslim:



Filimon: 1. I'll sing that song: / The young man was going to Presnya, / In the evening, / the path is not long.
2. He went to Presnya, / from the village of Sesvyatskov, / In the evening, / the path is not long.

Example 11.4 Sokolovsky, *Mel'nik–koldun, obmanshchik i svat*, Act I no. 5 "Vot spoyu kakuyu pesnyu," mm. 1–16

Kappeler (2001, 31) and Kollman (2017, 89) note that during the reign of Peter I, Muslim nobles who refused to convert to Orthodoxy lost their hereditary noble status and were reclassified as *odnodvortsy*. And yet, Filimon is the opera's sympathetic protagonist; to infuse his music with "otherness" seems to mark him with difference that is usually reserved on European stages for despots, sexual predators, or "noble savages." Paradoxically, the song's text identifies specific locales around Moscow: the young woman lives in the village of Vsekhsvyatskoye, from which the young man travels to the Presnya district.

The answer to this curious representation perhaps lies in another solemn procession into Moscow that unfolded four years prior to the opera's premiere. In 1773, a deadly rebellion broke out in the frontier regions that brought together the diverse concerns of peasants, Cossacks, ethnically marginalized tribes, and small landowners such as *odnodvortsy*. When the rebellion was finally quelled in 1775, an unusual sentence was handed down to the insurgency's leader, Yemelyan Pugachev. Arrested in the frontier town of Yaitsk, Pugachev was sent in a metal cage to Moscow where a sentence of decapitation and quartering awaited him. The gruesome public execution was carried out in Bolotnaya Square, just several blocks from the Maddox Theater on Znamenka Street in which *Mel'nik* premiered only four years later. Like the protagonist in "Vot spoyu" entering Moscow from the village outskirts, encoded with exotic musical signifiers, Pugachev likewise entered Moscow from the frontier lands tinged with ethnic, religious, and political otherness.

The topical and textual context of the song thus invites a rich intertextual play with contemporary political events close both in memory and geographic space, and there is much potential in unpacking the song's multilayered meanings. On the one hand, the song perhaps taps into a sense of solidarity with the rebellion through its sympathetic casting of the exotically-coded Filimon.[8] Employing signifiers of musical exoticism alongside local landmarks dissolves the geographic and even class boundaries between Moscow's theater goers and the uprising on a distant frontier. This reading is strengthened if we consider that the Maddox Theater was privately operated and catered to ticket-paying audiences well outside the courtly, political, and geographic influence of St. Petersburg (Findeizen 2008, 72–73; Sosnovtseva 1984, 230–31). On the other hand, the song's exoticism perhaps plays on familiar European tropes and fears of Eastern despotism and barbarism. If the song's young man is a stand-in for Pugachev himself journeying to Moscow for a particularly violent execution, the exotic elements of the song subtly align Catherine's harsh sentence with the barbarity expected of a Turkish despot. Such a reading is perhaps so subversive as to stretch credulity. And yet, a cornerstone of Allanbrook's readings of Mozart's operas in the role topics play in delivering social critique where (censored) words cannot (1983, 73–75).

Conclusion

Extending topic theory to late eighteenth-century Russian repertory illuminates a process of (re)negotiating stylistic correlation in the transmission of Europe's musical signs to Russian court and urban centers. For readers familiar with the historiography of Russian opera, however, this analytic approach may tread on dangerous ground. The history of Russian opera, so the story goes, begins with Glinka, whose operas *Zhizn' za tsarya* (*A Life for the Tsar*, premiered 1836) and *Ruslan i Lyudmila* (1842) present Russian "firsts" with regard to both "genre (the first real operas—that is, sung straight through) and reception (performed and admired abroad!)" (Taruskin 2016, 52). Scholarly focus on opera before Glinka is largely shaped by this narrative: studies and critical editions hardly mention European influence and instead trace folk sources and pseudo-folk idioms in the

operas. While grounding the repertory in a uniquely Russian, rather than European, tradition, the emphasis on folk elements overlooks a more complex mediation with the *galant* style.

To approach this repertory from the semiotic perspective explored here sets a very different agenda. Burkholder (2009, 404–05) calls for American and Russian repertories to be treated not as peripheral to a central European tradition, but rather as developing alongside in dialogue with the European tradition. Taruskin further argues that:

> we need to look for other contexts into which to place Russian music if we want to normalize it within the historical narrative and counter the essentialist assumptions that have demeaned it—above all, the dogma of authenticity or legitimacy of Russian music depends on its Russianness, however that quality is defined.
>
> *(2011, 133)*

Topic theory can help to "normalize" (or "centralize") late eighteenth-century Russian opera by placing it within the conventions of *galant*-style composition more broadly. The presence of topics in both conventional and ironic strategies suggests that composers and audiences in Russia were well-informed of the expressive strategies of late eighteenth-century music. These signifiers, moreover, do not point to mere imitation of European tastes. Rather, composers in Russia engage in complex semiotic processes in which Western signifiers interact with folk and domestic practices of music making in order to articulate Russia's emerging autocracy, social reorganization, and orientation of self and other vis-à-vis the southern frontier. In this context, folk sources are not an end unto themselves, but rather contribute to the mediation and synthesis of converging sign systems. To evaluate the cultural significance of opera before Glinka, one must not only study its sources and archival traces, but also understand its interactions, particularly as they are illuminated by expressive methodologies honed for contemporary repertory in Europe.

Notes

1 I am grateful to Maria Fokina, Marina Ritzarev, and Inna Naroditskaya for assistance with Russian translations and transliteration and for rich discussion of this research at Indiana University, New York University, and the Institute for Russian Music Studies.

2 For simplicity this study will use "opera" to refer broadly to a variety of theatrical works in eighteenth-century Russia incorporating singing, spoken text, and dance and whose generic distinctions might include *opéra comique*, Singspiel, pastorale, masque, or pageant.

3 A fuller exegesis of the pathways by which Western musical traditions arrived in Russia in the eighteenth century, can be found in several excellent studies in English (Ritzarev 2006; Findeizen 2008). In general, the transmission of Western functional and art music to Russia channeled through: 1.) court musicians, often hired from abroad; 2.) foreign performance troupes that brought the latest Italian, French, and German music theatrical trends; and 3.) foreign composers, usually well-established in Europe, who worked for the royal family and the wealthiest Russian nobles. By the last quarter of the century, foreign composers employed at court in Russia (Paisiello, Cimarosa, Sarti, Martín y Soler) were joined by a growing number of Russian and Ukrainian composers (Berezovsky, Bortniansky, Fomin) trained abroad by Italy's most prestigious composers and pedagogical institutions, followed by another generation (notably Pashkevich) of domestically-trained composers.

4 See Ritzarev's article in this volume.

5 Bergholz uses the adverbial phrases *polnisch tanzen* or *english tanzen* in his diaries, but does not elaborate on musical or choreographic features. Sander therefore cautions against equating these

adjectives with the specific dances of a polonaise and contredanse (2007, 100–02 and 104–05). However, "minuet" (*Menuet*) always appears as a noun, implying the specific dance.

6 Several translations have been offered for this title with slightly varying meanings. Pring's translation in Findeizen (2008, 214) gives the title "Idle hours away from work, or a collection of songs with added melodies for three voices." Mazo (1987, 7–8) translates the collection as "Dallying 'twixt duties," and Hodge (2000, 8) uses "Indolence amid Business." What is perhaps most important here is the emphasis on leisure time—a commodity enjoyed by the nobility and, increasingly, the middle classes. The songs are available in Livanova (1952, 189–245).

7 Taruskin (1997, 152, n1) credits this chorus as one of the earliest examples of Russian musical exoticism, but the fourth chorus of Act V of *Oleg* can also be added to the list. The beginning of the chorus features an arabesque melody on the word "war" (*voyna*) accompanied by martial rhythms in the woodwinds and the distinctive "Janissary" combination of timpani, drum (tamburo), and triangle, as well as sistri (similar to a tambourine). See Naroditskaya 2012, 113–58) on the interweaving of historical and narrative plots in this work. A critical edition of *Oleg* edited by Bella Brover-Lubovsky (2018) is available and will hopefully enable further study of this fascinating work.

8 Ritzarev (2006, 147) also proposes that the opera holds a subversive, anti-serfdom subtext in its allusions to the seventeenth-century Cossack revolutionary figure Stepan Razin.

12
SHE SPINS AND SHE SIGHS

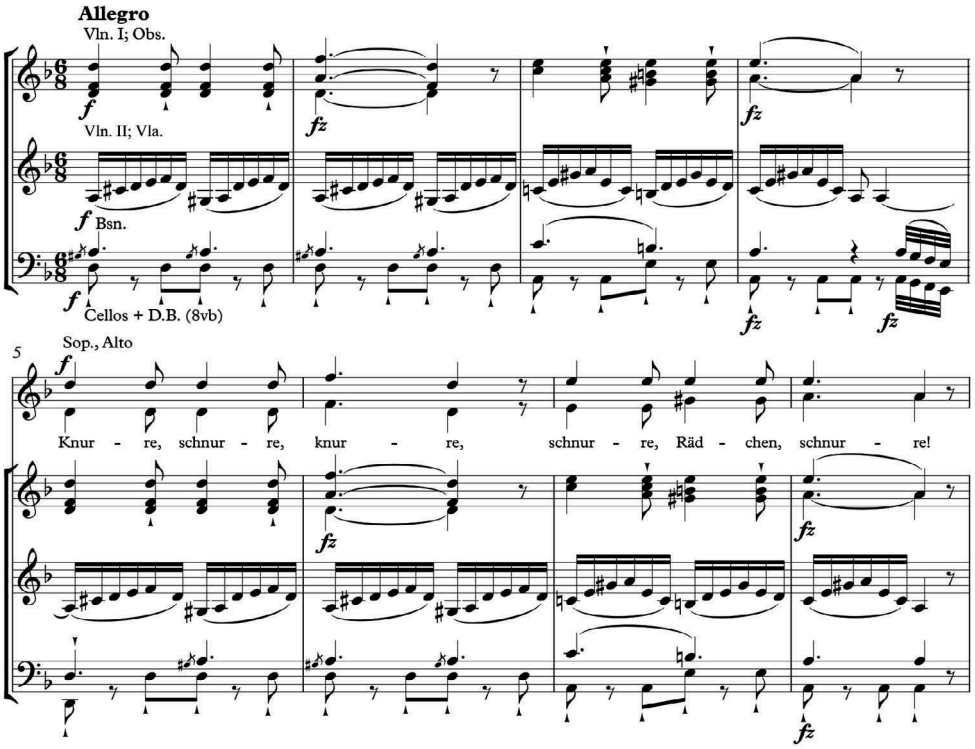
The spinning-wheel topic and the lamentation of the romantic female

Chia-Yi Wu

Felix Mendelssohn's op. 67, no. 4 from the *Lieder ohne Worte*—the celebrated "Spinnerlied" (Spinning Song)—begins with a two-measure introduction of continuous sixteenth notes revolving or circling chromatically around G4. Staccato eighth notes are then added in higher and lower voices when the "song" begins, while the swirling sixteenth-note gesture shifts to F4 before continuing in broken thirds. This charming character piece from the sixth volume of *Lieder ohne Worte* was published in September 1845 without a descriptive title.[1] Indeed, in a letter written a few years earlier, responding to an inquiry from Marc-André Souchay about the meaning of certain works in the *Lieder ohne Worte*, Mendelssohn explicitly expressed his reluctance to attach descriptors to the songs. Mendelssohn viewed words as ambiguous and vague, and therefore as less capable than pure music to fill the soul. He stressed that even were he to have definite terms that could be applied to the songs, he would not disclose them (Mendelssohn-Bartholdy 1864, 276–77). Nevertheless, many of the *Songs without Words* inevitably invited publishers to add evocative titles or descriptions to bolster sales (Todd 2003, xxvii). The editor of the circa 1880 Peters edition, for instance, included the words "*Spinnerlied genannt*" (called a spinning song) as a parenthetical addition near the top of the score.[2]

Many publishers targeted middle- or upper-class families who owned a piano and had daughters who took lessons. Indeed, many composers, including Mendelssohn, wrote short piano compositions with female amateurs in mind.[3] The descriptive "title" that has been attached to Mendelssohn's op. 67, no. 4 suggests that the composition employs certain musical features that are interpretable as signs which correlate to an object within a cultural code. The recurring circular gesture, often revolving around a pitch axis, coupled with the essentially continuous repeating sixteenth-note rhythms, is suggestive of a wheel, and given the targeted audience—well-to-do young women—a spinning wheel would be readily associated with the concept.

In fact, the editorial addendum linking Mendelssohn's instrumental composition to spinning was likely inspired by similar figurations occurring in earlier texted compositions. Haydn's oratorio *The Seasons* (1801) includes a choral spinning song accompanied by similar whirling gestures (Example 12.1). In addition, Schubert's "Gretchen am Spinnrade" (Gretchen at the Spinning Wheel—composed in 1814 and published in 1821) contains the



Example 12.1 Choral spinning song from Haydn's *The Seasons*, no. 34, mm. 1–8

most famous musical spinning wheel. In each of these three musical instances, the restless motion of a spinning wheel is captured by the repetition of circular gestures in a $\frac{6}{8}$ meter that correlates with the motion of the wheel. In addition, in all three examples, the ostinato-like iambic rhythmic pattern creates a thrusting motion, simulating the force created by the treadle to drive the circular motion of the spinning wheel on top.

All of these passages in the three compositions involve a type of iconic relation between the music as a sign and the spinning wheel as an object. But, as Monelle argues, only when a musical icon has passed from literal imitation to associative connotation—that is, the relation between sign and object becomes indexical—can it be considered a musical topic (2000, 80). This essay argues for the indexicality of stylized musical gestures that correlate with the image, motion, and sound associated with the spinning wheel. I contend that at the time Mendelssohn wrote his op. 67, no. 4, spinning-wheel-like gestures had become stylized through the above described figurations that repeatedly accompanied female protagonists in vocal compositions with a theme of spinning: in other words, there was a spinning-wheel topic that could be musically cued. Furthermore, the spinning-wheel topic inevitably signifies the female gender and domesticity. I establish a symbolic connection between spinning-related musical gestures and feminine misery, particularly around the time of industrialization, when the socioeconomic situation of women drastically deteriorated. Based on the significations encoded in historical, cultural, and intertextual contexts, I examine two compositions by Schubert, who contributed greatly to the stylization of the iconic gestures related to spinning. Although there is not an explicit thematic connection

with spinning, various revolving, treadling, and weaving gestures cross the borders of spinning songs to signify a gender identity, domesticity, and frustrated desire.

Women and spinning

Spinning has always been associated with women in Western culture, and the ancient spindle symbolizes female productivity and wisdom.[4] Baines (1977) reports that up to the nineteenth century, spinning rooms could be found in middle-class as well as peasant houses. In addition to Mendelssohn's work mentioned above, there were similar piano character pieces explicitly titled as "Spinning Song" published around the time, including later works by Burgmüller (1858) and Ellmenreich (1863). In all these pieces, the piano imitates the spinning wheel in a major key, and the lighthearted content was appreciated by women of the leisure class, who likely associated spinning with blissful domesticity. Compared to women who sat at the piano—a household item that signifies a social class that did not have to work—for women of the working class the spinning wheel "became a symbol of virtue and thrift, for indeed the industrious housewife spent every spare moment spinning" (Baines 1977, 175). As a domestic activity, spinning played a crucial role in rural social life. In addition to being a woman's workspace, the spinning room was commonly used for get-togethers—women frequently took their spinning wheels along to attend spinning parties where they would be joined by their husbands and children to gossip, tell stories, and sing spinning songs about love and their dreams (Baines 1977, 175).

Haydn's spinning song, in the winter segment of *The Seasons*, vividly portrays a spinning party as described by Baines. At a cottage on a bleak winter night, a peasant describes the chores that the village people are performing as they chatter at the neighborhood gathering. The recitative is accompanied by sporadic broken chords in the harpsichord when he talks about how young boys are making nets while their fathers plait baskets. As soon as he mentions the spinning activities with which mothers and their daughters are engaged, the harpsichord accompaniment is replaced by strings playing revolving gestures between the phrases of his sentences. A rustic spinning song soon follows, beginning with an orchestral introduction with energetic spinning gestures (Example 12.1). The song features a short refrain in which all the women sing "Knurre, schnurre, Rädchen, schnurre" (Purring, whirring, my little wheel) over the iambic pattern in $\frac{6}{8}$ meter. In the fashion of work songs, these onomatopoeic words imitate the sound of the spinning wheels and are paired with the repetitive treadling gesture in the accompaniment, binding the women and their spinning wheels as one. In one of the verses, a soloist representing a farmer's daughter (Hanne) sings "Aussen blank und innen rein muss des Mädchens Busen sein, wohl deckt ihn der Schleier" (A maiden's breast will be bright on the outside and pure on the inside when covered by the veil she makes), relating the flax veil she is making to her own virtues. Her final verse, in which she expresses her belief that her diligence and piety will attract a worthy suitor, is echoed in the entire choir, now including the males, accompanied by the full force of the orchestra to create a domestic soundscape of rural households. The choral spinning song expressing the collective expectations of young girls is followed by a story of an individual by way of exemplification: the peasant's daughter sings about how an honorable young maid rejects a nobleman who tries to woo her with gold, with the chorus reacting intermittently.

Mozart uses an anonymous poem in his setting "Die kleine Spinnerin" (The Little Spinner, K. 531 [1787]). The text describes a confident young spinner who is proud of her productivity and in control of her own fate. When a boy next door asks her why she would

rather spend more time spinning than playing with boys, she scolds him for his frivolous intention by proudly informing him that she values her work ("Ich lobe mir mein Rädchen" [I praise my little wheel]). In his setting, Mozart also uses the accompaniment to depict the spinning. The strophic song opens with a back-and-forth movement of the treadle followed by a contrasting right-hand gesture that creates a whirling sound effect. While each verse is accompanied only by the treadle gesture, the triplets spiral back at the end to thread the three stanzas together.

Young girls received similar messages connecting spinning with prospects of marriage in many folktales collected and edited between 1812 and 1856 by Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm. In German countries in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, spinning was a rural occupation taken up by women of poverty working in a sexually segregated employment. The Grimm brothers' tales were perceived in the mid- to late-nineteenth century to exercise a normative function for readers, since, as Bottigheimer observes, the language of the tales was crafted by the Grimms to "affirm and extol spinning as a worthwhile enterprise" (1982, 143–44); as such, the tales reflected a nineteenth-century value system imposed by men. A girl who took up spinning and did it well was "*geschickt* (clever, skillful), *fleissig* (diligent), *schön* (beautiful), *treu* (loyal), *flink* (nimble), *arbeitsam* (industrious), and *lustig* (jolly)," and spinning would lead her to wealth. Otherwise, she was described with words such as "*faul*, *Faulheit*, *faulenzen* (lazy, idleness, to be lazy), *garstig* (hateful), and *bas* (ugly)," and would never escape poverty (Bottigheimer 1982 145–46). Zipes adds that the revisions the Grimm brothers made reflect changing social attitudes, as spinning as an occupation was gradually removed from its domestic sphere and its associated gender. For instance, while the first versions of *Rumpelstiltskin* celebrate female productivity and self-identification, the final version became a "tale of domestication" in which a woman spinner's role is framed within a male discourse and reduced to reproduction placed at the mercy of men (Zipes 1993, 49–50).

Industrialization in Europe had an impact on the changing social attitude toward spinning and spinners. In 1738, Lewis Paul took out a patent for a roller spinning machine; in 1764, James Hargreaves invented the spinning jenny with multiple spindles. The first spinning machines appeared in factories where men were in charge, gradually replacing the spinning wheels in rural households and causing great desolation in some areas (Baines 1977, 186–87; Wosk 2001, 34–44). In addition to European industrialization, the dramatic rise in the number of unmarried women in Europe further warped society's view of this social group. Unable to fulfill their expected duties as wives and mothers, the overabundant "old maids" were cast as financial burdens in the domestic economy and labor market. The denigration of the social status of single women was witnessed by the changing meanings of words in European languages in the eighteenth century. The "spinster" entry in the *Oxford Living Dictionaries* states:

> The development of the word spinster is a good example of the way in which a word acquires strong connotations to the extent that it can no longer be used in a neutral sense. From the 17th century the word was appended to names as the official legal description of an unmarried woman … In modern everyday English, however, spinster cannot be used to mean simply "unmarried woman"; it is now always a derogatory term, referring or alluding to a stereotype of an older woman who is unmarried, childless, prissy, and repressed … The current sense dates from the early eighteenth century.
>
> *(https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/spinster, accessed January 3, 2019)*

Indeed, as Zipes points out, other languages exemplify similar biases:

> In French the term for spinster is *vieille fille*. There is a connection to *filer* or *filare*: to spin. In German, *eine alte Spinne* is an ugly old woman. To spin is *spinnen*, and *spinnen* can also mean to babble in a crazy way.
>
> *(1993, 55)*

In literature, spinners were often females to be ridiculed. Oppenheim notes that unmarried women of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries are regularly depicted by male authors as caricatures who provide comic relief or make convenient villains (2003, 1–2). Even in novels written by successful female authors—some of whom remained single well into their professional lives—spinster characters stereotypically represent this social stratum. Oppenheim (2003) argues that the comical spinsters in Frances Burney, the babbling spinsters in Jane Austen, and the tragic spinsters in Charlotte Brontë are perhaps used by the authors to fault their society for making spinsterhood so problematic.

The social double message—in which spinning is a highly commendable female activity while the women that engage in it are also stereotypically derided—does not stop here. Despite the Grimm brothers' message that spinning will lead to riches, Bottigheimer (1982) believes that faint, private cries of the spinners shared by generations of women are still discernable in the tales. The act of spinning sometimes emerges as highly undesirable, an occupation to be avoided, or a form of punishment. In "The Lazy Spinner," the wife tries every tactic to deceive and trick her husband to avoid spinning. In "The Three Spinners," spinning is deforming: the three spinners in the story suffer, respectively, a broad flat foot from treadling, a falling lip from licking the flax, and a broad thumb from twisting the thread. At its worst, in "Little Briar Rose," the story of sleeping beauty, a spindle is a curse, an agent of death (Bottigheimer 1982, 141).

Spinning songs as laments

A similar type of double message can be found in the opening scene of Schubert's opera *Fierrabras* (1823), where the switching between choral and solo sections contrasts the conventional morality of a society with the private reflection of an individual. Set in the Frankish royal palace, the opera opens with a group of women engaged in activities that underscore their social ranking: Princess Emma is embroidering while her maids are spinning and singing.[5] Accompanied by lively figurations with both the revolving and linear gestures to suggest the spinning wheel, the maids remark that the silver thread is a pledge of love ("ein Liebespfand"), woven only for good and never for harm. The fabric they make can wrap a newborn baby, as well as serve as a festive garment for a woman on her wedding day. The princess, however, is lost in deep thought as the spinners describe the happiest day of a woman's life; she is secretly in love with a young knight who has been sent to war by her father, the king. Knowing that the king will not bless their union, and worried about her lover's safety, she turns the maids' song into a lament by singing her strophe in the parallel minor. The alleged "pledge of love," Emma intimates, once woven into a fabric, can be used to cover the dead and to dry one's tears.

Wagner conjures up a similar sequence in the second act of the opera *Der fliegende Holländer* (*The Flying Dutchman* [1839]) to highlight a different perspective of an

individual female. In the orchestral introduction to the spinning song, we hear a much expanded and enriched soundscape of the spinning room where a chorus of women reveals their excitement while waiting for the sailors to return home with gold. Various instruments contribute to a rich texture with stylized gestures to mimic the movement and sound of the spinning wheel. In addition to the steady treadle figuration of the low strings, the buzzing viola tremolo is paired with the periodic triplets played by the second violin to imitate the rigorous mechanic movement of revolving wheels. Occasionally, the second bassoon adds a lively swirling gesture to enlighten the already vibrant texture. Like Haydn's spinning song in *The Seasons*, Wagner's female chorus sprightly sings an onomatopoeic refrain emulating the sound of the spinning wheel: "Summ' und brumm, du gutes Rädchen, munter, munter dreh' dich um!" (whirl, purl, turn cheerfully, my good little wheel!). Fully in sync with the treadle figuration in the orchestral accompaniment, the women hope that the winds generated by their spinning wheels will bring their beloved sailors home sooner. A choral spinning song again connects spinning with the prospect of marriage, but Wagner's spinning song is followed by an individual woman who refuses to follow a normal path. Senta, staying away from the expected craft is thus socially marked, confesses her longing for the cursed Dutchman, captain of a ghost ship who only goes ashore every seven years to seek the pure love of a woman for his redemption.

The private suffering of a marginalized spinner was exploited by Romantic poets, for whom the vulnerability of the single woman was highly significant. Placing a poetic speaker by a spinning wheel proclaims her gender as well as her humble social status, both potentially related to her emotional devastation. Poems that connect the theme of spinning with unrequited love and entrapment have invited numerous composers to set them to music, many including gestures that imitate revolving, treadling, or weaving gestures.[6] Sitting by her spinning wheel, the Romantic spinner now sings of her own despair. Such a typical Romantic spinner is Schubert's Gretchen, who expresses her sentiments while spinning after her first encounter with Faust. Using Goethe's stage direction "Gretchen am Spinnrade allein" (Gretchen alone at her spinning wheel) as the song's title, Schubert sets the musical stage with a sonic prop created by two measures of the spinning gesture played by the piano. Throughout the song, the transformation of the piano accompaniment reflects the changing emotions of Gretchen, the protagonist whose own bodily movement drives the spinning wheel, merging external physical phenomena with Gretchen's psychological journey.[7]

Following Goethe's text, Schubert divides "Gretchen" into three freely composed episodes with a refrain rooted in a gloomy D minor, in which Gretchen complains, "Meine Ruh' ist hin, mein Herz ist schwer/Ich finde sie nimmer und nimmermehr" (My peace has gone, my heart is heavy, never shall I find it, never again). The refrain reminds Gretchen of her reality while in three rhapsodic episodes her mind drifts from her desire for him, to her memory of him, and her fantasy about him. While Goethe's poem ends with the line "An seinen Küssen vergehen sollt!" (I should die in his kisses!) —leaving Gretchen in her erotic fantasy and allowing for further dramatic development in the play—Schubert returns Gretchen to her "heavy heart," ending the song with a repetition of the opening refrain to create a rondo-like form. While Gretchen wanders from D minor to C major in the first three statements of the refrain, only the first half of the refrain returns at the end to poignantly complete the trajectory in D minor. The additional refrain creates a drastically different tragic signification: Gretchen's fate is sealed in a harsh reality from which she can never escape.

In the first stanza, Gretchen reveals that her desire for Faust is the cause for her restlessness and heavy heart described in the refrain. The heightened desire pushes her voice to rise higher when she adds a maddening headache to her symptoms of being love struck, bringing her physical sensations to center stage. Her longing for Faust reaches its climax in the second episode, as she shifts her attention to recollecting her encounter with Faust. Schubert creates a thrust through an ever-faster phrase and harmonic rhythm as Gretchen starts to recall his physical attributes, his manner, and their sensual contact. His touch is remembered over a B♭ pedal, the $\hat{\flat 6}$ of D minor (mm. 63–66), with high anticipation created on a B♭ chord (VI) that rises in pitch, increasing the harmonic tension from VI to V^6_5 where the striking (anti-)climactic moment is created by a sudden suspension of the spinning-wheel accompaniment. The words "ach, sein Kuβ!" (ah, his kiss!) are enunciated over two diminished seventh-chords, with the bass note passing from B♭ through B♮ and to C♯, not only stopping the spinning motion but also disorienting her sense of direction. Gradually, the treadle starts on A, the dominant pedal, moving the spinning wheel as well as pulling Gretchen's consciousness back to her heavy heart, where she again sings her refrain and continues to lament.

The tragic frame created by ceaseless spinning or weaving gestures in a minor key is a common feature in spinners' laments. The teary spinner in Paul Heyse's "Auf dem Dorf in den Spinnstuben" (In the Village, in the Spinning Rooms) imagines that she is the only one without a suitor in the village. Supposing that other spinners in the village are happily spinning their wedding garment with their busy wheels, she questions the purpose of spinning without any prospect of marriage. Set by Schumann in 1851 as "Die Spinnerin" (op. 107, no. 4), the vocal part is surrounded by oscillating sixteenth notes in the right hand that suggest the weaving motion while a largely steady eight-note accompaniment in the left hand invokes a treadle gesture.

"Wie kann es anders sein?" (How can it be otherwise?) asks a little spinner in Goethe's *Die Spinnerin*. Facing disgrace alone, she has no other choice but to spin, endlessly punished for her lover's action. She identifies with the flaxen thread ("Mein dem Flachse gleiches Haar, und den gleichen Faden" [My flaxen hair and the flaxen thread]) in the second stanza, and the loss of her innocence to a handsome young man is symbolized by the torn threads in the third stanza ("Und der Faden riβ entzwei, den ich lang' erhalten, den ich lang' erhalten" [and he tore the threads that I had kept so long in two]). As in Gretchen's monologue, Goethe addresses the physical sensations experienced by a lonely spinner. He describes the stirring of her poor heart as she takes the thread to the weaver as well as the pain she feels when bending to bleach the threads under the sun: physical strains and stress associated with spinning are tied to her loss of pride. Schubert set this text in 1815 (op. posth. 118, no. 6, D 247), shortly after he wrote "Gretchen am Spinnrade." In this song, a largely continuous weaving or circling gesture appears in the voice, no less, compositionally capturing the identification of the young spinner and the act of spinning. Each of these "weaving" gestures is infused with chromatic inflections that capture the spinning girl's blemished integrity.

Romantic spinners are obedient and steeped in morality. The ceaseless sound of the spinning wheel also defines a confined and suffocating space, a domestic sphere that Schroeder terms as a single woman's "sanctuary of virginal security," which "protects her from her own base desires and from a world that seeks to violate her" (1994, 183). When Goethe's Gretchen sings, at the beginning of the second stanza, that she would look out of the window and go out of the house only for him, she is expressing a willingness to cross moral boundaries. To step out of her sanctuary to pursue what her heart and body desire is

demeaning; but to remain trapped in her spinning room with no prospect of marriage is to face her grief alone at her spinning wheel. This feminine dilemma is explored in Friedrich Rückert's "O süße Mutter" (Oh Sweet Mother) that was set by Hugo Wolf as "Die Spinnerin" (no. 3 of *Sechs Lieder für eine Frauenstimme* 1888). The text portrays a young girl begging her mother to let her out of the spinning room to explore her sensuality. Wolf uses various stylized gestures related to the spinning wheel as motives to develop the piano accompaniment. The song opens with revolving eighth notes in the left hand and their syncopated sixteenth notes in the right hand, which sound like the clicking sounds of a foot treadle. The C-minor section (m. 14) contains fast-moving sixteenth-note triplets that create a sense of continuous periodic rotations. All these motives are varied and combined to underline her rapidly changing moods as she pleads her mother. Especially telling are the revolving triplets—"broken" with sixteenth-note rests—in the right hand that appear in the first stanza (mm. 8–11) when the young spinner complains that "Es stockt das Rädchen, es reisst das Fädchen" (The spinning-wheel stops, the thread is ripped). While stylizing the sounds of a spinning wheel that is not running smoothly, the piano accompanies the spinner's recitative-like voice, which is rhythmically fragmented and tonally unstable, to express her annoyance and agitation of being trapped in her spinning room. Variants of this passage recur in the second half of subsequent stanzas, first to reflect the young girl's strong desire to leave the spinning room (mm. 22 and 37) and then to imply her mixed feelings of apprehension and excitement as she imagines meeting boys (mm. 50 and 70), with the understanding that by leaving the spinning room she is stepping out of her sanctuary of virginal security.

Beyond spinning songs

Schubert's propensity to set music to poems about the suffering of female protagonists started early (Schroeder 1994, 183). At the age of seventeen, Schubert sets a musical stage with spinning and treadling piano gestures to accompany Gretchen's lament. A year later he set "Die Spinnerin," another poem by Goethe about a disgraced single woman, with chromatically weaving melodic lines. In 1823, he continued to connect the spinning wheel to domesticity and frustrated desire in *Fierrabras*, where a group of women sings a spinning song with an orchestral spinning wheel to contextualize the circumstances the female protagonist is facing.

When various revolving, treadling, and weaving gestures are incorporated into the String Quartet in A Minor, D 804 (1824), one year after *Fierrabras*, the intertextual connections invite interpretive curiosity. As Newbould observes,

> etching in harmony which is fixedly tonic, the top part of the accompaniment (second violin in the quartet) takes the minor third and rotates around it, while a marked monotone rhythm appears below. Is the starting point of the A minor Quartet, then, a further recall of Gretchen's forlorn state?
>
> *(1997, 352)*

Indeed, the similarities between "Gretchen" and Schubert's A-minor Quartet go beyond the familiar pairing of revolving and linear gestures in the accompaniment.

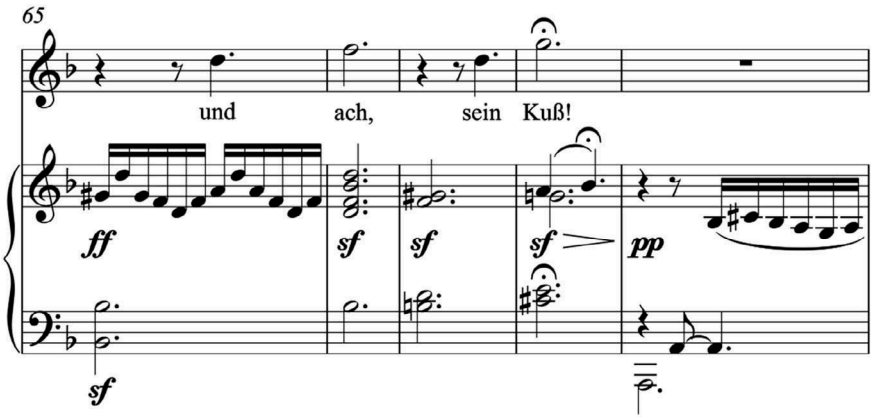
Strikingly similar features from Gretchen's song are interwoven at marked points to project a dramatic arc of a tragic monologue.[8] The first movement of the quartet possesses the essence of the Lied, a genre with a short introduction that leads into

a treble-dominated texture. The songful themes with a Lied-like texture suggest a first-person narrative, casting the movement in the realm of poetic expression. The primary theme features a descending arpeggiated tonic triad that functions similarly as a refrain between the episodic second theme and the rhapsodic development section, with flourishes (for example, mm. 33–34 and 36–38) that recall the chromatic weaving gestures in "Die Spinnerin." Half of the primary theme also returns as a coda to bring the plot full circle, sealing the tragic frame in A minor.

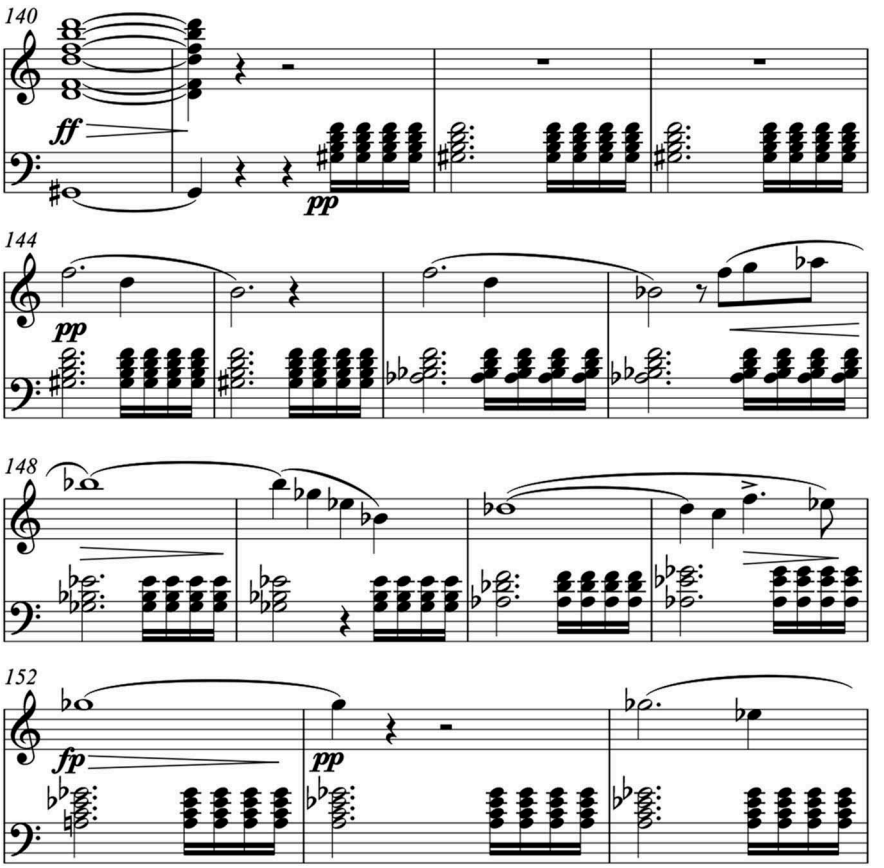
Most importantly, a moment of Gretchen's erotic arrest is recreated near the end of the development section. After a brief return of the primary theme in D minor (m. 109), tension gradually builds to a contrapuntal passage in a rigid, archaic, learned style that creates a stark contrast to the song-like texture, evoking an overpowering experience (m. 130). The agitated counterpoint grows more intense, but the momentum created by the chromatic eighth notes in the lower strings comes to a sudden halt on a haunting $G\sharp^{\circ 7}$ chord (m. 140), as if the poetic speaker is suddenly incapacitated. Instead of resolving back to A minor, the head motive of the primary theme returns, picking up the diminished harmony to wander until another diminished-seventh chord (this time on A) appears (m. 152). Where is the music to go? At this moment, tonal direction is completely suspended. This moment of disorientation is sustained over the next few measures by the bass that descends chromatically from A to E in a varied version of the *passus duriusculus*, and it therefore has the suggestion of a lamentation (see the lowest cello notes of mm. 155–63). The recapitulation commences in m. 168, with the return of tonic key and the "revolving" gesture in the second violin.

Schubert's unusual treatment of the climatic build up marks both the song and the quartet. The dramatic highpoints are created by a sudden suspension of musical momentum over two diminished-seventh chords. In addition, instead of using a dominant pedal to create tension, Schubert situates the dominant pedal *after* the dramatic highpoint to recover both protagonists from their internal drama, after which the revolving accompaniment resumes. Alluding to the kiss in Gretchen's song (mm. 66–67), Schubert recreates that famous moment of arrest mixed with ecstasy and apprehension in the quartet. This is the high point of feminine misery, the cause of her lamentation (see the similarities in climactic moments in Example 12.2a and 12.2b).

Another way Schubert uses musical gestures related to the spinning wheel to underline unrequited desire can be heard in his setting of Ludwig Rellstab's "Kriegers Ahnung" (Soldier's Foreboding, from *Schwanengesang*, D 957, no. 2).[9] The setting of the four stanzas is through-composed, allowing for four contrasting sections that reflect the soldier's emotional shifts between premonition and nostalgia. When the soldier describes his surroundings and expresses his anxiety about the war, he is accompanied by pressing double-dotted quarter-note chords in C minor that underline his description of anxious and heavy heartbeats in the first stanza. A piano part with block chords accompanies the text of the third stanza as he contemplates the cruelty of war. In the second and fourth stanzas, though, as his thoughts turn to his distant beloved, the soldier is accompanied by different pairings of gestures that simulate revolving and treadling movements and that are characteristic of the sounds and movements of the spinning wheel; as such, the salient change in accompaniment patterning not only represents a female identity, but also locates her in a domestic sphere, a home. While in the second stanza arpeggiated triplets revolve over gently-rocking octave slurs in the bass to accompany the soldier's



Example 12.2a Schubert, Gretchen am Spinnrade, mm. 65–69



Example 12.2b Schubert, String Quartet in A Minor, D 804, I:140–54

flowing, folk-like melody in A♭ major. A much quicker and more intense spinning-wheel gesture ("Geschwind, unruhig") appears in the accompaniment of the last stanza, with sixteenth notes oscillating over a bass that largely contains neighbors to a dominant pedal; it suggests that some of the soldier's fear is ameliorated by the act of saying goodnight to his absent lover.

The musico-poetic nature of the spinning-wheel gesture, which "embodies in itself the sense, the movement, and the form of the song" in "Gretchen am Spinnrade" led Reed to describe it as a musical metaphor: "the image of the spinning wheel *is* the song," and he attributes the greatness of "Gretchen" to the single unifying figure that establishes a new relationship between text and music (1997, 251). The musical spinning wheels in these compositions are not just about the spinning wheel: they are about the people who operate them. Tokens of the spinning-wheel topic reference a household item enshrined with social and historical significations. They locate the music within a particular frame in which society as a whole witnessed dramatic changes. The spinning and weaving gestures are associated not only with female identities, but they also index domesticity, domestication, and even feminine misery in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Indeed, the web of signification in Romantic Lieder embodies all elements of a spinster's tale: "the lost lover, the passions arrested in the past, the twenty blank years which follow" (Oppenheim 2003, 232).

Musical spinning wheels in piano character pieces, often suggestive of domestic bliss, index an idealized female identity imagined by women of the leisure class; their counterparts in choral spinning songs preach domesticity; and the ceaseless whirling motion of a spinning wheel in Romantic Lieder often accompanies single women whose desolation appealed to the middle-class avant garde. Romantic poets presented a working-class female identity different from the one imagined by the middle-class women sitting at a piano. Rather than being able to choose among her suitors wisely, she is now rejected, damaged, or deserted. Spending long hours on spinning no longer represents a work ethic and productivity; instead, it points to physical torture and mental deterioration. No longer a sanctuary to protect her, the spinning room now imprisons her body and desire. The fabric she makes is torn, and the ceaseless sound of spinning only reminds her of frustrated desire and endless longing.

Notes

1 This is the last collection of piano character pieces that the composer personally saw through publication. Two more volumes of *Lieder ohne Worte* were published posthumously. None of the six works in the op. 67 collection were published with titles. In fact, of all the 48 *Lieder ohne Worte*, only three titles ("Gondellied," "Duetto," and "Volkslied") were given by Mendelssohn.

2 The melodic contour and constant rhythmic pattern of the song have also been associated with the characteristic sound of a buzzing bee; as a result, the work is sometimes referred to as "The Bee's Wedding."

3 Of the six volumes of *Lieder ohne Worte* published in Mendelssohn's life, five are dedicated to women. His op. 67 was dedicated to Sophie Rosen, the fiancée of a family friend.

4 See Zipes (1993, 50–52) and Bottigheimer (1982, 143) for discussions of the symbolic meanings of spindle.

5 The stage direction reads "Emma (mit weiblicher Handarbeit beschäftigt), ihre Jungfrauen (spinnend)."

6 For instance, Goethe's "Meine Ruh ist hin" (from *Faust,* first published in 1790), Clemens Brentano's "Der Spinnerin Nachtlied" (1802), Friedrich Rückert's "O süße Mutter" (1869), and

Paul Heyse's "Auf dem Dorf in den Spinnstuben" (1851) were set to music by many nineteenth-century composers.

7 For other discussions, see Dittrich (2004), Malin (2010, 95–98), Seelig (2010) and Youens (2010).

8 For a detailed analysis comparing the song and the quartet, see Wu (2016, 83–102).

9 I thank Andrew Stuckey for directing me to this song, which was published in 1829, a few months after the composer's death.

13

CHARLES GRIFFES'S XANADU

A musical garden of opposites

Taylor A. Greer

The music of Charles Tomlinson Griffes (1885–1920) represents a pivotal moment in American musical life. He drew inspiration from a wide spectrum of exotic sources, including French, Celtic, Javanese, and Native American, and synthesized them into a new compositional voice. For example, after reading a novel by the late nineteenth-century French author Pierre Loti, he confided in a diary entry: "Loti has written a highly-coloured and strangely exotic tale of an Arab quarter of Algiers. Every word breathes Oriental perfume!"[1] Five years later, Griffes composed his own sonic brand of "Oriental perfume" in his tone poem *The Pleasure-Dome of Kubla Khan*, based on Samuel Taylor Coleridge's phantasmagorical vision of the Chinese emperor and his garden, Xanadu.

Griffes's experimental approach to the pastoral provides an opportunity to reconsider an essential aspect of signification: the relationship between the concept of a group such as a musical topic and an unusual individual case. My point of departure is Foucault's alternative ideal of paradise or "heterotopia," which he defines as a phenomenon that combines utterly contradictory features and yet still maintains some underlying coherence. The challenge arises when trying to compare a particular example of heterotopia with other examples that have elements of similarity with it. For the purposes of this essay, the notion of heterotopia captures well the quandaries of trying to classify Griffes's highly varied pastorals into a single overarching group.

This essay consists of five parts: (1) a summary of the concept of musical topic, emphasizing the role that exceptional cases play in understanding Griffes's personal style; (2) a summary of a highly suggestive literary theory of the pastoral, which can be adapted to music; (3) an overview of the "heterotopic" garden and its relevance for interpreting Griffes's artistic vision; (4) a glimpse into the genesis of Coleridge's poem and Griffes's tone poem based on it, *The Pleasure-Dome of Kubla Khan*, what is arguably his most famous orchestral work; and (5) an analytical commentary on three central characteristics of this alternative musical garden.

Griffes's significance in twentieth-century American music is twofold: his unique style that relied on a vibrant yet ambivalent aesthetic; and his conception of the pastoral, which transformed the siciliana-based tradition he had inherited from the eighteenth century into a new expressive genre. Griffes's style embraces a fundamental ambivalence that reflects

a Romantic sensibility co-existing within a modernist orientation. A useful metaphor for describing his artistic approach is Janus, the ancient Roman god of paradox, who looks backward and forward at the same time. In some ways, Griffes was a Romantic artist par excellence, at home with the nineteenth-century conventions of expressive melody and chromatic harmony à la Wagner and Strauss. But, in other ways, he was clearly an incipient Modernist, inspired by contemporary French, British, and American muses.

Griffes belongs to a generation of composers during the early twentieth century who revived the pastoral tradition. Throughout his career, he was continually drawn to this tradition in both his vocal and instrumental works. The titles alone of the songs he composed between 1912 and 1917 are suffused with pastoral themes.[2] In addition, the titles and programs associated with his instrumental works depict various scenes of nature such as night winds, clouds, lakes, and fountains. Furthermore, like other turn-of-the-century European composers, such as Debussy, Delius, de Falla, and Ravel, Griffes frequently found artistic inspiration in the image of a garden.[3] What distinguishes Griffes's contribution to the pastoral tradition is that, in some works, his emotional palette was broader than that of other composers, mixing traditional ideal associations—serenity, exoticism, and sensual beauty—along with darker emotions such as suspense and aggression.

At the border of the pastoral

It is appropriate to begin our study of Griffes's pastorals by focusing briefly on the founding father of topic theory, the twentieth-century composer and musicologist, Leonard Ratner. While most critics acknowledge that Ratner inaugurated a new approach to musical interpretation, the written statements he left behind do not constitute a systematic theoretical vision. He defines three kinds of musical topics (Ratner 1980): "types," "styles," and the general phenomenon of "pictorialism," which includes the concept of text painting. Ratner's "type" refers to a "fully worked out piece," such as a dance or march; by contrast, a "style" is a section or passage that displays a distinctive character such as a hunting signal or the French overture (1980, 9). By presenting three distinct definitions of the concept, he displays a piecemeal approach: two are general categories (dances and styles); and one is a correspondence between two different art forms: literature and music. Instead of offering a single all-inclusive umbrella that unites all of the empirical evidence he has collected, he is content to let the diverse evidence speak for itself.

In the context of Griffes's oeuvre the musical pastoral falls somewhere between a dance and a style, for it has characteristics of both. It is more like a dance when it displays features that are typical of the siciliana, cued by compound meter, static or drone-like harmony, and dotted rhythmic patterns; it is more like a style when a marking in the score, such as "languido," invites the performer to take liberties with tempo and/or phrasing. As will become clear below, one of the most distinctive features of Griffes's experimental pastorals is his knack for cultivating topical opposites in the same work, in this case, music that evokes languor as well as the bacchanal.

To help clarify the subtle nuances in Griffes's pastorals, let us return to Ratner's original proposals about topics. One way of identifying a musical topic in a piece of music is to try and match the features in a given passage with those outlined in a list of topics—what might be dubbed the "field guide" approach. Ratner himself encouraged this point of view by calling his collection of topics a "thesaurus." For late eighteenth-century music, he developed a short list of topics with various degrees of historical evidence (1980: 9–28), which was later considerably augmented by Agawu (2009, 43–44). Eventually other

semiotic scholars such as Tarasti (1979), Grabócz ([1986] 1996), Hatten (2004), Monelle (2006), and Dickensheets (2012) further expanded the topical lexicon so as to include compositional innovations by nineteenth-century composers. The modus operandi for anyone equipped with such a lexicon appears to be a one-to-one mapping between type and token where each type represents a pre-existing musical tradition with its own cultural associations. The implicit assumption is the bigger, the better. According to this line of reasoning, topical competency becomes synonymous with lexical fluency.

While, on first impression, this "field-guide" approach certainly seems attractive, it assumes that any entry in the lexicon can be successfully identified in a given passage; that is, that there are clearly defined discovery procedures. It does not take into account situations where there is some ambiguity about what particular topic is displayed in a given passage—that is, either there are not enough cues to establish any single topic or there are so many conflicting cues that they end up suggesting multiple topics. Furthermore, additional problems arise when composers employ new cues or characteristics that are idiosyncratic to their version of a given topic or tailor-made to their musical style. If we assume that nineteenth-century composers were not only preserving topics from the past but also creating syntheses of old and new topics and/or inventing new ones altogether, then the number of entries in the topical lexicon would increase by leaps and bounds and the prospect of developing a comprehensive dictionary would become more remote.

Topical analysis has an inherent philosophical dimension that arises from the act of classification. To identify a topic in a composition inevitably brings into play fundamental questions such as: (1) what is a type? and (2) upon which basis does an individual member belong to a group? Both of these questions lead to the age-old philosophical query of universals vs. particulars. Over the years many possible criteria for determining universality have been proposed.[4] In this essay, my aim is not to unveil a new theory of types about the relationship between a general type and a particular token. I wish to explore an unusual example that belongs to the type called "the pastoral topic" in the hope of shedding light on a single composer's eclectic style.

John M. Ellis offers a fascinating justification in literary theory for exploring atypical cases that challenges the traditional notion of an abstract type or category:

> instead of looking to the center of the category (that is, its most typical and unproblematic cases) and for broad features running through it, it will be more profitable to look at its edges, its marginal members, and to find out what factors cause speakers to hesitate as to whether the word is appropriate or not in a given case. It is from such decisions on the part of the speaker that we can abstract the principles on which instances are included within or excluded from the category.
>
> *(1974, 34–35)*

Ellis proposes an alternative approach to classification that emphasizes the exceptional or marginal case, rather than the most commonplace example. His ultimate goal is to focus on the "appropriate circumstances," that is, the broader context of why a speaker would use one word and not another. While I have no intention of pursuing a musical analogy to Ellis's focus on the contextual basis of speech, I fully embrace his focus on so-called "marginal" examples that test the limits of a category. In this essay, I wish to consider one challenging case as part of a larger project that explores works which fall at the border of the pastoral, an artistic tradition with both literary and musical characteristics. My focus is on Griffes's personal artistic voice rather than the communal understanding of an artistic category.

The literary pastoral

To better understand Griffes's conception of the pastoral, let us consider a definition proposed by another literary critic, Harold Toliver, that focuses on reconciling opposites. In the opening chapter of his book, *Pastoral Forms and Attitudes* (1971), Toliver argues that the basis of the pastoral is not a single idea but rather a pair of opposing ideas. In his view, the history of the pastoral is a litany of dialectical opposition: "we begin with some of the broadest implications of the idyllic elements of pastoral … which habitually calls forth an opposite …" He believes that all worthwhile pastorals possess a dialectical tension between the "golden age and the normative world" (1971, 1). One requirement that all pastoral theories must satisfy is to explain in what ways this tension is manifested in a work of art.

Such a dynamic interpretive framework is entirely appropriate for the study of Griffes's music. This is true for three reasons. The first is biographical, for Griffes himself was a passionate student of literature; indeed, his personal diary contains almost as many observations about authors as about composers. Second, Griffes's musical setting of the poem is suffused with various kinds of oppositions and, thus, is perfectly in keeping with Toliver's assumptions about the pastoral genre. Third, while there is always a tension between the properties that a group of works share and those that are unique to an individual work, in the case of Griffes this distinction takes on greater importance. The reason for this is an underlying protean character in his musical personality—what might be called an aesthetic restlessness—that led him to experiment constantly with different national traditions, dances, styles and yet still maintain his own integrity.

Genesis of the poem and the poem

The source of inspiration for Griffes's work is one of the most well-known poems by the English Romantic, Samuel Taylor Coleridge: "Kubla Khan, or a Vision in a Dream. A Fragment," written in 1797. According to the preface, Coleridge, before falling asleep, had been reading Marco Polo's account of the palace of Kubla Khan, the medieval Chinese emperor, as described in the collection, *Purchas his Pilgrimes*. Immediately upon awakening from a vivid hallucination induced by an "anodyne" he had taken (most likely opium), he furiously began writing. While in the heat of inspiration, he was suddenly interrupted by an extended appointment, an event which completely unsettled him and which led to a much shorter work than the epic he had originally begun to record. Regardless of whether or how much of this elaborate story is true, the poem itself has a clear two-part structure, as though the narrator had been interrupted (Halmi et al. 2004, 182–83).

By contrast, the genesis of Griffes's *The Pleasure-Dome of Kubla Khan* is one long labor of ambivalent love. Unfortunately, neither of his two principal biographers, Edward Maisel and Donna Anderson, explains how Griffes came in contact with Coleridge's poem. He began a work for solo piano inspired by the poem sometime in 1912 and continued revising it until 1915. In a diary entry he confided that "never before have I changed and changed a piece as much as this one" (Maisel 1984, 197). Later, while in the process of transcribing it for orchestra, he continued to revise the work until 1917. The version for orchestra, however, differs so much from its piano counterpart that it should be considered an independent work, not a mere transcription. Two years later when the orchestral piece was premiered in Boston, Griffes included brief excerpts from Coleridge's poem (lines 1–8; 11; 31–36). The composer himself prepared the following program notes for the concert (Anderson 1993, 159):

> I have taken as a basis for my work those lines of Coleridge's poem describing the "stately pleasure-dome," the "sunny pleasure-dome with caves of ice," the "miracle of rare device." Therefore, I call the work "The Pleasure-Dome of Kubla Khan" rather than "Kubla Khan." … As to argument, I have given my imagination free rein in the description of this strange palace as well as of purely imaginative revelry which might have taken place there.

These remarks are particularly telling about Griffes's aesthetic approach in this work. First of all, his focus was on the palace and surrounding garden—hence the different titles of the poem and the tone poem. Second, and more important, he admits that in his composition he invented something that was not in Coleridge's original dream: a scene of "imaginative revelry" inside the palace. This supplement of "revelry" serves as the basis of a new kind of pastoral, a conflict of opposites that combines the peaceful contemplation of nature with the eruption of primal energy. Such a combination of pastoral calm and wanton abandon was the product of a new aesthetic vision, a bold literary/musical collaboration, initially fueled by Coleridge, but ultimately brought to fruition by Griffes alone.

Heterotopic garden

In Western European history, the garden myth assumes epic proportions in that it has been associated with creation stories of many different cultures. This myth has a long and rich history, embracing natural beauty, emotional and physical respite, and, most of all, sensual pleasure. For Homer, Theocritus, and Virgil, the garden was a *locus amoenus*, a pleasant place, whether framed in sacred or secular terms. During the Renaissance, according to Eugenio Battisti, the garden was "a place of pleasure … feasts, entertainment of friends … sexual and intellectual freedom … philosophical discussions, and a restorative for both the body and the soul …" (Cooper 2006, 4). In his exhaustive compendium, *The History of Gardens* (1979), Thacker isolates six principal types of gardens that have recurred throughout the history of human civilization: *locus amoenus* garden, sacred grove garden, farm garden, garden associated with specific Greek and Roman gods, private garden, and paradise garden (1979, 9–17). Of these six, the most relevant for the treatment of Griffes's tone poem is the paradise type.

The image of the garden is a critical lens through which we can view Griffes's experimental approach to the pastoral. It is more than a mere poetic backdrop, providing atmosphere or color for the titles, programs, and/or literary texts of some of his instrumental and vocal works; rather, it is an interdisciplinary artistic design that allows contradictory forms of musical expression to intermix with layers of literary associations. While Griffes relied on gardens and scenes of nature as the source of inspiration for a number of works, there are two compositions in particular which evoke the image of the garden in unique ways and, more important, in which he invested considerable creative energy: *The White Peacock* and *The Pleasure-Dome of Kubla Khan*.

"Heterotopia" is a concept initially described in the late writings of the twentieth-century French philosopher, Michel Foucault ([1967] 1994), denoting a phenomenon that had multiple characteristics—hence the prefix "hetero"—and was not limited to utopia and/or its negation, dystopia. In Foucault's mind a "heterotopia is capable of juxtaposing in a single real place several spaces … that are in themselves incompatible" (1967, 6). Examples include ancient Persian gardens, Jesuit colonies in South America, modern museums and cemeteries. In recent years, Foucault's notion of "heterotopia" has inspired a surge of scholarly inquiry in such fields as literary criticism, architecture, landscape architecture, and geography.[5] For example, Luke

Morgan uses this concept to explain a peculiar type of garden that emerged during the Renaissance, a so-called "monster garden," in which wildly conflicting iconography and emotional associations were juxtaposed, including fear and violence alongside sensual beauty and serenity. He observes, "without the threat of the dark wood, the rapacious harpy, the murderous giant, or the entrance to hell itself, Arcadia has no definition. If so, then the monsters and giants may be necessary to the idyll" (2015, 171).

By invoking Foucault, I have no intention of demonstrating a direct historical link between the Renaissance twin fascination for fear and desire and the garden that inspired Griffes's music. Instead, the notion of heterotopia provides a rich interpretive framework for understanding the novel character of one of Griffes's most perplexing pastorals: *The Pleasure-Dome*. The garden's unique character is embodied in three different musical oppositions: linear form vs. circular form; the languid style vs. the bacchanalian style; and, finally, a complete cycle vs. an incomplete cycle. Each will be discussed in turn.

Formal design

One of the most curious characteristics of this work is its formal design, for two different principles of large-scale structure are present: a linear or episodic plan and a circular plan. The linear plan is evident in the constant variety of motivic material throughout much of the work, as shown in the symbolic diagram in Figure 13.1.

In principle, the linear/episodic plan is purely additive, thereby undermining any sense of overall unity. Beginning in m. 15, Griffes's *Pleasure Dome* presents a series of diverse textures and motives, almost like a musical travelogue, evoking a wide spectrum of emotions ranging from placid to impassioned. While there is some repetition among subsections, the most distinctive feature of this plan is its unpredictability. The constant parade of contrast mirrors the breathless series of paradoxical images in Coleridge's orientalist rhapsody.

The other notable aspect of the composition's form is its circular character, for in mm. 210–20 a truncated version of the opening section appears (indicated in Figure 13.1 by the recurring "A" symbol in bold). The prelude illustrates Griffes's fascination for rhythm/metric ambiguity in that two separate musical layers are juxtaposed at the same time. The first layer is a mysterious "sacred chorale" texture played by the piano, mostly in parallel counterpoint that repeats five times (McKee 2008). The harmonic pattern is 12 chords long, beginning on an offbeat and moving mostly by quarter notes. Its phrase structure is irregular, dividing into 7+5 beats due to the internal repetition of the melodic fragment, G–F♯–D♯. Soon, an additional chorale texture arrives in the trombones and tuba, suggesting a hunting fanfare in slow motion. But this layer contains a different form of syncopation, consisting of attacks on beats 3 and 6. The combination of these two distinct layers, highlighted by contrasting instrumental textures, creates a stunning mosaic of rhythmic/metric ambiguity.

In the postlude Griffes repeats the opening chorale material, but with several changes: the overall passage is shorter (ten measures long), and the same three-measure excerpt of the chorale appears twice in succession and at different registers—one octave lower in the piano and two octaves higher in the celesta.

mm.	1	15	28	47	57	72	89	106	125	139	169	210
	A	B	C	D	E	D	D	E	F	G	H	**A**

Figure 13.1 Griffes, *Pleasure-Dome*, formal design

Ultimately, the piece's form can be understood in two different ways. On one hand, the continuous contrast in texture suggests a linear design. On the other hand, the return of the opening chorale texture, now shortened and rearranged, serves a narrative function, as if dramatizing the listener's arrival and departure from the garden—a horticultural processional and recessional. It is the conflict between these two formal principles that helps create the unique character of Griffes's heterotopic garden.

Languid vs. bacchanalian styles

Another central feature of Griffes's depiction of Coleridge's garden is the conflict between the languid and the bacchanalian styles. Each term in this opposition has a limited history in nineteenth-century music, and instead relies primarily on a contextual foundation within the composer's oeuvre. The "languid style" is a musical texture based on the common features among other pieces by Griffes that have the same marking. In this particular work, passages marked "languid" are strongly associated with the traditional notion of utopia: that is, the positive dimension of Foucault's heterotopic amalgam. By contrast, the "bacchanalian style" was based on the title and poetic program that Griffes prepared for a single instrumental work, Scherzo, no. 3 from *Fantasy Pieces*, op. 6, which is then adapted to *The Pleasure-Dome*.

The term "languid," grows out of his own performance directions, as he used the terms, *languido* and *languidamente*, in only a handful of works. There are four representative examples of this cue: three pieces that share this initial marking—the instrumental tone poem, *The White Peacock*, and two songs, "Symphony in Yellow," and "Cleopatra to the Asp"—plus an internal section of *The Pleasure-Dome*. Whether Griffes used these terms at the beginning or the middle of a work, it takes the place of a tempo indication or exact metronome marking. In this context, "languid" denotes a freedom of tempo and an invitation for using rubato and/or agogic accents. In addition, it sets the emotional tone for the player(s) to experiment with changes in articulation, color, and tone quality. What unites all four examples of this marking is the expectation that the performer should take extreme liberties in interpretation.

There is also a historical dimension to the connotation of a "languid" musical texture. "Languid" markings in works by Chopin, Wagner, Debussy, Fauré, and Scriabin trace an expressive thread through the long nineteenth century, encompassing some of the leading Polish, German, French, and Russian composers.[6] Since the term appeared so seldom in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century music, it is reasonable to speculate that previous instances by these composers had some influence on Griffes, especially considering that he owned scores for most of them.

The appearance of the term "bacchanal" in reference to music is quite rare and therefore deserves a few prefatory comments. First, the justification for using this term is biographical, for the composer himself used the word "Bacchanale" when he renamed and transcribed for orchestra an older work that he had already composed for solo piano: Scherzo, *Fantasy Pieces*, op. 6, no. 3. Since passages in the Scherzo and the *Pleasure-Dome* have many features in common, it is reasonable to refer to a "bacchanalian style."

Several questions arise when considering this style. What is the history of musical works with bacchanalian associations to which Griffes's new contributions refer? How did nineteenth-century composers before Griffes depict the ideal of the bacchanal? There is no simple answer to these questions, for there is no long-standing tradition of expressing bacchanalian excess in music. The etymology of the term can be traced back to the ancient Greek cult of Dionysus (or Bacchus in ancient Rome) where his followers were called

"Bachae" or Bacchantes. There is, however, no record of what music was played at the Dionysiac or Bacchic festivals (Hornblower and Spawforth 1998, 232–5).[7]

When searching for more recent musical precedents that evoke bacchanalian pleasure, a likely candidate is an Italian folk dance that is associated with a tradition of abandon—the tarantella. This dance, most likely named after a city in southern Italy, Taranta, has regular phrasing $\frac{3}{8}$ or $\frac{6}{8}$ meter, alternates between major and minor mode, and was performed in couples as a mimed courtship. More important, nineteenth-century composers shared such a fascination for the dance that it emerged as a virtuosic subgenre of its own, characterized by $\frac{6}{8}$ meter, a highly repetitive motivic structure, and breakneck tempi leading to a final accelerando. The end of Griffes's work participates in this virtuoso tradition. There is also a persistent legend that the name derives not from a city but from a spider, the tarantula. The intensity of the dance was said to be a choreographic treatment to purge the spider's poison from a dancer's body. But whether the tarantella's origins are Italian or arachnidian, the association of this quick, repetitive dance with wild frenzy is still the same.

For Griffes, the musical characteristics of the bacchanalian impulse consist of a repeated rhythmic pattern and an increase in tempo, leading to a climax in dynamics. Viewed in isolation, this treatment of rhythm, tempo, and dynamics has no intrinsic association with the fantasy of a bacchanal. But in *The Pleasure-Dome*, the confluence of these three parameters along with strong motivic repetition and a relevant textual program becomes integrally connected to a large-scale formal design.

In summary, the mutual interaction and conflict between these two impulses, the languid style and the bacchanalian style, constitutes a central dimension of Griffes's heterotopic garden.

Complete vs. incomplete cycle

The final subject in our overview of idiosyncratic cues is the concept of cycle that serves as an overarching psychological scaffolding for the work. One may wonder whether Griffes was trying to portray the different stages of natural growth or decay in a garden, that is, the change of seasons. In fact, his cyclic model is more personal, a large-scale psychological design formed by the interaction between the contrasting emotional associations of the languid and bacchanalian styles. The complete cycle consists of three parts: it begins with a languid section, gradually proceeds to a more impassioned section, and then ends with a release of tension as a dénouement. The quintessential example of the complete cycle in his oeuvre would be *The White Peacock* (Greer 2010).

In other Griffes's works, however, the psychological cycle is incomplete. The rupture in the work's expressive arc is characterized by a sudden shift in dynamics, a change in tempo, and/or an abrupt contrast in motivic material. Griffes reserved this pattern of interruption for works with intense imagery such as a bacchanalian fantasy or a supernatural vision. It occurs in two works: "The Rose of the Night" from *Three Poems of Fiona MacLeod*, and *The Pleasure-Dome*. In the latter case, the most radical departure from Coleridge's original poetic vision lies in double contrast: on the one hand, the initial languid melodies versus an exotic theme and, on the other hand, the gradual build-up to an enormous climax, which is suddenly subverted.

Interrupted climax

Much of the initial emotional impact of the composition lies in the traditional pastoral character of the thematic material immediately following the prelude: mm. 15–42. The notated $\frac{6}{4}$ meter and static harmony—mostly over a pedal B—create a playful, idyllic

ambiance. Two independent melodic lines, played by the oboe and flute, sound languorous and improvisatory. In a word, this passage signifies indulgence. While there is no shortage of contrasting material in this tone poem, such as the hint of military fanfare in the trombone and timpani motive at mm. 40–46, the initial languid character lingers throughout the opening sections of the work.

In the middle of the *Pleasure-Dome* (m. 47) a passage appears with strong exotic associations, which is due to two factors: colorful instrumentation (solo oboe); and a distinctive scale that contains two augmented seconds (B, C♯, D, E♯, F♯, G, A♯). The same passage, however, also displays other characteristics—phrase structure and harmonic plan—that have unmistakable associations with a decidedly Western dance: the waltz. This element of exoticism is significant, for it confirms that Griffes was as eager to transform the pastoral tradition as he was to revive it. In his hands, musical exoticism becomes a confluence of the unfamiliar and the familiar, a fusion between a non-Western scale and an utterly Western rhythmic texture—in short, one more indication of the heterotopic garden.

That said, nothing prepares the listener for the *Pleasure-Dome's* astonishing conclusion. Beginning at m. 169, everything changes. Figure 13.2 gives a synopsis of the musical debauchery.

First, the tempo marking slowly speeds up from vivace to presto. Likewise, the dynamics gradually increase from *forte* to *fortissimo* at m. 197. The notated meter, which up to this point has been either $\frac{6}{4}$ or $\frac{3}{4}$, is now a spirited $\frac{2}{4}$. Even more dramatic is the change in rhythmic values. Starting at m. 177, the music consists of either eighth notes, eighth-note triplets or sixteenth notes, creating a notable rhythmic acceleration. At m. 197, the entire ensemble shifts to eighth-note triplets in $\frac{2}{4}$, which is a notational equivalent to $\frac{6}{8}$. In the next 13 measures the texture sounds like a tarantella out of control.

All of these factors point to an impending climax—yet the climax never arrives. At m. 204 the tempo shifts to Lento (Tempo 1), slowing to a crawl. Also, the dynamics suddenly die away from *fortissimo* to *pianissimo*. The ensemble thins out from a riotous *tutti* to a two-voice texture—a single melodic line in the tuba, plus a muted tremolo in the low strings followed by a bizarre glissando in the low strings. Without warning, the musical "orgy" has expired; the eruption of energy has finally come to an end. The overall effect is an interruption of massive proportions, a musico-dramatic purgation that never comes to fruition.

At first glance, this subverted climax might be interpreted as a musical analogy to the interruption of Coleridge's original burst of literary inspiration—the mysterious "knock-on-the-door" that disrupted his creative process. Taken together, Coleridge's original dream and Griffes's musical response to it are both suspended in time—either in mid-stanza or in mid-tarantella. Since what happens next in the orchestral work, an abbreviated repetition of the opening section, fails to reflect Coleridge's final lines, the correspondence between the musical and literary interruptions should be considered as extremely loose.

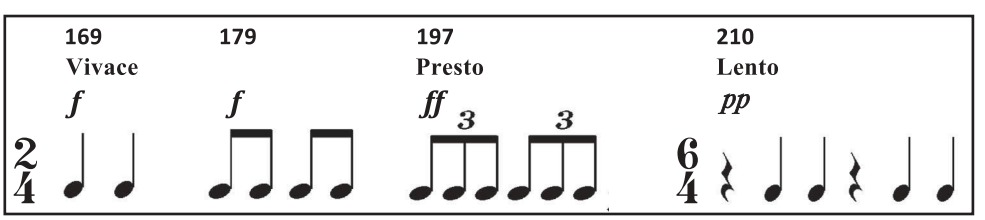


Figure 13.2 Griffes, *Pleasure-Dome*, Schema of Interrupted Bacchanal

Happily, there is a more persuasive interpretation. The three oppositions in form, style, and treatment of cycle serve a larger musico-dramatic purpose. Griffes's pastoral composite, part languid, part bacchanal, is not a stable union of two equal partners. Instead, it functions more like a musico-rhetorical experiment, an unstable compound of two opposing and highly active ingredients. This conflict of opposites is less a strict formal category than it is a fluid process—one that changes from moderate to fast pace, from soft to loud dynamics, from evocations of subdued pleasure to wanton excess, from the spirit of Apollo to that of Dionysus. The return of the initial mysterious chorale at the end is like the calm after the sensual storm, creating a semblance of closure.

The ultimate power of the work is inseparable from the near circularity in its form. The appearance of the same mysterious chorale at the beginning and the end serves as a musical frame. The abrupt shift in dynamics, tempo, and texture—in short, the interruption—dramatizes the boundary between the final passage and everything that occurs before. As a result, this tear in the musical fabric takes on a pseudo-narrative function, as if one were stepping outside the story or waking up from a dream. What remains is the music from the entry into the garden—the slow methodical rhythms of the opening chorale, now restated in a more heavenly register and with a more enchanting timbre. This chorale now serves as a recessional, combining the memory of revelry with the eternity of the Kubla Kahn's river of Alph.

Notes

1 I wish to express my gratitude to Donna Anderson for giving me the opportunity to peruse Griffes's diaries in her personal collection.

2 The following are representative songs with pastoral themes from 1912–1917: "The First Snowfall," "The Half-ring Moon," *Tone-Images*, op. 3: "La Fuite de la lune," "We'll to the Woods and Gather May"; *Four Impressions:* "Le Jardin," "Impression du matin," "La Mer," "Le Réveillon"; "Two Birds Flew into the Sunset Glow"; *Five Poems of Ancient China and Japan*, op. 10: "So-Fei Gathering Flowers," "Landscape," and "The Old Temple among the Mountains."

3 Claude Debussy: "La Soirée dans Grenade" and "Jardin sous la pluie," *Estampes* (1903); Frederick Delius: *Florida Suite* (1887); *A Village Romeo and Juliet* (1907); "Walk to the Paradise Garden"; Manuel de Falla: *Nights in the Gardens of Spain* (1915); Maurice Ravel: "Le Jardin Féerique," from *Ma Mère l'Oye* (1910); *Daphnis et Chloé*, suites 1 and 2 (1912).

4 Possible criteria for universality include "*having instances, being repeatable,* being abstract, being acausal, lacking a spatio-temporal location and being predicable of things." See "Types and Tokens," *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy,* plato.stanford.edu/entries/types-tokens/#Uni, accessed November 20, 2018.

5 For a sampling of the breadth of influence that Foucault's concept of heterotopia has had, see the bibliographies at the following website: www.heterotopiastudies.com/. (Accessed November 14, 2018).

6 A partial list of works with a "languid" marking includes Chopin, *Nocturne* in G minor, op. 15, no. 3: languido e rubato (1834); Wagner, *Tristan und Isolde,* Prelude: "Langsam und schmachtend" (1865); Debussy, *Ariettes oubliées*, "C'est l'extase langoureuse" (1887); and Scriabin, Piano Sonata no. 9 ("Black Mass"), op. 68: "avec une langueur naissante" (1913). Other than the Chopin, Griffes owned scores for all these works. My thanks to Donna Anderson for the inventory of Griffes's library prepared by Harold E. Wands.

7 Another source of confusion is Dionysus himself, a mysterious divinity who was born twice and who symbolized four different attributes including wine and intoxication, ritual ecstasy or madness, the world of the theater, and a cycle of death and resurrection.

PART IV

Music signification and narrative

14
MUSIC NARRATIVE
Theory, context, subjectivity

Byron Almén

I

Musical narrative, its defining features, scope, boundaries—indeed, its very existence—has been contested terrain for a generation within the fields of music theory and musicology. Narrative music is not precisely a new development; indeed, music as a storytelling medium can be traced back several centuries. Peter Kivy (1984, 160) points, for example, to Johann Kuhnau's set of Biblical Sonatas, first published in 1700. Nor has narrative theory been entirely a recent development. Anthony Newcomb (1984, 233–41) has argued that nineteenth-century conceptions of musical style encompassed the notion of music as a temporal succession of thematic events that had the potential to display conventional plot archetypes. But it is probably legitimate to argue that the entire project of musical hermeneutics was viewed with considerable suspicion by the English-speaking music-theoretical community for most of the twentieth century. For example, the prevailing analytical modalities of the 1970s—primarily Schenkerian, set-theoretic, and serialist—at best confined hermeneutic speculations to the periphery, with only a few dissenting theories: for example, Leonard Meyer's 1950s-era Gestalt approach (Meyer 1956) or Wilson Coker's semiotic exploration of musical gestures and musical sign types (Coker 1972) tacking away from the formalist position. To the degree that musical narrativity was addressed, as it was in Kivy 1984 book *Sound and Semblance*, a rather pessimistic opinion was rendered: that "the 'narrative' technique is essentially … the illustration of a narrative, not the narrative itself" (1984, 159), although Kivy also recognized that we have been "over restrictive … in our notion of what narrative is, and guilty of overemphasis in our insistence on the dependence of narrative on the propositional" (159).

Between 1982 and 1987, however, a trio of articles in *19th-Century Music* brought narrativity back into the spotlight, initiating the development of a mature and uniquely musical narrative theory. These articles reveal a resurgent interest in the narrative potentialities of so-called absolute music. The first, "Schubert's Promissory Note" by Edward T. Cone (1982), does not mention narrativity, but Cone's conclusions appear to set the frame for a narrative theory. Musical meaning, Cone argues, needs be confined neither to a Ratner-esque historical catalog of characteristic types (dances, learned style, brilliant style, etc.) nor to the motivic associationism of the *Figurenlehre*, but "must depend on a close structural analysis" (234–35). In other words, "expressive content must be congruent with structural content" (239). That this assertion—now

the standard point of departure for hermeneutic projects more broadly—seems completely unobjectionable today belies its revolutionary impact at the time. Furthermore, Cone's analysis of Schubert's *Moment musical* in A♭ major, op. 94, no. 6, is grounded on what might be considered a typical narrative strategy: a musical event that calls attention to itself, creating an obligation that is later discharged. The composition, then, can be understood as an attempt to carry out a narrative program.

The second and third articles, "Once More 'Between Absolute and Program Music'" and "Schumann and Late Eighteenth-Century Narrative Strategies," both by Newcomb, were explicitly narratological in focus. In these and later articles, he suggests that narrative arises

> most powerfully from the intersection of formal paradigm, thematic recurrence and transformation, and a third element, which I have gropingly called plot archetype—that is to say, various standard configurations of actions or intentions, configurations that are a fundamental vocabulary for interpreting the design and intention of human action and its simulacrum, narrative.
>
> *(Newcomb, 1992, 119)*

Like Cone, Newcomb sets aside extra-musical reference; unlike Cone, he locates narrative specifically in the idiosyncratic manipulation of formal schemes through the unfolding of phrase, motive, cadence, harmonic progression, genre, and multi-movement relationships. These "plot archetypes," though never exhaustively listed, typically appeal to interpretive strategies that are contemporaneous to the works he analyzes. For example, the Finale of Schumann's Second Symphony is said to reflect the nineteenth-century archetype of "suffering leading to healing or redemption" (Newcomb, 1984, 236), through thematic transformations and their associations with a "standard series of mental states" (240). His analysis of Schumann's *Carnaval*, op. 9, rests on an analogy with the Romantic narrative device of Witz: "the faculty by which subtle underlying connections are discovered … in a surface of apparent incoherence and extreme discontinuity" (Newcomb, 1987, 169). Interestingly, then, musical narrative is first rearticulated, not on the basis of modern narrative theory, but on appeals to historically grounded strategies.

Despite this fact, the idea that music might possess narrative properties sparked intense interest in the scholarly community and, almost overnight, narrativity became the subject of special conferences, panel sessions, and individual essays. These enthusiastic explorations appeared at risk of overstating music's narrative properties, potentially repeating the overly metaphorical flights of the fancy characteristic of late nineteenth-century interpretations and moving beyond Newcomb's more circumscribed project.

As a result, scholarship in the late 1980s and early 1990s—prefigured by Kivy's earlier reservations—tended to signal a reaction against the pitfalls of an inadequately theorized or overenthusiastic narrative surge. For the first time, music theorists like Carolyn Abbate (1991), Lawrence Kramer (1989, 1991), and Jean-Jacques Nattiez (1990a) began to construct a non-historicist narrative. These theories, however, were employed to emphasize radical dissimilarities between music and literature. In *A Theory of Musical Narrative* (2008), I summarize the four arguments made by Abbate, Kramer, and Nattiez against music as a narrative medium. First, "we do not hear a narrative unless we are given a linguistic cue" (29); second, the "temporal sequences of historical facts, individual actions, or musical events do not themselves constitute a narrative, because those sequences do not appear with" a causal relationship that explains them (30); third, narrative cannot be present in music because there is no narrator; and fourth, music's lack of referentiality disqualifies it from being a vehicle for narrative.

The strength of these critiques, coming as they were at a time when musical narrativity was allusive and metaphorical rather than systematized, would gradually begin to erode disciplinary interest in narrativity as a productive interpretive modality. By the mid-to-late 1990s there was a growing consensus that narrativity, as a theoretical and analytical paradigm, could not be supported.

But this account passes over an overlapping strand from the late 1980s and early 1990s wherein, from multiple directions, the status of musical narrativity was variously reasserted and re-theorized in relation to literary narrative theory and semiotics. This phase also witnessed a significant dialogue between North American and European scholarly communities, wherein three important developments in this strand can be singled out.

First, Robert Hatten, in his 1994 book, undertook a forceful defense of a hermeneutic alternative to formalist approaches. Hatten systematized several elements of musical topic theory—also theorized by Ratner (1980), Agawu (1991), and Monelle (2006)—to include local gestures ("yielding"), the distinction between type and token, correlation and interpretation, stylistic registers (low/middle/high), principles of style growth and change, larger topical categories (tragic, pastoral), and expressive genres (tragic-to-transcendent).[1] Though not explicitly narrative, Hatten's interpretive strategies would serve as a model for later narrative theorists; my own notion of narrative archetypes, though not derived from Hatten, bears some relation to Hatten's expressive genre when expressed in the topical domain.

Second, 1994 also saw the publication, in English, of the Finnish semiotician Eero Tarasti's book *A Theory of Musical Semiotics*. Like Hatten, Tarasti develops a systematic interpretive hermeneutics, but from the perspective of Greimasian narrative grammar. His musical correlates for the Greimasian terms isotopy, discursive categories (spatiality, temporality, actoriality) and modalities (*être*, *faire*, *vouloir*, *pouvoir*, *savoir*, and *devoir*) created another foundation for narrative analysis informed by French structuralism.[2]

Finally, Fred Everett Maus's 1988 article "Music as Drama" and his 1991 article "Music as Narrative" take an important step toward chipping away at Abbate's and Nattiez's contemporaneous critique of musical narrativity. First, Maus does not find music's indeterminacy to be a weakness. He argues that music is less like literature than it is like a drama lacking determinate characters: it directly presents events rather than narrating them, and it does so in a less representational manner. Second, the tendency of listeners to interpret the same work differently is not a repudiation of musical narrativity. Instead, it points to a psychological tendency to anthropomorphize the succession of events by relating them to the human sphere in a constrained variety of ways. Maus's essential contribution is that we must be sensitive both to the nature of literary narrative and to the ways in which musical narrative is distinct.

These writings were both more comprehensively systematic and analytically heterogeneous than the early explorations of Cone and Newcomb. As a result, it took some time for their impact to register, paving the way for a new hermeneutic approach based both on solid theoretical grounds and on nuanced interpretive details.

Thus, the declining confidence in narrative approaches gave way in the first decade of the new millennium to more sustained applications of narrative, variously concerned with broader theoretical systematization, a wider range of analytical applications, and an expansion of literary/philosophical/semiotic influences. For example, Vera Micznik (2001) proposes a rigorous analytical methodology based on the distinction between "story" and "discourse." The first category ("story") identifies coherent musical units (events) and their stylistic meanings at different levels of magnification (morphological—cells, motives, and themes; syntactic—meanings arising from grammatical, formal, and generic functions; and semantic—meanings arising from conventionally recognized codes). The second category ("discourse") identifies

strategic meanings arising from the temporal unfolding of the work (transformations over time and context, orienting vs. momentum-generating events, gestural connotations, and temporal manipulations). The influence of both music writers like Hatten and Kramer and of literary narrative writers like Gérard Genette and Gerald Prince are obvious here.

Also during that same decade, theorists and musicologists continued the exploration of individual narrative theorists in relation to music, as, for example, Michael Klein (2004) has done for Paul Ricoeur. Perhaps we find ourselves today with a more responsive stance toward music narrative. Its increased presence at conferences in the fields of music theory, musicology, film music, sound design, and video-game music, suggests that it has become an established subdiscipline, with scholars comfortably employing narrative approaches as part of their theoretical/analytical palette and applying it to numerous special topics, as evidenced in Klein and Reyland's collection on twentieth-century narrativity (2012). The newfound security of musical narrativity is grounded in stronger connections with existing theories from other disciplines, a richer understanding of music's unique features, and a generous palette of interpretive and analytical strategies.

II

In *A Theory of Musical Narrative* (2008), I argue that we should not be content to derive narrative principles for music unreflectively from those of literature, despite occasional convergent features. Neither is musical narrative seen as merely a productive analogy which cannot stand up to more thorough systematization and formulation. Rather, the relationship between these two disciplines might best be understood as that of siblings springing from a common parent, instead of as progenitor and descendent. Both disciplines draw from a common set of principles (see the discussion of transvaluation below) but manifest those principles in divergent ways. Leaving aside the details of the argument momentarily, this perspective allows one to step back from looking for equivalents to literary narrative phenomena and focus on ways in which music natively does this. That being said, such equivalences have been and will continue to be fruitful at times. There are interesting questions to be asked about musical narrators, musical points of view, musical personae, and so on that are not rendered useless by this formulation.

As a disciplinary matter, a sibling model and a theory arising from it have the advantage of engaging productively with the various critiques against musical narrative that have been leveled by various writers, even as such arguments can also be tackled head-on at times. For example, we can observe the importance of a listener becoming cued to a particularly narrative listening strategy through a title, a program, or other linguistic markers, but such cues are also inherent in the signifying system of music itself, with its productive dialectics of textures, dynamics, key regions, themes, and the like. It is also possible to understand music in narrative terms that do not arise from or conform to a privileged text—that is, a narrative reading can be both conventional and idiosyncratic, resulting in a multiplicity of intersubjective readings that nevertheless proceed through the engagement with (potentially) recognizable and articulable features in the musical discourse.

Likewise, the apparently pivotal role of causality in literary narrative and its apparent absence in music can be problematized both within literary narrative (for example, in works with unreliable or multiple narrators) and within temporal art forms as a whole: the listener/reader/observer must infer connections between events for them to be rendered meaningful, and the conventions of musical discourse provide countless such landscapes for doing so. The centrality of a narrator (ubiquitous in literature, but marginalized in music discourse) can likewise be decentered by

pointing to the role of listeners/readers/observers themselves in situating events in a temporal frame and a sequence of events, and mediating what is conveyed. Numerous devices in language, including the use of particular verb tenses and methods for representing consciousness that combine scene and summary, tend to efface the role of the narrator. Thus, a musical narrative that must adhere to what literary narrative itself does not consistently evince would seem to decenter and overly restrict the former.

Music's lack of "realistic" representation also becomes less of a concern with a sibling model; not only does the narrative impulse emerge from a willingness or intention to hear a narrative (Klein 2004) and not from realistic events, but the very notion of "realism" is conventional in both literature and music. Semiotics teaches us that it is the relations between elements and not the elements themselves that are pivotal to signification.

III

In light of the above reorientation to a sibling model, I locate the principles of narrative as conceptually prior to its manifestation in a particular medium. Most compelling is the notion of narrative as transvaluation, the latter term arising from Nietzsche but more recently articulated by the semiotician James Jakób Liszka in relation to myth (1989). To summarize this position somewhat informally, narrative involves (1) the perception of a change in the valuative relationships among aspects of a discourse as constrained by (2) changes among the sign relationships themselves within the entire signifying system, and (3) the interpretive predilections, intensions, and biases (whether conscious or unconscious) of an interpreter and his or her cultural context. Interpreters' competencies—indeed, their very identity as individuals—are complicit in what narrative trajectory is posited. This also necessarily suggests that narrative does not depend on fixed and immutable signifying conventions, and therefore inherently evokes competing intersubjective interpretations that jostle for consensus in the public discursive sphere.

Observe that this definition still leaves out all of the essential details about how such an analysis might be performed. Just as the definition of narrative itself preserves the inherent intersubjectivity of its manifestations, so too does the above theory resist privileging any one methodology. Instead, the work of other scholars such as Hatten, Tarasti, Klein, and Micznik, whose analytical efforts explicitly or implicitly engage with narrative, have been highlighted and my own voice added to theirs in a spirit of mutual dialogue and community. Readers approaching my book looking for a sanctioned methodology will instead find examples that are necessarily provisional, subjective, and inviting of complementary perspectives.

In lieu of a sanctioned method, Liszka's (1989, 120) tripartite structure of the narrative analysis of myth (1) seemed loosely to capture some commonalities among the handful of approaches surveyed in *A Theory of Musical Narrative* and (2) introduced a degree of top-down organization that allowed for comparison and classification. One potential danger of suggesting this structure is that it might not be approached with as light a touch as might be needed, with the result that—like many form-functional analyses—we mistake orienting categories and labels for the goal of analysis.

The first two levels—agential and actantial (not to be confused with actorial)—are by far the most critical, since it is here that all the real work of analysis is performed.[3] The agential level involves the articulation of relative value with respect to the cultural units considered analytically relevant in a musical work. These units can take innumerable guises—gesture, topic, program, form-syntactic, tonal-syntactic, and so on. Importantly, they need not be actorial in nature; that is, there is no need for the anthropomorphization of the musical

material for the narrative to occur. Value can be established through any normative/non-normative or typical/atypical scale, such as those established by a tonal hierarchy, a prevailing registral region or metric level, or even a dynamic and/or textural range. The second, actantial level takes account of the ways in which the musical unfolding itself acts upon and influences the cultural values in question—this involves tracking the relative changes in cultural value among the various elements throughout the work.

One way to conceive of these levels is to consider the distinction between (1) the a priori valuative configuration, distinctions given in advance by the culture and/or the individual analysts' preconceptions and in its initial formulation within the work—where "initial" can be qualified by features such as framing functions, which begin "before the beginning," or works that point back to prior movements or historical works, and (2) the subsequent shifts in value as the work unfolds. This pair of levels does not so much represent a method of analysis as a useful way to sort and conceptualize the mass of material.

In actual practice, an agential and actantial analysis might first involve an intuitive appraisal—based on long familiarity and detailed study—of the work's significant elements, interrelationships, and dynamic processes. Methods such as those of Tarasti or Micznik can be used to make an exhaustive inventory of such elements, relationships, and processes to ensure that one's analysis accounts most convincingly for what the analyst perceives to be occurring. Often, attention to segmentation, typical strategies for signification, and the coordination of details into a larger frame will be required. Finally, these elements can be described and outlined in whatever way seems most rhetorically effective.

The third level of analysis—the so-called narrative level—is the way in which the disparate details are coordinated into a more comprehensive frame. Following Liszka (1989, 129–41), I employ a reworking of Northrup Frye's four narrative archetypes (1957), or mythoi—romance, tragedy, irony, comedy—that articulates them in terms of the oppositions victory/defeat and order-imposing-hierarchy/transgression. So, for example, a romance involves the victory of an order-imposing hierarchy over its transgression (victory + order), while a tragedy involves the defeat of a transgression by an order-imposing hierarchy (defeat + transgression). Irony (defeat + order) and comedy (victory + transgression) complete the pairings. The appropriation of these mythoi does not extend to the symbolic-mythic elements of Frye's theories, only to the combinatorial features expressed by their semiotic reformulation.

These archetypes, being the easiest aspect of the theory to retain in memory and the most comprehensive in scope, have garnered the most attention in subsequent scholarly literature. It is worth noting, however, that this deductive level is in many respects only a crystallization (and, sometimes, a prefiguring) of the first two levels. The interest in a narrative analysis should always lie in the agential and actantial details. The narrative level is useful as a way (1) to articulate initial insights into a work's narrative dynamics; (2) to focus explorations of the first two levels, even as I may be forced to reconsider my initial assessments; and (3) to provide a summative categorization that potentially allows me to compare two analyses of the same work or analyses of different works. That is to say, the narrative level, unlike the first two levels, is not an end in itself but a tool to advance the analysis or to suggest additional applications.

IV

Over the last decade, *A Theory of Musical Narrative* has contributed to a productive conversation about music signification and sketched out a frame within which such a conversation might be situated. There has also been sufficient time and opportunity to reveal aspects of the text that might have been articulated more clearly in the original draft.

The discussion below clarifies certain intentions to those for whom such clarifications would be of interest, not to constrain the paths that subsequent explorations might take. In that light, four topics will be taken up again: (1) the narrative level of analysis and the related term "primary narrative level;" (2) "order-imposing hierarchy" (particularly in the light of my earlier formulation "initial order"); (3) the special nature of irony as a narrative archetype; and (4) the "teleology of the sign user."

The narrative level

As noted above, the narrative level provides a useful shorthand for succinctly crystallizing analytical insights. The four narrative archetypes are helpful in their own right, insofar as they help to coordinate the signifying details in a coherent manner. In addition, to the degree that, say, all tragic narratives have certain features in common and are different with respect to other features, such a category can be used to group such works together for the purposes of comparison.

The four archetypes are distinguished by the combinatorial possibilities inherent in two fundamental semiotic oppositions: "victory/defeat" (outcome) and "order/transgression" (emphasis). Although this appears simple, it can actually be a tricky and subtle process to frame the narrative argument in such a way.

These semiotic oppositions may actually involve the operation of multiple signifying features (multiple themes/gestures/motives, multiple parameters, multiple listener expectations via form, genre, etc.). In other words, the presence of two oppositions at the level of the definition of the narrative level does not imply a simple "X vs. Y" (as in "theme 1 vs. theme 2," or "tonal closure vs. lack of tonal closure") formulation on the level of musical details. In some works, for example, multiple themes contribute to the musical discourse, as was the case for my Mahler analyses (Almén, 2008, 97–138). It would be ludicrous to reduce the complexity of such works to the opposed "fates" of two themes. Instead, these themes participate in a more abstract, more generally defined opposition. What is required here is that the analyst, for the sake of making the transvaluation clear, finds the most succinct expression of that transvaluation by locating the nature of this most general set of oppositions.

Indeed, it may not even be possible to locate the opposition in such concrete terms. In my analysis of Haydn's "Joke" Quartet finale (Almén, 2008, 169–74), the narrative opposition must be formulated in terms of whether a formal expectation is realized or whether it is not. This opposition clearly involves the coordination and interplay of many different musical signifying elements. There is, however, value in attempting the succinct formulation of the narrative level so that the nature of the opposition is clear. It is also possible to express the narrative level in cases where it is not possible or relevant to identify two opposed groupings of musical content.

Likewise, the oppositions at the narrative level do not preclude narratives that eschew opposition as a dynamic strategy. For instance, the discursive strategy of synthesis (Almén 2008, 207–21) invokes a narrative dynamic that moves toward the reconciliation of previously opposed musical elements.

The concept of the primary narrative level (Almén 2008, 163–64; 230) calls attention to the possibility of diverse strategies for narrative transvaluation which, in many cases, involves a complex combination of musical elements. This concept is not intended to imply that only a specific signifying element (like a theme or motive)—let alone one or two concrete phenomenal representations of that element—would be needed to characterize a transvaluation. Instead, attention is called to the fact that analysts would need to search for an appropriate depth

of focus to express the global narrative trajectory, and that the resultant trajectories would differ with respect to many piece variables such as length, complexity, the nature and importance of actorial elements, and the density of signifying mechanisms and layers.

Some of the difficulties expressed here are more understandable in light of the fact that in earlier formulations of the subject, the boundaries between narrative level and musical detail tended to be somewhat blurred (see Almén 1998, 2003). As a result, the reader is invited to default to the later formulations found in *A Theory of Musical Narrative*.

A narrative analysis that does the fullest justice to the musical details will engage with as many signifying elements as possible. The narrative level, rather than constraining or limiting one's scope, should concisely articulate this complexity. The binary oppositions generally occur only at the level of the formulation of the narrative level, not at the levels of the musical content. Put most simply, the narrative level should be capable of expressing any form of narrative dynamic from the simplest (something like a single change in one parameter or signifying element) to the most complex. The simplicity of the narrative level is in its expression, not the content that it organizes.

"Order-imposing hierarchy"

The term "order-imposing hierarchy," which represents one pole of the opposition "order/transgression," appears as part of the appropriation of Liszka's definition of the narrative level. Originally referred to as "initial order," its reformulation in *A Theory of Musical Narrative* is an attempt to more carefully convey how this should be understood. Although "order-imposing hierarchy" should serve as a reasonably good description of what is intended, certain possibilities for confusion might still emerge.

One point of confusion involves what is meant by "order," which does not primarily refer to "order" in the sense of "orderly" or "secure," as the opposite of "chaos" or "disorder." Rather, the term is to be understood in the sense of "configuration"; a particular constellation of musical signifying material into a valuative spectrum, where some material in that configuration is more or less marked, and of higher rank than other material. This distinction is important in that the former understanding might lead the analyst to look for a certain stability or lack of disorder in the work's initial hierarchic configuration. This would preclude us from attending to cases in which that configuration is indeed chaotic or uncertain, a situation which occurs with great frequency. By extension, then, a transgression need not be chaotic or disordered. An example of this might be the finale to Mahler's Symphony no. 1, where the initial "infernal" material gives way to a glorious apotheosis at the end of the work (Almén 2008, 189–95). Indeed, no characterization of the quality of the hierarchies found in a musical work is to be inferred from the use of the term "order."

That said, there is a sense in which any hierarchical configuration involves the imposition of a kind of order, that this hierarchy does violence to other possible hierarchies, such that "order" also has a quality of being put in place as opposed to other possibilities. This is what might be called Liszka's critical (as opposed to the hermeneutic) stance in relation to narrative dynamics. That is to say, narrative emerges out of the violence inherent in any system and gives rise to an attempt to redress the imbalance, leading to a different configuration that itself engenders violence in a different way. So, my use of Liszka's term "order," however fraught with difficulty, nicely constellates this combination of qualities.

As stated above, the use of "initial" in the original formulation alludes to the typically important role of a work's initial musical expressions in establishing the prevailing hierarchy

that is to be transvalued. Sometimes, however, what occurs at the actual beginning of the work is better understood as contributing to a later stage of this transvaluation, or to something "before the beginning," as with framing functions. We might, for example, be led to understand the actual beginning as the foreshadowing of something yet to come. As a result, though not wishing completely to efface the importance of the initial material, it would be useful to take the term "initial" with something of a grain of salt.

The problem of irony

In *A Theory of Musical Narrative* (2008, 234–35), attention was called to a particular peculiarity of the ironic archetype—and also of an earlier employment of the notion of "listener's sympathy"—with respect to Liszka's semiotic articulation of the narrative level. Because this discussion was given in a footnote and not the main body of the text, its clarifying features are somewhat obscured. In the interest of redressing that balance, the footnote is quoted in full:

> When I discussed the issue in Almén 1998 and 2003, I suggested that the manner in which the opposition victory/defeat was cued musically was through reference to a listener's sympathy. I now feel this approach to be problematic for several reasons. First, it oversimplifies a listener's reception of a work: a listener might be profoundly ambivalent toward the emotive effects of a narrative trajectory without disrupting the clarity or general lines of its interpretation. Second, it misleadingly gives priority to actoriality in interpretation, since it is difficult to see how one could feel "sympathy" for an abstract musical rule outside of the narrative trajectory within which it was employed. Thirdly, and most importantly, my characterization problematized the ironic mythos, in that it suggested that the listeners' sympathy would be with the defeated order-imposing hierarchy. In fact, the opposite is usually true: the function of irony is frequently to point out the illusions or flaws in a hierarchy. When the cracks in the ideal façade are revealed, a more realistic appraisal of that hierarchy is engendered. While this may reveal a certain sympathy with the hierarchy being satirized, it might also be motivated by a transgressive desire to reevaluate the priorities of that hierarchy, as we saw with the ironic McClary analysis of the Brandenburg Concerto movement in Chapter 2. It is thus more appropriate not to impose an additional layer of interpretation onto narrative analysis, instead allowing the opposition victory/defeat to be interpreted more directly through attention or emphasis rather than sympathy. In this sense, irony is more clearly seen as an emphasis on the defeat of an order-imposing hierarchy, generally through the exposure of its inconsistencies and absurdities, rather than as sympathy with that defeat.
>
> *(2008, 234–35)*

More than other narrative archetypes, then, irony calls forth a bifurcation of awareness in us: a narrative trajectory that exposes the flaws of an order-producing hierarchy, and an interpretive stance that may or may not lead one to hope for that hierarchy to be transvalued. In some cases (mostly of the comic irony subtype like the Haydn "Joke" Quartet analysis), this interpretive stance does not jar with the narrative trajectory, while in others, that trend toward middle-phase or tragic irony, like McClary's (1987) analysis of the Brandenburg Concerto no. 5, such a bifurcation is essential to understanding, and to the proper assessment of the opposition "victory/defeat."

The teleology of the sign user

Central to Liskza's—and my—definition of narrative transvaluation is the essential, subjective, and contextualized perspective of the analyst that gives rise to it. Two elements of the definition foreground this feature. One is that the markedness and rank relations of a musical hierarchy that are revalued in the process of transvaluation themselves arise through the perception, imagination, or conception of a particular interpreter, even as these relations are constrained by those within the signifying system. The second is that these relations are further constrained by the "teleology of the sign user," or what we might call the personal equation, the combination of cultural, experiential, and temperamental elements that make up an individual's unique perspective.

Indeed, any theory of narrative that does not place this subjectivity and contextualization at its heart risks much: by reifying contingent interpretations, by placing faith in a monolithic stance, and by remaining unaware of the excision of countless alternatives in the process of perceiving music and making analytical choices, the analyst is at risk not only of retreating into an illusory and fixed *Figurenlehre*, but also of promoting the discursive violence that emerges from presenting any one reading as sanctioned or exclusive. A theory can be both systematically rigorous and attentive to the contingency of the interpretations it enables. Analysts should therefore be aware of the impossibility of precluding competing narrative interpretations for any given work. A consequence is that interpretations will necessarily compete and jostle in the marketplace for the possibility of achieving a partial, temporary, and finite consensus, a consensus that shifts with the passing of time and the exchange of ideas.

This diversity arises from the complexity of musical discourse itself and from the clash of incommensurable cognitive preferences that cannot be completely purged. The "unwinnable wars" that result from such clashes are themselves worthy of attention. One such clash involves a preference for either unbounded or bounded pattern recognition. In other words, some analysts resist closure, definitive stances, and closing the circle in their interpretations while others value these qualities. There are trade-offs to both perspectives, with the former capturing emergent features at the expense of a satisfying sense of optimal clarity, completeness, or coherence, and the latter striving for conceptual elegance and rhetorical comprehensiveness at the expense of attention to messy exceptions and loose ends. This and other clashes—establishing value through social consensus vs. protecting individual stances; giving preference to logic, disciplinary sanction, or tradition vs. searching for new and optimal points of interpretive leverage; seeking to be "experience-near" in one's perceptions vs. allowing for memory and experience to influence these perceptions—should ideally be brought into our reflective consciousness so that we can recognize the contingency of the choices we have made and do not risk assuming that our stance is the only possible one to make.

Notes

1 See Hatten's essay in this volume.
2 See Tarasti's essay in this volume.
3 See Baker's essay in this volume for an approach to actantial pairing.

15

MOTIVIC LINKAGE AND ACTANTIAL PAIRING IN BRITTEN'S OPERAS

Michael Baker

The carrying over of pitches from the end of one musical segment to form the beginning of the next is commonplace in twentieth-century music, and it represents one of the most comprehensible means of creating local continuity between musical gestures in neo-tonal and post-tonal music.[1] This device, called "linkage technique" by Heinrich Schenker, is widespread in music from the tonal tradition.[2] Linkage technique, however—with its inbuilt focus on the immediate repetition of surface-level motives—is applicable to a wide range of music, regardless of tonal implications or the lack thereof. Whereas motivic connections such as this can be found in many instrumental genres, opera composers may use this technique to depict subtle aspects of a character's thoughts and motivations, either spoken or unspoken, as the drama continues to unfold on stage.

This essay examines several instances of motivic connections between opera characters in three of Benjamin Britten's operas: *The Turn of the Screw*, *Albert Herring*, and *Peter Grimes*. Drawing upon Greimas's model of narrative actants, I illustrate how motivic linkages play a structural role in clarifying the function of various narrative archetypes, where subjects, objects of desire, and opponents dynamically interact and transform across the course of the operas in question. The notion of linkage technique is widespread in Britten's operas, and the actantial model may be applied more generally to other operas and stage works to reveal aspects of the narrative structure, and the functional roles performed by various characters within the drama.

Greimas's actantial model

Algirdas Julien Greimas (1917–1992) was a prominent French-Lithuanian literary scholar and semiotician whose work can generally be characterized as an attempt to describe textual structure on a purely functional level. Although Greimassian semiotics contains a wide range of ideas, including the famous "semiotic square," this essay focuses only on the so-called actantial model, first proposed in 1966 and central to Greimas's later ideas.[3] Greimas drew inspiration from the work of Vladimir Propp, particularly his *Morphology of the Russian Folktale* (1928), which introduced a variety of structural functions in the study of folk tales, and can be seen as an intellectual precursor to Greimas's study of deep narrative structure.

Greimas's formulation, however, has gained widespread use among semioticians, and his theories are extremely influential in the broader field of structural linguistic studies (see, for instance, Latour and Akrich 1992; Haraway 1992). In Greimas's model there are six actants, or narrative structural archetypes, that play various functional roles in storytelling: subject, object, sender, receiver, helper, and opponent. Greimas distinguishes between *actants* and *actors* since a single actantial function may be embodied by many individual characters or elements of the narrative; likewise, a single character may also embody different actantial functions depending on the character's role in the story.

Within Greimas's formulation, the actants are set in binary opposition and form three primary pairs: the subject and object, the sender and receiver, and the helper and opponent. Each of these pairs operate along a separate narrative axis, illustrated in Figure 15.1. The axis of desire connects the subject, or primary protagonist in the narrative, with the object, or an item, ideal, or, frequently, a person that the subject desires. Greimas notes that the pairing of subject and object is the most crucial actantial pairing in a given narrative structure. The axis of knowledge connects the sender, or source of information related to the object, with the receiver, who obtains this information. Greimas points out that in many instances the same character represents both the subject and the receiver of information. The axis of power connects the helper, someone or something that provides assistance to the subject, with an opponent, someone or something that impedes the subject's acquisition of the object. It is worth noting that some aspects of the protagonist may represent the actantial opponent, such as the subject's fear of failure or fatal hubris, in addition to an actual character standing for an opponent.

A related concept is Greimas's distinction between whether a subject and object are conjoined (symbolized as $\cap$) or disjoined (symbolized as $\cup$) within the narrative structure. Each of these concepts represents different states between the subject and object, and may either be static (a single overriding state) or dynamic (a motion from one state to another). As an example, consider the proto-fairy tale in which a hero seeks a treasure. If, for instance, the hero seeks and finally attains the treasure (possibly with the aid of a helper), one can represent this narrative structure as shown, $(S \cup O) \rightarrow (S \cap O)$, where the arrow might be read as state 1 *leads to* state 2, as if on a timeline. The distinction between conjoined and disjoined states, and the dynamic motion between them, will play an important role in the study of narrative later in this essay.

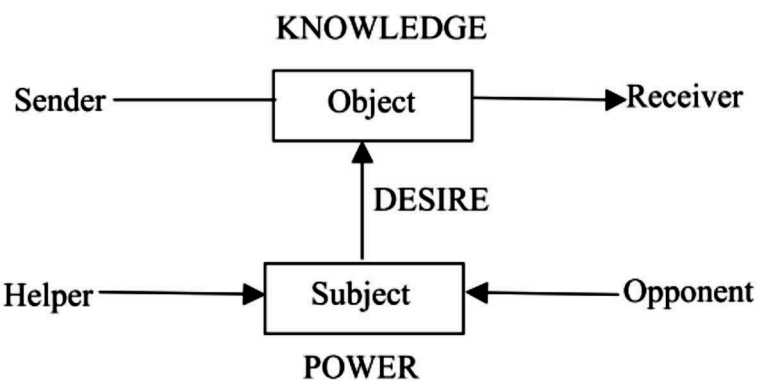


Figure 15.1 The actantial model
(after Greimas [1966] 1984, xliii)

As a preliminary example, consider the actantial structure of that most prototypical of fairy tales, one involving a literal fairy. Cinderella's primary objective, at least initially, is to attend the royal ball (representing the object). She is impeded by the actions of her wicked stepmother and stepsisters (opponents), and aided by her fairy godmother and friendly mice (helpers). The royal proclamation about the ball (sender) sets the plot into motion, providing important information about the ball both to Cinderella and her stepmother (receivers). Furthermore, observe that the object of Cinderella's desire shifts from wanting to attend the royal ball to Prince Charming across the course of the narrative. The emergence of new characters and plot devices frequently results in such revisions to the narrative structure, and to the play of actants within Greimas's theory.

The Turn of the Screw

As a demonstration of this concept and its relation to narrativity within opera, I examine several moments of linkage from Benjamin Britten's operas, beginning with *The Turn of the Screw*, an adaptation of the Henry James novella.[4] The opera, with a libretto by Myfanwy Piper (1911–1997), features a uniquely interrelated musical structure, with 16 individual scenes interspersed with a set of instrumental theme and variations, all preceded by a lengthy prologue.[5] The opera mixes aspects of tonality and atonality, common to Britten's harmonic language, and is notable for the use of a twelve-tone theme, Britten's first attempt at dodecaphonic composition.

The story is about a young Governess hired by a man who has become responsible for his young nephew and niece after the deaths of their parents. That man lives mainly in London and is uninterested in raising the children himself; upon giving full charge to the Governess, he explicitly states that she is not to bother him with communications of any sort. The children, Flora and Miles, live at Bly, a country house in the East of England, currently being cared for by the housekeeper, Mrs. Grose. In addition, the story features two "ghost" characters: Peter Quint (the former valet of the Bly household) and Miss Jessel (the Governess's predecessor), both of whom died under mysterious circumstances. In the course of the story, Mrs. Grose reveals not only that Quint and Miss Jessel shared an improper sexual relationship, but also suggests that Quint may have been a child molester who preyed on Miles.[6] As the story continues, Miles is contacted by the ghost of Quint and begins displaying many unsettling behaviors and characteristics. Meanwhile, the Governess becomes aware of the relationship and grows increasingly determined to protect Miles, to the point of obsession, alienating herself from Flora and Mrs. Grose in the process.[7]

Our first example of linkage occurs between the end of the Prologue and the onset of the Theme. The opera opens with a Prologue that uses an unnamed narrator to describe the meeting between the Governess and the children's guardian. The Prologue's function within the opera is similar to that of the opening narrator's role in James's novella, which, after a framing introduction, reads as a first-person narrative from the Governess. The Prologue sets the stage for the subsequent drama, describing the Governess's mission and the conditions imposed by the guardian. The Prologue ends with a rising and falling sixth interval, through the pitches G–E–G, which is picked up at the beginning of the Theme that reports the Governess's response to the charge. The effect of this linkage is similar to a baton being passed off between two relay runners, effectively signaling that the Governess has accepted the challenge with her words "I will," spoken in third-person by the Prologue.

A consideration of the actantial structure reveals that this linkage points up a connection between the sender and receiver along the axis of communication. The Governess's primary

objective, at least initially, is professional success and pleasing the guardian. The guardian, serving as the sender within this configuration, provides important information about the Governess's mission, specifically that she is not to communicate with him in any way about the affairs at Bly. As such, the Governess functions as both the subject and receiver of this information. The Governess's extreme level of autonomy, coupled with her lack of professional achievement described in the Prologue, leads to a state of timidness and fear of failure, which plays out as the opera unfolds. The Governess's fear of failure emerges as an opponent as the Prologue progresses, an internal characteristic of the Governess, to be addressed in subsequent scenes in the opera.

A second example occurs in Scene 2, titled "The Arrival," involving the moment in which Mrs. Grose and the children gather to welcome the Governess to Bly. The Governess is charged with overseeing the affairs of the children and running the household, and while each are unaware, both the Governess and Mrs. Grose are nervous over the meeting and eager to make a good first impression on one another. In Scene 1, the Governess confesses her misgivings over her new position and questions whether she will fit in with the others and be able to fulfill her task. This feeling of being on unsure footing continues into her Scene 2 entrance (rehearsal 9) when the Governess timidly introduces herself to the household. Britten depicts the Governess's hesitation through the dissolution of tonality for her entrance. Just as the Governess ends her introduction, Mrs. Grose quickly links to her music, momentarily pulling the music back into the prevailing key of B major. This linkage aptly portrays Mrs. Grose's motivations in the passage, offering a kind greeting to a timid and worried stranger. The enharmonic spelling further illustrates this helping hand from Mrs. Grose, answering the Governess's out-of-place G♭ with the pitch F♯, one of the most stable pitches within the key of B major.

A consideration of the actantial functions of this moment reveals a different relationship than that between the Prologue and the Governess, focused now on the axis of power between the helper and subject. Following her Act 1 soliloquy, in which she describes her fear of failure and misgivings about her new position, the Governess's initial objective has now shifted from professional success toward acclimating to the household and her new position. From this perspective, Mrs. Grose now functions as the helper, while the opponent in this configuration is the Governess's fear of failure. This example demonstrates that Mrs. Grose's kind and welcoming gesture counteracts the fear of failure, which enables the Governess to achieve her objective in this scene.

Later in Scene 2, following a greeting from Mrs. Grose and the children, the Governess sings of feeling instantly at home at Bly (rehearsal 10) and of the children's charm, to whom she feels a great emotional attachment. As the scene progresses, the children return to a teasing motive from earlier in the scene, now imploring the Governess to see the grounds of Bly with them. As they sing, Mrs. Grose scolds the children with a *fortissimo* entrance, overlapping the children's pitch (rehearsal 13). This merger, where Mrs. Grose "talks" over the children, serves a dramatic purpose, with Mrs. Grose demonstrating her lingering nervousness and eagerness to display her authority over the children. The Governess rebuffs Mrs. Grose's overlapping gesture a few measures later by stealing the pitch F from Mrs. Grose and redirecting the music to a concluding cadence in C major. This latter linkage reveals the Governess's motivations at the end of Scene 2, asserting her newfound authority within the household while also exposing her protective instincts toward the children.

Figure 15.2 illustrates the actantial structure of this passage, drawing upon Greimas's notion of conjunct and disjunct states. Greimas describes this situation as a complex *meta-utterance* involving three actants, two subjects and one object ([1970] 1987, 88). Within this

$$(S_1 \cap O \cup S_2)$$

S_1 = Governess
S_2 = Mrs. Grose
O = Authority over the Bly household
∩ = conjoined
∪ = disjoined

Figure 15.2 A complex meta-utterance involving three actants (after Greimas [1970] 1987, 95)

formulation the object is authority over the Bly household, which both Mrs. Grose and the Governess are vying over. The figure shows that the ultimate winner of this competition is the Governess, who is conjoined (symbolized ∩) to the object, in opposition to Mrs. Grose, who is disjoined (symbolized ∪) from the object.

As previously noted, the opera famously features two "ghost" characters, Peter Quint and Miss Jessel. As the opera continues, Quint contacts Miles, and the two sing of their connection, which must be kept secret from the Governess. Meanwhile, the Governess becomes aware of the relationship and grows increasingly determined to protect Miles. The drama reaches a climax in the final scene (titled "Miles"), in which the Governess confronts Miles over a stolen letter intended to her employer. Throughout the Governess' questioning, Quint, who is unseen by the Governess, pressures Miles not to betray him. After forcing Miles to confess to stealing the letter, the Governess demands to know who put him up to it, and Quint's pressuring becomes more menacing. Upon blurting out Quint's name, Miles falls dead in the Governess's arms while the ghost of Quint vanishes.

The competition between the Governess and Quint over Miles is masterfully portrayed by several instances of linkage technique throughout the entire scene. Quint's vocal gestures consistently focalize around the pitch E♭ throughout the opera, such as at rehearsal 129. During this portion of the scene, Miles frequently links to Quint's vocal gestures, particularly on the pitch E♭, as a way of resisting the Governess's questioning, obeying the insistent orders of Quint in this case.[8]

As Miles grows increasingly frightened of Quint, however, he turns away from the pitch E♭ and links to the music of the Governess, such as at rehearsal 133, immediately preceding his climactic death, in which Miles's descending fifth—G and C—mimics that of the Governess only moments before. Furthermore, observe that the Governess's music at this moment focalizes on the key of C major, and thus it creates a direct tritone conflict with Quint's sustained F♯, signifying musically the decisive choice for Miles.

Figure 15.3 depicts the actantial structure in this scene. It shows that the scene features two subjects, the Governess and Quint, who are in competition over the object, Miles. Greimas describes this narrative structure, familiar from many folk tales, as "a complex state involving two narrative programs" (Greimas [1970] 1987, 95). He goes on to clarify that when two narrative programs are in play, their inverse states exist in a relation of contradiction, effectively flipping from conjoined to disjoined relations between actants as the narrative progresses. Greimas uses the terms *syntagmatic junction* to describe the swapping from conjoined to disjoined or vice versa between one subject and the object, and

$$(S_1 \cup O) \Rightarrow (S_1 \cap O)$$
$$(S_2 \cap O) \Rightarrow (S_2 \cup O)$$

S_1 = Governess
S_2 = Quint
O = Miles

Figure 15.3 A complex state involving two competing narrative programs (after Greimas [1970] 1987, 95)

paradigmatic junction to describe the inverse relationship between utterances of conjunction and disjunction affecting two separate subjects (Greimas [1970] 1987, 95).

The motivic linkages in this scene aptly portray the transformation from conjunct to disjunct states, and vice versa, for each of the narrative programs. Miles initially links to Quint's E♭ gestures as a way of resisting the Governess, preventing her from obtaining her objective. During the course of the scene, this linkage is weakened as Miles grows increasingly frightened of Quint, and he begins to link to the Governess's music, until ultimately linking to her C major music, irrevocably blocking Quint from obtaining his objective.

Furthermore, consider the transformation of the actantial object across the course of the opera. The Governess's initial objective is professional success, which gives way to acceptance into the household and fulfilling her duties at Bly. As the drama continues, the Governess focuses on uncovering the mysterious circumstances of Miles's dismissal from school, then to convincing Mrs. Grose of her suspicions of supernatural activity. The Governess's objective ultimately becomes winning Miles's trust and protecting him from Quint.

Similarly, characters take on differing actants as the drama progresses. Mrs. Grose, for instance, is introduced as a helper in Scene 2, and she retains this role throughout much of the opera. Near the end of the work, however, as the Governess becomes increasingly concerned over Miles's safety, Mrs. Grose begins to question the Governess's means, effectively becoming an opponent to the Governess's activities. The children's guardian, introduced in the Prologue, initially serves as sender along the axis of knowledge, but later becomes an opponent in relation to the Governess, especially the mysterious insistence that she must not contact him in any way over the affairs at Bly, even in the face of extreme circumstances. Consideration of the changing actantial roles portrayed by characters throughout the narrative reveals much about the Governess's desires and motivations through the course of the opera.

Albert Herring

Albert Herring (1947) is one of Britten's rare attempts at comic opera. The opera tells the story of the titular character and events leading to his moral corruption. Linkage technique occurs throughout the opening scene in which a representative group of local townspeople gather at the home of Lady Billows to discuss candidates for the May Queen, with Lady Billows suggesting that the chosen person "should make virtue attractive and desirable for young people." The guests take turns suggesting candidates, and each candidate's suitability is brought into question by observations from Florence, Lady Billows's nosy and overly-informed housekeeper. The Vicar, singing in the key of F major, offers Jennifer Searl as a possible candidate (rehearsal 21). Florence links to the Vicar's pitch (rehearsal 22), then

redirects the music toward the relatively distant key of D♭ minor as she reveals that Searl had an illicit affair with Tom O'Dair, leading Lady Billows to immediately dismiss her from consideration. This change in tonality focuses the listener's attention toward the change in affect between the Vicar's enthusiasm for Searl and Florence's revelation.

Later, Miss Wordsworth presents her student Elizabeth Newell as a candidate, singing in the key of G major about her interests in botany, with Florence linking (rehearsal 23) and redirecting the music to E minor, mocking her interest in botany by noting that she had recently seen the student in the woods with Tom Hood. The Mayor then suggests Winnifred Brown, singing in C major, rebuffed by Florence (rehearsal 24), again linking to the Mayor's C and redirecting the music toward a G♭-seventh chord. Finally, Budd, the superintendent, suggests Amelia Keats, singing in B♭ major. Florence once again links to Budd's pitch (rehearsal 25), mentioning her brazen behavior and frequent state of undress, moving toward a cadence on G minor. Throughout this passage, each member of the party puts forward unsuccessful nominees for the May Queen, with Florence providing a juicy bit of gossip on each candidate. In each case, Florence links to the preceding music and quickly upends the established key of the previous character's phrase, musically mirroring how her comments put an end to each candidate's chances of being named the May Queen.

Later, each character continues to offer more options, each more desperate than the last, each rejected by Florence, until Budd suggests that, instead of a May Queen, perhaps they should consider a May King: Albert Herring (just before rehearsal 39). This stumps Florence, which immediately pleases Lady Billows, who proclaims him an ideal candidate for the May King.

From an actantial perspective, Florence represents the sender, providing information about the candidates to Lady Billows. It is established early on that Lady Billows will not tolerate immoral behavior, and Florence's gossiping provides important information to Lady Billows that gives cause to summarily dismiss each candidate from consideration. As the scene continues, the Superintendent eventually nominates Albert Herring for the "May King," and after some cajoling, Lady Billows agrees to the course of action. Linkages abound throughout the scene with the characters each taking turns extolling Albert's virtues to Lady Billows, each serving momentarily as senders in the actantial structure.

Peter Grimes

A different view of actants appears in *Peter Grimes* (1945). The Prologue opens with an inquest into the suspicious circumstances surrounding the death of Peter's latest apprentice. Following a non-conviction based on lack of evidence, Peter is reprimanded and advised not to take on another apprentice. Though innocent in the eyes of the court, he is deemed guilty in the hearts of the people of the Borough, except for that of Ellen Orford, a widowed schoolmistress. It is only through her agreement to serve as the boy's ward that Peter is allowed to take on a new apprentice. Following the inquest, Peter and Ellen linger in the courtroom to discuss his situation (rehearsal 9), with Peter singing desolately in the key of F minor, Ellen more positively in E major. Despite the distance between the two keys, linkages occur throughout this scene, through an enharmonic spelling of A♭ (within Peter's F-minor music) to G♯ (within Ellen's E-major music). Ellen eventually persuades Peter to sing with her in E major, just as her words persuade him to turn away from his negative thoughts in the aftermath of the inquest. The enharmonic connection between A♭ and G♯ thus serves as a harmonic and emotional bridge, allowing Peter to join with Ellen despite the vast chasm between them and the two key areas. This excerpt also begins with an enharmonic linkage between Peter's C♭

and Ellen's B, transforming an unstable pitch within Peter's key to a stable pitch in Ellen's E-major music.

In this scene, Peter serves as the subject whose object is that of acceptance within society. Peter begins the opera as an outsider, cast off from society, who longs for acceptance and a normal life. Following the inquest, he is farther than he has ever been from this goal. Ellen acts as a helper, providing kind words and descriptions of a normal life to come. Ellen's actions counteract those of the opponent, Peter's dark and negative thoughts. The whole dramatic scene is richly portrayed through Britten's music, enabled by the multiple linkages, which point up the actantial structure at play.

Later, in Act II, Scene 1, Ellen takes John, Peter's new apprentice, to the beach on Sunday morning. After singing of a hopeful future for her and Peter, she notices a fresh bruise on the boy. In the distance, the Rector sings to his congregation (rehearsal 10), ending his melody on the pitches E♭-F-E♭-D, centered in the key of C minor. Ellen's moment of fearful realization of Peter's temper and brutality is depicted with another moment of linkage, as the Rector's benediction motive migrates into the instrumental accompaniment, with enharmonic spellings, transformed into the pitches D♯–E♯–D♯–C𝄪, harmonized in B major. From an actantial perspective the Rector (and the Borough in general) represents the sender, providing knowledge about Peter's unchanging nature to Ellen, who receives this information.

Conclusion

Britten's handling of linkage technique was extremely flexible, and he frequently used it to depict aspects of poetic meaning, relations between characters, and changes in those relationships in the libretti. Linkage technique focuses the listener's attention on connections at phrase boundaries rather than segmentation, and it represents one of the most comprehensible means of creating continuity between musical gestures in neo-tonal and post-tonal music. In the context of opera, linkage holds tremendous potential in the expression of the inner thoughts and motivations of characters, especially as these motivations change over time, such as the shifting object of the Governess's desire described above, or the transformation of characters from helpers to opponents as dramas unfolds. Similarly, the examples from *Albert Herring* and *Peter Grimes* reveal that motivic linkages are powerful musical signifiers of the relationships between actants and in revealing the motivations of characters.

Whereas linkage technique provides a convenient means to theorize about character motivations in the passages examined here, it is not exclusively reserved for text setting purposes in Britten's operas. Other works by Britten, such as the *Temporal Variations* (1936) or the *Third Suite for Unaccompanied Cello*, op. 87, reveal that linkage is commonplace in his instrumental music as well.[9] Britten also uses linkage technique to create motivic connections between one song to the next in his song cycles. In the *Serenade for Tenor, Horn, and Strings*, op. 31, for example, the horn's pitches at the end of the "Elegy" are repeated in the tenor to begin the "Dirge." Another example occurs between the "Highland Balou" and "Sephestia's Lullaby" in *A Charm of Lullabies*, op. 41, the pitch A♯, harmonically out of place in both songs, links them together into a larger work.

Far from merely being an abstract thought experiment, consideration of the actantial structure in these operas has practical implications for performers, directors, and choreographers who may draw upon any number of bodily gestures in crafting a staged, gestural interpretation of these narrative elements. Furthermore, the motivic relationships

drawn out in this paper are suggestive of further research into actantial pairing in operas in general; multiple characters frequently interact on stage through linkages in many operas, not only in those by Britten considered here. Closer study of this phenomenon may reveal other aspects of linkage technique and its impact on actantial pairing in the narrative analysis of opera; thus, an actantial model can provide a general basis for contemplating the functional roles and activities fulfilled by the opera characters.

Notes

1 For instance, see Debussy's Sonata for Flute, Viola, and Harp, first movement, which is marked by many instances of linkage technique between the instrumental entrances at the opening. Linkage technique also characterizes Webern's row deployment in the *Variations for Piano*, op. 27, second movement, with many instances of overlapping the end of one row form with the beginning of another.

2 Schenker's fullest explanation of linkage technique (*Knüpftechnik*) can be found in his analysis of Brahms's *Variations and Fugue on a Theme of Handel*, op. 24 from *Der Tonwille* 8/9 ([1924] 2005). The classic description of this device, however, appears in Jonas 1982, 7–9. For other writings on linkage technique, see Rothgeb 1983; Smith 2007; Baker 2011 and 2013.

3 Much of the methodology used in this paper is derived from Greimas 1983 and 1987. For a recent study relating Greimas's actantial functions to the songs of Schubert, see Suurpää (2014).

4 *The Turn of the Screw* originally appeared in *Collier's Weekly* as a serial in 1898. It later appeared in *The Two Magics*, published in New York by Macmillan and London by Heinemann.

5 This interspersed theme and variations structure is similar to that found in Britten's Canticle III: "Still Falls the Rain," also composed in 1954.

6 Craig Raine (1999) states categorically his belief that Victorian readers would have identified the two ghost characters as child molesters.

7 *The Turn of the Screw* has a long history of interpretation and literary criticism dating from its publication, with early critics focused on the *unreliable narrator* trope and questions surrounding the sanity of the Governess (e.g., see Elton 1907). Interestingly, Britten composed another opera based on another Henry James novella, *Owen Wingrave* (1971), that also features a ghost character that causes the title character's unexpected death, unseen by other characters within the drama.

8 This linkage between Miles and Quint through the pitch E♭ occurs earlier in the opera, such as at Scene 7, rehearsal 73.

9 For instance, see the linkages between the "Polka" and "Resolution" in *Temporal Variations* or the linkages between movements 6 and 7 and movements 7 and 8 (all played *attacca)* in the *Third Cello Suite*, op. 87.

16

THE NARRATIVE RHETORIC OF BEETHOVEN'S FIFTH SYMPHONY

Anatole Leikin

Fate or fowl?

Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, op. 67 (written between 1804 and 1808), is one of the most discussed and analyzed compositions in the literature. Much of the symphony's immense appeal is owed to its celebrated opening, which "without question … is one of the most arresting openings ever written, immediate in its dramatic impact, memorable in its simplicity" (Hopkins 1981, 125).

The famed four-note opening has not only attracted an inordinate level of attention—it has also produced two conflicting accounts of the motif's origin, each of them citing Beethoven himself as a source. The most commonly known interpretation emanates from the composer's associate, secretary, and biographer Anton Schindler (1795–1864), who wrote that Beethoven explained to him the beginning of the first movement and the fundamental idea of the symphony: "Thus Fate knocks at the door!" (Schindler [1860] 1966, 147).

The other version of the four-note motif's meaning comes from Carl Czerny, who attested that Beethoven mentioned to him that "the little pattern of notes came to him from a yellowhammer song, heard as he walked in the Prater park in Vienna" (Hopkins, 129; see also Grove [1898] 1962, 147; Guerrieri 2012, 20–22).

A study of these two accounts reveals that the main objection to the Fate story is not so much related to the merit—or lack thereof—of the case, but rather to its source: Schindler's reputation was severely damaged in a series of musicological articles published in the 1970s (Albrecht 2009, 171–73). The vilification of Schindler, accused of destroying hundreds of Beethoven's conversation notebooks and falsifying a number of entries in the remaining ones, still continues today. Barry Cooper insists that Schindler's "propensity for inaccuracy and fabrication was so great that virtually nothing he has recorded can be relied on unless it is supported by other evidence" (1991, 52). Consequently, concludes Cooper, "Schindler's claim that the opening motif represented Fate knocking on the door, besides being manifestly spurious, is wholly inadequate as a rhetorical interpretation of the work" (2000, 171).

Recently, however, this widely accepted belief has been effectively debunked. Theodore Albrecht's archival research confirms that "Schindler never possessed any ca. 400 conversation books, and that he never destroyed roughly five-eighths of that number," adding that

> in the course of organizing the 137 volumes in his possession, Schindler—probably innocently, at first—started to annotate them, jotting down probable dates, identities of writers, circumstances under which an entry was made, and then, occasionally, adding "what the composer had said or *might* have said".
>
> *(Albrecht 2009, 181)*

Now that Schindler's reputation has been, to some extent, rehabilitated, his report of "Fate knocking at the door" seems more believable. Moreover, there is additional evidence that lends credence to Schindler's report.

In the years prior to Beethoven's work on the Fifth Symphony, he was beleaguered by health problems, the worst of which was the increasing loss of hearing. In a letter to Franz Gerhard Wegeler, written on 29 June, 1801, Beethoven admitted that "if I had any other profession, I might be able to cope with my infirmity; but in my profession it is a terrible handicap" (Anderson 1961, vol. 1, 60). In the same letter, the composer expresses his preoccupation with fate and his struggle against it: "If it is at all possible, I will bid defiance to my fate." A few months later, on 16 November, he writes again to Wegeler, insisting that "I will seize Fate by the throat; it shall certainly not bend and crush me completely" (Anderson 1961, vol. 1, 68).

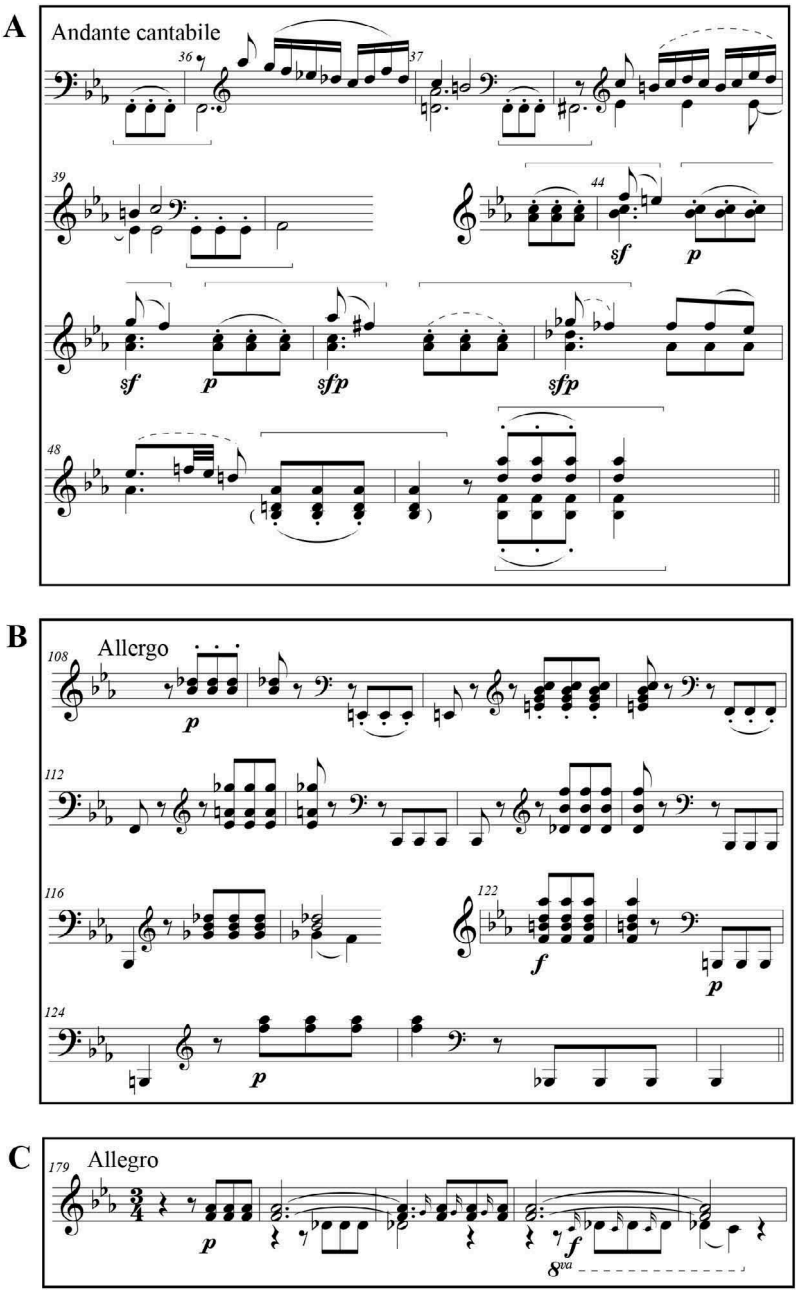
Interestingly, while the "yellowhammer" story concerning the opening of this Symphony mentions a specific musical icon (in the Peircean sense), the "Fate" explanation offers only a suggestive perception of the motif rather than pointing to its musical provenance. All that it does is to affirm, with no additional elucidation, that, as Swafford explains, "the first movement implies a story about something on the order of the action of fate on the life of an individual, an assault that cannot be turned back but can only be borne, resisted, transcended from within" (2014, 496).

Beethoven therefore had to find a musical signifier of Fate knocking on the door that would express a "personified external menace" (Sullivan and Navin 1927, 142). But merely utilizing a rhythmic pattern of three short notes followed by a long one might not serve this purpose. For example, three short and one long notes in a rising rapid scalar passage have an entirely different connotation. This energetic rhetorical figure is known as *tirata mezzo* (Bartel 1997, 409; see, for example, the beginning of Mozart's Symphony no. 41, K. 551 "Jupiter"). In order for "the hammering motif at the start of the symphony" (Geck 2017, 191) to become a mimetic signifier for "the peremptory gesture of … pounding" (Geck 2017, 193), at least the first three notes of it must be reiterated at the same pitch.

Beethoven, however, did not invent this motif and its denotation of "unknown forces pitted against a feeble self" (Geck 2017, 188). This expressive motivic pattern had already been used by Beethoven's predecessors. It is heard in Bach's Christmas Oratorio in no. 49, at the words "Warum wollt ihr erschracken?" [Why are ye so sore afeared?] (Geck 2017, 193).

Unlike the momentary, although striking, invocation of this signifier in the Christmas Oratorio, there are two compositions in which the four-note pattern takes center stage: the second movement in Mozart's Piano Sonata in B♭ major, K. 333 (1783), and the first movement in Haydn's Piano Sonata in E♭ major, Hob. XVI, 49 (1789–1790). In each of these two cases, the composer finds his own way to deal with this motivic pattern. In Mozart's Sonata, K. 333, the sinister four-note motif in the bass snakes up threateningly in the development (mm. 35–40, Example 16.1a), but then the threat quickly dissipates. The four-note motif is moved to a lyrical upper register, and gentle appoggiaturas are added to the long notes (mm. 43–48 in Example 16.1a, marked by brackets). Finally, the section ends with a transformation of this motif into a wistfully repeated dominant-seventh chord in E♭ major (mm. 48–50, Example 16.1a).

Haydn's presentation of the motif in question (Example 16.1b) is more profound, extending for almost 20 measures in the development (intriguingly, like in the Mozart



Example 16.1 (a) Mozart, Piano Sonata, K. 333, second movement mm. 35–50. (b) Haydn, Piano Sonata, Hob. XVI, 49, first movement, mm. 108–26. (c) Haydn, Piano Sonata, Hob. XVI, 49, first movement, mm. 179–83

Sonata, this segment, too, moves from F minor to E♭ major). And since the motif plays a more prominent role in Haydn's Sonata, he adds an extra twist in the process of coping with the menace: in the recapitulation, acciaccaturas are attached to the short notes of the motif, turning the earlier ominousness into a joke (Example 16.1c).

Beethoven's treatment of this four-note tattoo was at times similar to Mozart's and Haydn's earlier models shown in Examples 16.1a and 16.1b; likewise, he inserted the motif into single movements of his Piano Sonata in F minor, op. 57 ("Appassionata," 1804–1806), and the Piano Concerto in G major, op. 58 (1805–1806). It is interesting to note that an earlier sketch for the latter's first theme, with three "Fate" motifs fused together, can be found in Beethoven's sketchbook immediately after an early draft of the Fifth Symphony, dated 1804 (Meredith 1991, 106–08). In the Fifth Symphony, however, Beethoven elevates the role of this knock to a different level. Unlike its prototypes, Beethoven's "Fate" motif spawns an entire symphony and biographically corresponds to Beethoven's preoccupation with his own fate.

Equally important is the impact that this interpretation of the Fifth had on listeners and composers who were influenced by it. In an 1878 letter to Sergei Taneyev, Tchaikovsky discusses his Fourth Symphony:

> In reality my work is a reflection of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony; I have not copied his musical contents, only borrowed the central idea. What kind of a programme has this Fifth Symphony, do you think? Not only has it a programme, but it is so clear that there cannot be the smallest difference of opinion as to what it means. Much the same lies at the root of my Symphony.
>
> *(Tchaikovsky [1906] 1970, 294)*

Sylvia Bowden, among others, discusses Czerny's report that, according to the composer, the Fifth's opening theme derived from the song of a yellowhammer (Bowden 2008, 18). Indeed, typically, the bird's song consists of a series of repeated short notes, often followed by one or two longer notes. There are several problems, however, with this take on Beethoven's inspiration for the symphony. First, there are usually more than four short notes in the yellowhammer's song; second, it often stops immediately after the short notes, before the expected long note; and, finally, the adorable, high-pitch chirping of the yellowhammer is as far removed from the expressive disposition of the symphony as one can possibly imagine (an example of a yellowhammer's song can be heard on www.youtube.com/watch?v=dnvc-Cc3vkU, accessed December 8, 2018).

Does this mean that Czerny's reminiscence is wrong and Schindler's report is correct? Not at all; they both seem equally possible. I do not doubt the veracity of Czerny's account, but I do question Beethoven's sincerity. Indeed, come to think of it, what was the composer supposed to do—to say that he picked up this pattern from a yellowhammer's twittering in the park, or to reveal that he filched it from Bach, Mozart, and Haydn? It is more likely that the Master declared that a little bird sang it to him.

Per aspera ad astra, or from the key of tragedy to the key of jubilation

For a composer in Beethoven's time, one of the most important decisions was to choose the correct key for a composition. Beethoven read many of the major treatises on key characteristics, became quite familiar with the theoretical arguments on the affective qualities of the keys, and had a strong belief that every key had its own expressive personality (Tusa 1993, 3; Steblin [1983] 2002, 140; 226–27; 230–32; Ellison 2014, 7; 23–29). Paul Ellison

describes in detail Beethoven's opinions of key characteristics, including the composer's views of C minor and C major (Ellison 2014, 18–63).

Ellison outlines three affective praxes for C minor: (1) lament, pathos, funereal mood; (2) tender, plaintive, longing expressions; and (3) tragic, forceful, dramatic, stormy. C major, according to Ellison's classification, is utilized in two affective praxes: (1) triumph, strength, rejoicing, celebration, freedom, light; and (2) purity, innocence, simplicity, naïveté (Ellison 2014, 49–56; see also Steblin [1983] 2002, 226–27).

The drama developing in the Fifth Symphony spans from the tragic C minor in the first movement (the third affective C-minor praxis) to the triumphal apotheosis in the fourth movement (the first C-major praxis). The path to the celebratory C major is protracted, arduous, and gripping, and the victory key in the finale is combined with three other musical signifiers. The first is the glorious blaze of brass instruments, buttressing the victory key; the second signifier is the musical topics of marches and dances in Cmajor; and the third is Beethoven's modifications of the "fateful four-note tattoo" (Swafford 2014, 411). While Mozart diffuses the ominousness of this motif through changing registers and transforming the motif's long notes into graceful appoggiaturas (Example 16.1a), Haydn achieves a similar result through attaching acciaccaturas to the short notes (Example 16.1c); in both cases, the sinister character of the four-note tattoo dissolves.

Beethoven finds yet another way to remove the menace from the four-note pounding, to tame it, as it were. While the overall narrative of the Symphony is fairly simple —"unknown forces pitted against a feeble self, and at the end an all-consuming victory" (Geck 2017, 188)—the specific steps toward the final victory are extraordinarily ingenious and very gradual, spanning all four movements of the symphony.

Movement I: the confrontation

In the first movement of the Symphony, the "Fate" motif reigns supreme, one can say, obsessively so, appearing in 323 of the movement's 502 measures. Of the remaining 179 measures, 14 are cadences and 165 are associated with the secondary theme. Nevertheless, this motto is not perceived as repetitive, because it continually varies in instrumentation, range, dynamics, texture, and accompaniment figurations.

The only timbre and key Beethoven shuns—except for brief moments in the closing section of the recapitulation—is the brass playing the "Fate" motto in C major. But even in those instances, the brass instruments are not exposed; they merely support either the strings or an orchestral tutti (mm. 365–66 and 369–75). His reluctance to use brass in C major in the first movement brings up the much-debated problem of the introductory phrase to the secondary theme in the recapitulation. In the exposition, this phrase, based on the "Fate" motto, is played in E♭ major by two E♭ horns (mm. 59–62). In the recapitulation, when the secondary subject is transposed to C major, the same phrase is assigned to two bassoons, which has caused numerous objections and speculations as to why this phrase was not given to the horns again.

Felix Weingartner (1863–1942), the celebrated Austrian conductor, composer, and pianist, wrote in 1907 that Beethoven could not use stopped notes on the E♭ natural horn, and therefore assigned this passage to the bassoons, which sounded "as though a buffoon had made his way into the council of the gods" (Weingartner [1906] 1969, 128). Many other commentators have supported this view, asserting that it was impossible for E♭ horns to play the passage in C major, and that there was not enough time for the players to change the crooks from E♭ to C (Tovey [1935] 1962, 41; Hopkins 1981, 138–39).

Horn players would indeed need about ten seconds to change these crooks. Still, the statements concerning substantial dissimilarities between open and hand-stopped notes are correct only when the notes are played on a modern instrument. When stopped notes are performed on a period natural horn, the results are markedly different.

The quality of the stopped notes on the modern horn, with its wide bell throat, declines distinctly, because the hand has to move farther in order to change the pitch. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, however, the narrower bell throat of the natural horn allowed players "to make the stopped notes sound more like open ones" by using "the smallest possible movement of the palm" (Humphries 2000, 31).

When playing the aforementioned C-major phrase on a period instrument using the E♭ crook, there is, practically, no difference in sound between the open and stopped notes, although they slightly vary in character (as demonstrated to me by Susan Vollmer, UCSC). But, complete equality of sound on the natural horn "was neither possible nor desirable" (Humphries 2000, 31). In other words, the variety of tone colors produced by the hand in horns was an asset rather than a downside.

The inevitable conclusion is that Beethoven gave the theme in mm. 303–06 of the recapitulation to the bassoons, rather than the horns, not because the E♭ horns "were unable to play the phrase in the 'new' key of C major" (Hopkins 1981, 138–39), but most likely in order to reserve the bright sound of brass in C major for later, to signify the ultimate victory; employing this particular timbre prematurely would attenuate its stunning effects afterwards. Replacing the bassoons with the horns in many modern performances does exactly that: it weakens the intensity of the evolving drama by giving away its outcome.

Another compositional device that prevents the first movement from being repetitive (besides orchestration) is the thematic changeability of the "Fate" motto. Many entries of the tattoo are built on the same pitch, increasing their percussive knocking effects and, therefore, sharpening their menacing signification. In the development and in the coda, the knocking pattern becomes even more aggressively pounding when two, three, five, or eight (!) "Fate" motifs merge together, especially when convincing performances emphasize their origin by grouping them into four-note motivic units (mm. 168–74; 240–48; 373–86; 390–95). On the other hand, there are two surprisingly uncertain entries of the motto in the coda, when the initially descending configuration of the motif is inverted, imitating a traditional rhetorical *interrogatio* gesture (mm. 386–88 and 396–97).

No less dramatic than Beethoven's treatment of the "Fate" motif in the first movement are reactions to it. One such response is the mollifying secondary theme, even though it is haunted by the tattoo, which is persistently punctuated by the low strings and the timpani. There are also other, more poignant instances of reaction to the menacing hammering in this confrontation.

The principal section's ending on the dominant in the exposition—the so-called "open" principal section—is not unusual (Mazel [1960] 1979, 372; Hepokoski and Darcy 2006, 77). What is highly unusual, though, is the lone lingering G in the first violins at the half-cadence, sounding like an anguished cry in the face of the vehement onslaught of the "Fate" motif (m. 21). In the recapitulation, the solitary G is played by the first oboe and expanded into a slow, plaintive cadenza that sounds especially entreating due to the inclusion of the Phrygian tetrachord G-F-E♭-D—a traditional rhetorical lament figure (m. 268): the D is then surrounded by two neighboring tones and followed by an abridged repeat of the Phrygian tetrachord. Finally, in the coda, the first oboe reiterates a mournful, weeping *pianto* in mm. 486–87 and 490–91 (see Monelle 2000, 66–73).

The pleading responses to relentless Fate in the *Allegro con brio* constitute only initial reactions. In the ensuing movements, Beethoven will look for and find other, more effective, rejoinders.

Movement II: the harbingers of victory

The form of double variations composed on two consecutive themes, *a* and *b*, perfectly fits the function of this movement within the overall narrative of the Symphony: searching for solutions, looking for ways to withstand the assault of the "personified external menace," Fate.

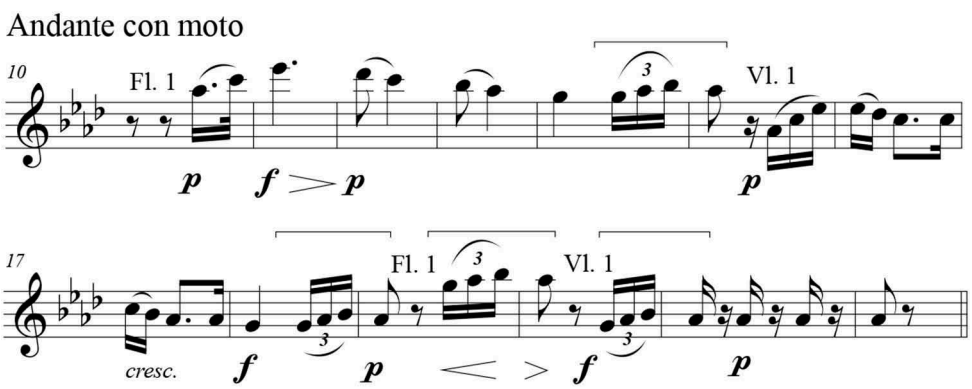
Theme *a* is a far cry from Beethoven's earlier draft, marked *Andante quasi Menuett* (Meredith 1991, 107–08). Although the lower, male-voice range of the original melodic presentation of this theme is retained in the final version, the graceful minuet curtsies are gone, and short triadic fanfare gestures are inserted. Practically nothing from the original minuet character remains in the Andante except for the triple meter.

An important thematic element is introduced at the theme's final cadence (mm. 14–15). In case the listener may miss it, Beethoven adds a short codetta to the period and repeats this element three more times, making it abundantly clear that this element is indeed significant, calling for attention.

The reiterated concluding motif consists of three short notes followed by a long one, rhythmically similar to the "Fate" motif, but without pitch repetitions, thus mollifying the original menacing meaning, where it was persistently emphasized by the repetition of the same pitch (see brackets in Example 16.2).

This melodic treatment of the "Fate" tattoo shows the way to tame its pounding element, to overcome its menace (Byros 2014, 403) and, correspondingly, one's fate. But the mollified motif does not sound in the triumphant key of C major, suggesting that the victory has not yet been achieved. Theme *b* attempts to rectify this: in the second half of the theme, C major breaks through with *fortissimo* horns and trumpets (mm. 30–37). This outburst, however, fades away just after eight measures.

Originally, this second theme was labeled, in Beethoven's sketchbook, *quasi trio* (Meredith 1991, 107–08), so one can assume that the composer initially envisioned the Andante's form as ternary rather than a double-variation. By making this melody the second theme of variations, Beethoven turns the movement into a succession of dramatic stages, as if multiple attempts to reach victory. After its "failing" to sustain C major, the music returns to the first theme, starting the next "round of struggle toward the victory key," which begins with Variation 1. Here the melodic line becomes more active, issuing a steady stream of sixteenth notes. Interestingly—and unusually for a variation form—the codetta with its



Example 16.2 Beethoven, Symphony no. 5, second movement, mm. 10–21

melodized "Fate" mottos does not change at all in this variation. Equally uncommon is the fact that theme *b*, both in its A♭ major and C major halves, stays practically the same except for slightly faster notes in the accompaniment. At this point, the narrative remains just as far from an establishment of C major as it was in the original.

The next round of pursuit of the elusive C major resumes in Variation 2 (m. 98). Theme *a* now appears much more energetic and insistent. The melody races ahead in 30-second notes, swelling to a *forte* played by the entire orchestra. The theme's codetta disappears, as does the first half of theme *b*, which is replaced by aimless meanderings of the woodwinds around a few unstable harmonies (mm. 132–46). The plot stalls for a while, as if the narrator is not sure what to do next. And then the second, C major half of theme *b*, suddenly erupts in a *fortissimo* tutti (m. 147). Nevertheless, this outburst does not deliver a desired outcome either, and the victory key fades away once again.

The reaction to this latest let down is striking. In Variation 3, theme *a* at first dolefully moves to a minor key (A♭ minor), at which point Beethoven invokes the chord progression of the traditional melancholic Folia: i–V–i–$V/_{III}$–III–$V/_{III}$–i–V (mm. 166–74). Subsequently, the original melody is brought back without any thematic changes in a powerful *fortissimo* tutti. The codetta does not change at all throughout the entire variations, with all of its melodized "Fate" motifs. But theme *b* is missing in Variation 3, and the victory components remain separated: the tamed, melodized "Fate" motifs still sound in the "wrong" key in theme *a*, and the brassy victory key, C major, still cannot be sustained in theme *b*.

Two new elements that anticipate future developments appear in the coda. The first of them is a droll dance (*Più moto* m. 205), in which the first bassoon (mm. 205–09) and the cellos with the violas (mm. 209–12) take turns carrying the melody, while the first oboe cackles double acciaccaturas, and the strings provide the oom-pah accompaniment, uncharacteristic to triple meter, and thus increasing the comical impression of this passage. The forceful, soaring A♭-major arpeggios (mm. 213–18) create the second element—yet another harbinger of what is to come later in the Symphony.

Movement III: the pivotal break

The Allegro revisits the confrontation presented in the first movement, but in reverse: it is a series of back-and-forth interchanges, in which piteous entreaties are answered by implacable retorts of Fate. These heart-rending dialogues might be the reason why Beethoven did not mark this movement Scherzo, even though it bears all the outward signs of the genre: a fast middle movement in triple time and in ternary form. Most of this movement, however, is no joke.

The first section of the Allegro's compound ternary form is shaped as a repeated binary structure, $ab\ a^1b^1\ a^2b^2\ a^3b^3$, where *a* (mm. 1–18) expresses a plea, and *b* (mm. 19–44) delivers an immitigable retort. This binary outline resembles, to a degree, the double-variation form of the previous movement. The difference is that, in the Allegro, sections *a* and *b* clash with, rather than complement, each other. The correlation between *a* and *b* in this movement is not static, however; it changes dramatically in the course of the movement.

Section *a* comprises two thematic components: a rising arpeggio in the cellos and basses (mm. 1–4), and an imploring phrase played by the upper strings (mm. 5–8). It has been noted that the first component corresponds, almost note for note but in transposition, to the finale of Mozart's G-minor Symphony, K. 550 (see Example 16.3a). This is not a coincidence; Beethoven copied 29 measures of Mozart's finale theme on the adjoining

page of the same sketchbook he was using for preliminary drafts of the Fifth Symphony (Grove [1898] 1962, 176–77; Hopkins 1981, 127). The second component of the theme is identical to a passage from Johann Stamitz's Orchestral Trio in C minor, op. 4, no. 3, mm. 153–56 (Taruskin 1995, 97–98).

These parallels are interesting, as far as Beethoven's borrowings from other composers' music (including the appropriated "Fate" motif) are concerned, but there are much more significant narrative connections within the Fifth itself. The ascending arpeggio was anticipated in the coda of the preceding movement, with a replacement of A♭ for G, which switches this arpeggio from A♭ major to C minor. The last four pitches of the second element, D-F-E♭-D, replicate the last four notes of the sorrowful oboe recitative from the recapitulation of the first movement.

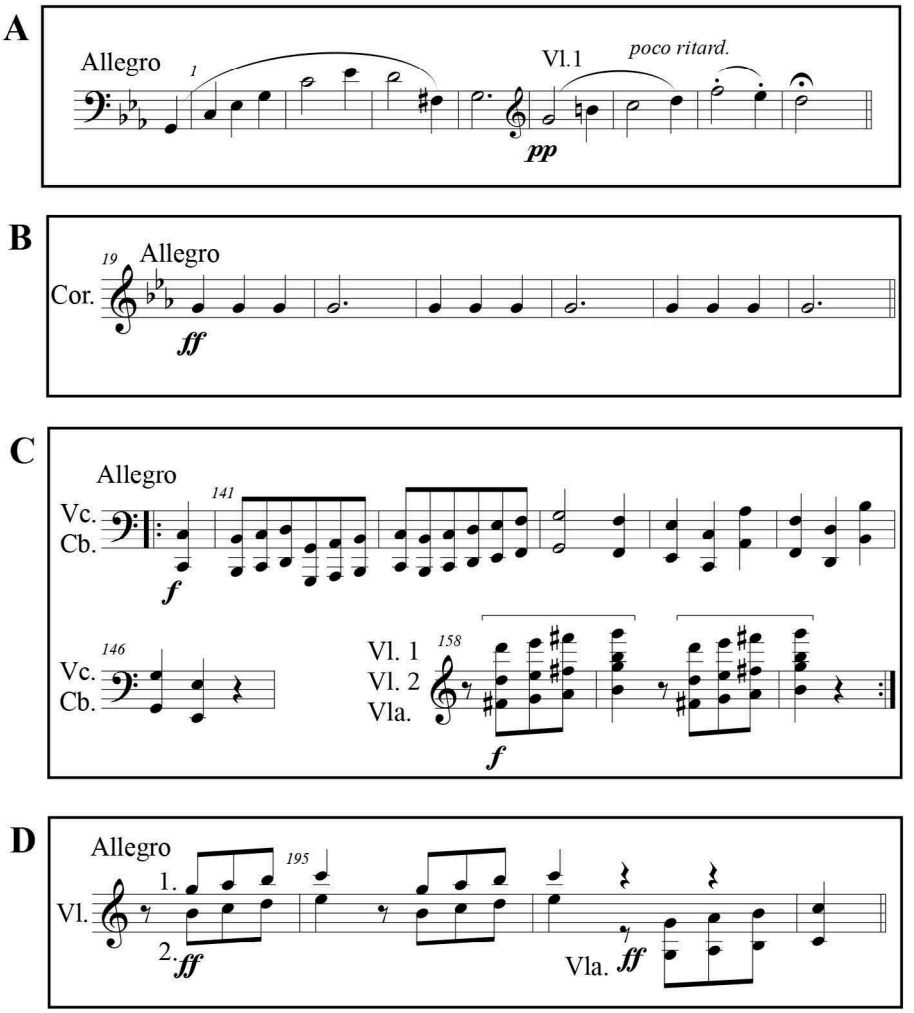
The response to *a* is built on the most foreboding embodiment of the Fate motif, with no pitch variation (mm. 19–24: Example 16.3b). The stunning reaction to the Fate motif is that a^1 slumps down a step to B♭ minor. The weaker *a* becomes, the stronger *b* grows. In b^1, the entire orchestra hammers out the Fate motif in *forte* and then in *fortissimo* (mm. 71–96). At the next phase of the unfolding drama, a^3 returns to C minor, but is beleaguered by incessant reminders of the Fate tattoos in the violins and timpani. The Fate motif briefly disappears during a "dancing" interlude in mm. 115–29, but then the motto comes back with a vengeance, pounded out in tutti *fortissimo* in b^3 (mm. 133–38).

The pivotal break in the Symphony happens in the C-major trio (it is not labeled "Trio" in the score, though). To begin with, large portions of it are laid out as *fugati*. Secondly, many commentators mention the stumbling, comical false starts of the cellos and double basses in the trio's midsection that leads back to fugato (Grove [1898] 1962, 165; Hopkins 1981, 150).

Equally noteworthy is the opening of the fugato, when the cellos and basses introduce the subject (Example 16.3c). The rapid eighth-notes in the lowest register are, actually, an instrumental equivalent of an operatic *basso buffo*. In opera, the *basso buffo* part is basically funny because the fast patter, with its coloratura technique, goes against the very nature of the lowest male voice. When the double basses (and, to a lesser degree, the cellos) face such uncharacteristic fast patter, the outcome is just as comical (mm. 140–60). To fully realize how comical the trio's *fugati* are, one can just imagine what would happen if the violins introduced the subject: it would have sounded gracefully elegant instead of comically awkward.

What is the meaning of merging fugato with farce? In the Classical style, the fugue was indisputably the most cerebral form; it served as a musical signifier for learned style. The mélange of humor and intellectual proficiency in the trio brings back the tamed, melodized Fate motifs from the Andante, first in G major (D-E-♯-G; mm. 158–60, Example 16.3c) and then finally, in the victorious key of C major (G-A-B-C; mm. 194–97, Example 16.3d). In other words, humor and intellect produce a winning combination, which finally makes possible for the protagonist, in Beethoven's words, to "seize Fate by the throat."

Indeed, the return of the scherzo, in contrast to its appearance before the trio, is marked by tentative staccato and pizzicato in *sempre pianissimo*. Both antagonists wither because pleas are no longer needed and Fate is defeated. The coda of the scherzo briefly recollects the previous movement's A♭ major along with a rising arpeggio (mm. 339–40). The low C from the A♭-major triad lingers on, and the C-major dominant-seventh chord joins it, creating an extraordinarily discordant preparation of the finale.

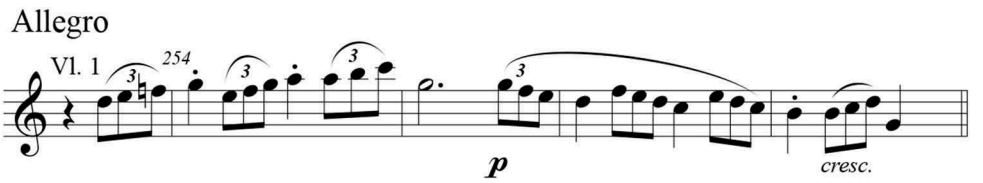


Example 16.3 Beethoven, Symphony no. 5, third movement, motivic development

Movement IV: the triumph

The concluding phase of the Symphony's narrative is an unabashed celebration. Beethoven reached the top of orchestral might in C major in the second movement, but here he ratchets up the brass's power to a new, over-the-top level by adding three trombones. Before the Fifth, the trombones were occasionally used but only in opera and church music; their sound was considered to be too heavy for a symphony.

Strictly speaking, Beethoven was not the first to introduce the trombones into a symphony. The Swedish composer of German extraction Joachim Eggert (1779–1813) used three trombones in his Symphony in E♭ major (Kallai 2001). The first public performance of his Symphony in Stockholm predates the premiere of Beethoven's Fifth by 18 months, but it is doubtful that Beethoven was aware of it. Even more importantly, the Stockholm performance of Eggert's Symphony was most probably unfamiliar to Beethoven's



Example 16.4 Beethoven, Symphony no. 5, fourth movement, mm. 254–57

listeners, so hearing, in December 1808, the trombones in the finale of the Fifth (as well as in the last two movements of the Sixth, presented at the same concert), was likely a shock to Beethoven's audience.

The finale is structured as a sonata form, in which all four leading themes (principal, transitional, secondary, and closing) are triumphal marches with a strong military flavor, one of which (mm. 26–32) has a thematic resemblance to the slow movement of Mozart's "Jupiter" Symphony, K. 551 (Hopkins 1981, 127). The secondary theme is built almost entirely on the melodized, mollified Fate motif, first, in the exposition, in G major (mm. 44–63) and then, in the recapitulation, in the victory key of C major (Example 16.4). In the development, however, the Fate motif unexpectedly comes back in its "knocking" reincarnation (mm. 122–32). After the dominant pedal point is established at the end of the development (m. 132) in preparation for the upcoming recapitulation, a portion of the scherzo, containing the Fate tattoo, abruptly reappears (m. 160). Such a twist in the storyline will become quite common in later thrillers, when a villain or a monster, after being slain, suddenly comes back to life, however briefly. Beethoven was not the first to use this device: it happens in Haydn's Symphony no. 46 in B major, where the *presto* finale is interrupted, near its end, by 34 measures taken from the Minuet (Grove [1898] 1962, 176–77).

But the dominant pedal point is reinstated in measure 175. The knocking tattoo vanishes (m. 198), and the orchestra seems eager to return to the C-major tonic. So eager, that the timpani and then the cellos and the basses impatiently start playing a C over the dominant chord played by other instruments, four measures (203–206) before the tonic C-major triad is triumphantly relaunched at the beginning of the recapitulation.

The victory celebration continues in the immense coda that encompasses almost twice as many measures (150) as the entire recapitulation (86). In the coda, march topics gradually give way to dance topics. This dancing, however, does not resemble the graceful steps of Beethoven's predecessors; rather, it is a massive stomping in an increasingly faster tempo (starting in m. 350). There is nothing subtle in the coda's blatantly overblown jubilation. Toward the end of the coda, the V–I cadence in the victorious C major is pounded out, *fortissimo*, seven times in a row (mm. 405–16), and then, when the final C-major triad is finally reached, it lasts, also *fortissimo*, for 29 measures straight.

The Fifth Symphony is not explicitly programmatic. But, as Tchaikovsky declared, "not only has it a programme, but it is so clear that there cannot be the smallest difference of opinion as to what it means." The symphony offers a persuasive symphonic narration, which undoubtedly contributes to its timeless appeal: Beethoven's inferred program presents musical symbolizations of two combined virtues—intellect and humor—evidently pointing more toward moral and ethical alternative models of human courage than to sheer, blunt struggle.

17

FROM MUSIC SIGNIFICATION TO MUSICAL NARRATIVITY

Concepts and analyses

Márta Grabócz

Signification in music

The history of aesthetics and of philosophical thought related to music demonstrates a dichotomy, a dual approach, one aspect of which emphasizes the purely theoretical, scientific, or physical features of music, while the other considers it as a type of human communication endowed with expression. This ambiguous, equivocal character of musical analysis and criticism was already present in Antiquity: the Pythagoreans focused on the laws of intervals and harmonic proportions—i.e., the numerical relations between sounds considered as models of universal harmony—whereas Plato and Aristotle were mainly interested in the ethical and pedagogical qualities, cathartic effects, and the social role of music. These dichotomous approaches, which lacked mediation and a dialectical exchange, reappeared several times through the history of the aesthetics of music from the eighteenth to the twentieth century (for example, the theories of Rousseau versus Rameau, Liszt versus Hanslick, and Kretzschmar versus Schenker).

Beginning in the mid-1970s, numerous currents of the humanities, such as structuralism, post-structuralism, cognitive sciences, literary semiotics, narratology, and gender studies, have powerfully influenced musicology. The integration of new disciplines into the framework of traditional musicology reinforced the weight and value of these approaches as they engage in an "aesthetics of content," by which I mean the analysis of expression in music: thus, music signification—that is, musical semiotics—was established.

In various geographical regions, depending on epistemological allegiances, and even throughout the decades, the terminology employed to define signifying units in music has varied, sometimes greatly. The following are summaries of some of the major trends in approaches to music signification.

Intonation

In the 1960s and 1970s, Eastern and Central European musicologists (such as Asafiev, Jiránek, Ujfalussy, Karbusický, and to some extent Szabolcsi) employed the term "intonation" to refer to expressive types within a musical style that were primarily based on older musical genres. These types functioned within a particular society, or social stratum, including, for example, lullaby, lament, *caccia*, *alla turca*, French overture, military march, funeral march, religious or ceremonial music, festive dances, popular dances, nocturne, serenade, and so on.

The term "intonation" originates in Rousseau's *Musical Dictionary* in which the Enlightenment philosopher related voice inflections to human expression and emotions. Asafiev considered "intonation" to be the foundation of the musical sign. He associated intonations with *musical memoranda*, a virtual thesaurus of musical types or formulae, and espoused the view that the technical and expressive characteristics of each type persist in the collective memory of listeners—a reservoir, as it were, that allows connections between historical periods. In 1968, the Hungarian musicologist, Ujfalussy, offered the following definition of intonation:

> In the current practice of musical aesthetics, the category of intonation represents much more than the simple melodic and rhythmic inflections of spoken language. In other terms, intonation signifies formulae, types of specific musical sonorities which transmit social and human meanings and which represent certain defined characters developing throughout a musical composition.
>
> *(Ujfalussy 1968, 136)*

Topics

In the early 1970s, Anglo-American scholars began developing an approach to musical signs as basic units of music signification. In his path-breaking study of the Classical style, Rosen (1971) analyzed the expressive and stylistic types found in the thematic material of Classical genres (see, for example, his chapters on Haydn symphonies that examine formal models based on stylistic references).

In 1980 Ratner introduced the notion of the "topic"—from *topos*, i.e. "commonplace"—of classical rhetoric. It was not a new notion, but a redefined and re-applied concept borrowed from seventeenth- and eighteenth-century treatises by Marpurg, Mattheson, and Koch. Ratner identified 27 types of conventional musical expression, each of which refers to some kind of human reality: the affects, the extra-musical world or "cultural units" of the Baroque and Classical periods. Among the types that Ratner identifies are the following:

1. Dance types: minuet, passepied, sarabande, allemand, polonaise, bourrée, country dance, gavotte, siciliano, gigue.
2. Marches: military; funeral; ceremonial.
3. Styles: *alla breve, alla zoppa*, amoroso, aria, brilliant (virtuoso) style, cadenza, *Empfindsamkeit*, fanfare, French overture, the hunt, learned, *ombra,* Mannheim rocket, musette, opera buffa, pastoral, recitativo, sigh motif, *cantabile*, *Sturm und Drang*, *alla turca* (see Ratner 1980, 9–30).

American and British musicologists continued to develop analyses of musical forms based on topics (among others, Allanbrook 1983; Agawu 1991; Hatten 1994; Monelle 2007). Monelle, for example, defines musical topics as follows:

> We now understand that topics may be fragments of melody or rhythm, styles, conventional forms, aspects of timbre or harmony, which signify aspects of social or cultural life, and through them expressive themes like manliness, the outdoors, innocence, the lament. The nexus between musical element and signification is by means of correlation, Hatten's word for the direct one-to-one signaling of ordinary language and expression.
>
> *(2007, 177)*

At present, the most complete list of topics appears in Kofi Agawu's *Music as Discourse* (2009, 41–50). By grouping Classic, Romantic, and twentieth-century topics, he identifies some 160 items, including some types that are duplicated on different lists. The theory and analysis of topics is greatly expanded and explored in *The Oxford Handbook of Topic Theory* (Mirka 2014a). The contributions to this study highlight the renewed the interest in topical studies.

Seme, classeme, isotopy

Since the mid-1980s, West-European musicological writings have used the terms "semes," "classemes," or "semantic isotopies" to describe musical signifieds. Greimas's writings on literary narrative semiotics inspired his students and followers (Tarasti, Stoianova, Miereanu, Grabócz and others). His influential *Structural Semantics* ([1966] 1984) was partly grounded on Russian formalism, particularly on the *Morphology of the Folktale* (1928) by Vladimir Propp, who was a contemporary and colleague of Asafiev in the 1920s and 1930s. The first publication that combines the Greimassian narratological approach with a topical analysis is Tarasti's *Myth and Music* (1978).

To sum up, music signification—in works written between the seventeenth and twentieth centuries—can be defined as the verbal reconstruction of a lost musical competence, a kind of musical knowledge almost forgotten, yet perpetuated in musical practice by performers, and handed down from generation to generation. The notion of signification covers the various expressive types (or "commonplaces") within each musical style; that is, types of expression linked to particular musical formulae that refer to identifiable "cultural units" recognized by members of a given culture or society. The gradual rediscovery of the implicit exploration of music signification has given rise to a permanent research program that can at present be considered as a work in progress. Topic theory has emerged as a vital linchpin in the contemporary research paradigm.

An introduction to musical narratology

Classical narratology

Narratology is the science of narrative (see Todorov 1971). Narrativity is a component of certain narrative genres: the narrative mode of textualization ("*mise en texte*") or enunciation (see Adam 1984). Narratology involves key functions such as action and event, transformation, and multi-part sequences. Generalized narrativity is the organizing principle of all discourse (Greimas [1966] 1984); similarly, narrative logic is the organizing principle of narrative and discourse (Fontanille 2006). According to Prince, "an object is a narrative if it is taken to be the logically consistent representation of at least two asynchronous events that do not presuppose or imply

each other" (2008, 19). Other theorists underline the role of the transforming act, based, for example, on the notion of narrative mediation (Todorov; Greimas) or a three-, four-, or—sometimes—five-fold chain of events, not to mention the two-fold "sequential and configurational" dimension of narrative (Ricœur 1980).

The "narrative" analysis of storytelling and discourse should take into account all of these dimensions. It is important to note that these definitions are derived from the branch of narratological research known as "classical narratology," since musicological approaches are mostly rooted in the methodological and analytical framework that emerged in the 1960s to 1980s (see Hermann, Jahn, and Ryan 2008.)

Adam states that "narratology can be defined as a branch of the general science of signs—semiology—which seeks to analyze the *internal organizational mode of certain types of text*" (Adam 1984, 4). Ryan characterizes the narrative text as follows:

1. A narrative text must create a world and populate it with characters and objects. Logically speaking, this condition means that the narrative text is based on propositions asserting the existence of individuals and on propositions ascribing properties to these existents.
2. The world referred to by the text must undergo changes of state that are caused by nonhabitual physical events: either accidents ("happenings") or deliberate human actions. These changes create a temporal dimension and place the narrative world in the flux of history.
3. The text must allow the reconstitution of an interpretive network of goals, plans, causal relations, and psychological motivations around the narrated events. This implicit network gives coherence and intelligibility to the physical events and turns them into a plot.

(2004, 8–9)

Narratology, narrativity in music

Since the 1980s, in Europe, various linguistic and semiotic models have been applied to describe the organization of signifying units within a musical form. For example, Tarasti and Grabócz follow the model of Greimas; Meeùs follows Hjelmslev; Karbusický follows Peirce; Vecchione follows traditional rhetoric; Monelle based his writings on a group of scholars: Peirce, Greimas, Riffaterre, and Daldry. In the United States different narratological systems or linguistic models have been referred to and used by scholars in the field of musicological research. For example, Agawu relies on traditional rhetoric; Almèn relies on Liszka; Ellis on Greimas; Hatten on Shapiro; Newcomb on emplotment theory; and Seaton on Scholes and Kellogg.

A feature common to all these different models is the quest for the rules that organize the signifieds. These rules vary from one historical epoch to another, from one style to another, from one composer's complete *oeuvre* to another's. Almost all the analyses of the above theorists and musicologists predominantly share a common position vis-à-vis the musical reality under study: they view the organization of the signifieds as consisting of binary oppositions. Such oppositions, based on asymmetrical markings in Hatten, and on rhetorical rules in Agawu, are located within a diagram of "archetypal" musical forms corresponding to different periods of music history in Karbusický. Maus (2001) offers an overview of the main narrative genres and models explored by American musicologists before 2005.[1]

Kramer (1991), Tarasti (1994) and Monelle (2008) have underlined the "problem" of, or the "debate" on musical narratology. Tarasti states his own position as follows:

> Finally, narrativity can be understood in the very common sense as a general category of the human mind, a competency that involves putting temporal events into a certain order, a syntagmatic continuum. This continuum has a beginning, development, and end; and the order created in this way is called, under given circumstances, a narration … It turns out to be a certain tension between the beginning and the end, a sort of arch of progression.
>
> *(1994, 24)*

Agawu also addresses the nature of (and controversy over) musical narratives:

> The idea that music has the capacity to narrate or to embody a narrative, or that we can impose a narrative account on the collective events of a musical composition, speaks not only to an intrinsic aspect of temporal structuring but to basic human need to understand succession coherently. Verbal and musical compositions invite interpretation of any demarcated temporal succession as automatically endowed with narrative potential.
>
> *(2009, 102)*

Beyond this basic level, Agawu also mentions the active desire "to refuse narration."

> The most fruitful discussions of musical narrative are ones that accept the imperatives of an aporia, of a foundational impossibility that allows us to seek to understand narrative in terms of nonnarration.
>
> *(2009, 102)*[2]

Monelle summarizes his own approach as follows:

> Music does not manipulate the realism of a seriality within continuous time; it manipulates time itself. It has no "story," no *fabula*, because it is already indexically in contact with the flow of life. This is especially revealed by the function of *memory*; and in this field, musical narrative can illuminate a study of literary narrative, in which the *syuzhet* encases a realism lacking from its apparently implied seriality.
>
> *(2008, 1)*

Despite such debates, most books and papers on music signification, published after 2000, include at least one chapter describing ways in which signifieds are organized, raising the level of theoretical inquiries into the connection and ordering of musical topics, which I regard as an essential part of "musical narrativity," and which go beyond traditional formal investigations.

On the basis of the definitions of classical narratology presented above, and of my own topical investigations in my analyses of movements in Mozart, Beethoven, Liszt, Bartók, and Kurtág (Grabócz 2009, 2013), and also based on an exploration of Greimassian theories of narrative to musical structure, I introduce here my own definition: "musical narrativity" or "musical narratology" refers to the mode of expressive organization in instrumental compositions. In other words, musical narrativity is the mode of organization of signifying units within a musical form. Applications of narrative strategies in music seek to understand how musical discourse is articulated in terms of the sequences of topics or intonations. This

approach will be combined in every case with a traditional musical analysis drawing on theories of musical structure (form), on thematic and motivic analyses, harmony, and orchestration.

Topical and narrative analysis of compositions related to music signification

In his articles and chapters on Beethoven, Hatten (1991, 1994) goes beyond the analysis of topics to that of expressive genres, which I regard as markers of narrativity. He considers an "expressive genre" to be present in Beethoven's complex musical forms that require expressive as well as structural competencies during the operation of musicological and hermeneutic interpretation: the approach both explains and reconstructs music signification. For Hatten, an expressive genre is a "category of musical works based on their implementation of a change-of-state schema (tragic-to-triumphant, tragic-to-transcendent) or their organization of expressive states in terms of an overarching topical field (pastoral, tragic)" (1994, 290). Hatten categorizes these fields into three classes on the basis of the rules of rhetoric (high, middle, and low styles) and segments them into two columns according to their markedness values as either marked or non-marked entities within the Classical style. The scheme below (Figure 17.1) describes the changes of state in the first movement (but also in the overall cycle) of Beethoven's Piano Sonata, op. 101, in which, as Hatten puts it,

> the topical contrast of the pastoral with the tragic, creates a typical dramatic structure. In the first movement of op. 101, tragic irruptions create dramatic moments of crisis. The pastoral exerts its control over these outbursts, and the movement ends with a serenity that invokes transcendence or spiritual grace.
>
> *(1994, 92)*

As he points out elsewhere,

> the progress from pastoral through the threat of tragedy and back to pastoral affirmation is replicated at the level of the four-movement sonata as a whole … What is important here is that the pastoral can organize the expressive structure of a complete cycle, placing its stamp on the ultimate outcome.
>
> *(1991, 86–87)*

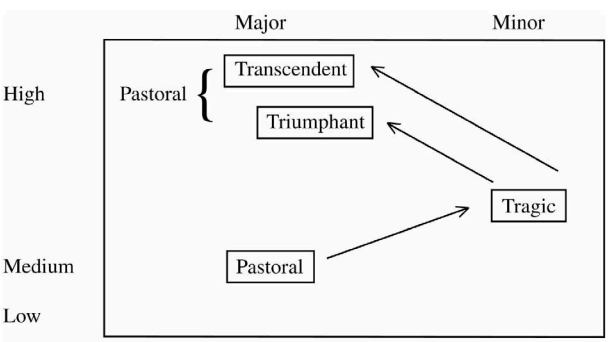


Figure 17.1 Expressive genre in Beethoven's Piano Sonata, op. 101 (based on Hatten 1991, 86)

Tarasti's study on Chopin's *Polonaise-Fantasy* op. 61 (1984, translated in Tarasti 1994) furthered our understanding of exceptional musical forms in the Romantic era. It also demonstrates one of the first analyses carried out that used signifieds and "expressive narrative strategies" (see Table 17.1). In this analysis, Tarasti presents the musical form as a succession of ten narrative programs (NP).

Throughout this progression occurs an alternating evolution of emotional or affective values, either euphoric or dysphoric (marked in the table as "+" or "–", respectively). After the dysphoric values of the nocturne (NP7), as well as those of the nocturne and the mazurka in NP9, three actors—the polonaise, the nocturne, and the mazurka—are superimposed as a group in NP10, which Tarasti describes as "accomplishment" or "fulfillment." This final section (NP10) corresponds to a "macro-metaphor" of the "elevation" that is heard in NP1, finally offering a victorious, heroic variation of the three themes, an event expected since the beginning of the composition. The *Polonaise-Fantasy* was composed in 1846, after the Polish insurrections of 1830–31 and before the 1848 uprising, thus it was written at a time of growing national identity. In this analysis Tarasti resolves the historic enigma created by the fact that, in the case of this composition, neither the sonata form, as Hugo Leichtentritt believed, nor a quasi-rondo form as Gerald Abraham insinuated (Tarasti 1994, 138–40). Indeed, the variation form, with narrative programs that encompass teleology and highlight the triumph of the closing heroic variants, allows a fuller semiotic description and analysis of the *Polonaise-Fantasy*.

Table 17.1 Chopin's *Polonaise-Fantasy*, op. 61, form described in 10 narrative programs

Narrative Program (NP)	*Description*	*Affects: Dysphoric (–) Euphoric (+)*
NP 1	Descent and then rising, elevation (mm. 1–8)	– +
NP 2	Birth of the main theme ([polonaise]: mm. 9–21)	–
NP 3	Polonaise, version 1 (mm. 22–66)	+
NP 4	Modulations or topological interruptions, stoppages (mm. 67–91)	–
NP 5	Polonaise, version 2: extreme affective states (mm. 92–115)	+ –
NP 6	Mazurka, version 1 (mm. 116–47)	+
NP 7	Nocturne, version 1 (mm. 153–80)	–
NP 8	Mazurka, version 2 (mm. 181–98)	+
NP 9	Journeying (departure) and return (mm. 199–240)	– –
	• Nocturne, version 2 (m. 201) B major	
	• Introduction + variations (mm. 205–14) D major, C major	
	• Mazurka, version 3 (m. 215) F minor	
	Transition: (m. 225) 'a tempo primo' F minor	
NP 10	Fulfillment (mm. 241–88)	+ +
	• Polonaise, version 3: (m. 242) A flat major	
	• Transition (variation of Mazurka) (m. 248) B major	
	• Nocturne, version 3 (m. 253)	
	• *Superposition* of Polonaise + Mazurka + Nocturne (mm. 267 ff.): accelerando, sempre ***ff***, A♭ major	

Table based on Tarasti (1994, 138–54)

After analyzing numerous complete piano works by Liszt, applying structural and "expressive" or topical segmentation in an intertextual perspective, I have focused on the "conceptual" or formal ideal type (or expressive archetype) of Liszt's piano works. My methodology depends on Greimassian models of "narrative strategies," "narrative programs," "semes" and "isotopies" (Grabócz 1986; 1996). I discovered that numerous instrumental works by Liszt involve identical successions of topics, whence a canonical narrative structure, a fixed concatenation of topics or isotopies are present (see Table 17.2).

Table 17.3 gives a detailed presentation of *Vallée d'Obermann*, an emblematic composition dating from 1848–55, which—because of its source of inspiration in Senancour's novel, *Obermann* (1804), depicting the atmosphere of the "negative sublime," of spleen, and the "mal du siècle"—was one of the first pure realizations of the above narrative strategy in Liszt's works.

This compositional strategy, based on a single theme and its variations in form or in character—over a composition lasting, depending on the performance, around 13 to 14 minutes—outlines a journey, a wandering or initiation leading from an anxious interrogation to a certain serenity found in religious and pastoral feelings, bringing consolation through a pantheistic transcendence. The two intermediate stages of the journey correspond to the encounter with Nature and/or Love on the one hand (section 2, m. 75), and to a battle with Nature or Society on the other (section 3, m. 119).

Table 17.2 Canonical narrative strategy in Liszt's works: succession of narrative programs

Topic or Isotopy / Composition	*Macabre quest*	*Heroic*	*Pastoral [amoroso]*	*Macabre fight*	*Mourning*	*Religious*	*Pantheist (or glorified religious, triumphant)*
Vallée d'Obermann	NP/1		NP/2	NP/3			NP/4
Pensée des morts (final version 1853)	NP/1 (and coda: NP/5)				NP/2	NP/3	NP/4
St François de Paule marchant sur les flots	NP/4		NP/1	NP/2		NP/3	NP/5
Sunt lacrimae rerum		NP/3	NP/2		NP/1		
Dante sonata	NP/1/a	NP/1/b NP/4/b	NP/2	NP/3		NP/4/a	
Tombez, larmes silencieuses	T/1		T/2			T/3	
Piano Sonata in B minor	NP/1/a NP/5/a NP/7	NP/1/b NP/5/b NP/6	NP/2	NP/3/a	NP/3/b	NP/4/a	NP/4/b
Tasso (symphonic poem)	NP/1	NP/3	NP/2	NP/4			NP/5

Table 17.3 Liszt: *Vallée d'Obermann*, narrative strategy of the monothematic variation

STRUCTURE OR NARRATIVE STRATEGY	*1st narrative program*	*2nd narrative program*	*3rd narrative program*	*4th narrative program*
Structural function	Theme and its rhetorical development	Theme and its formal variations	Motto and its "development"	Theme and its formal variations
measures	1–74	75–118	119–169	170–216
Key	E minor - opposition between the tonic axis (E–G–B♭–D♭) and the subdominant axis (A–C–E♭–F♯)	C major and modulation	C♯, D, E and modulation	E major
Tempo and expression indication	Lento assai, espressivo; then: più lento, dolcissimo	Un poco più di moto ma sempre lento, *pp*, dolcissimo	Recitativo, *pp*, trem. appassionato *ff*; agitato molto; Presto *ff*, energico, tempestuoso	Lento, dolce, una corda, dolce armonioso; sempre animando sin al fine *fff*
Topics or classemes	Lamenting rhetorical questions	Pastoral-amoroso, bel canto	Storm figures, macabre semes, fanfare semes	Pathetic bel canto, and campanella semes of church
ISOTOPY	MACABRE QUEST	PASTORAL-AMOROSO	MACABRE FIGHT	RELIGIOUS-PANTHEIST

Liszt's narrative program comprises four stages in the concatenation of topics:

1. *Topic of lament*: score markings in the compositions cited in Table 17.2 suggest a possible hermeneutic interpretation of a profound mournful Faustian quest about the meaning of existence ("avec un profond sentiment de l'ennui"; "Andante lagrimoso"; "con duolo, languendo"; "lamentoso"; "lagrimoso"; "lento e espressivo"; "sotto voce").
2. *Pastoral-amoroso topic*: a response found in love and intimacy ("con intimo sentimento"; "dolcissimo, una corda"; "con amore").
3. *Storm or struggle topic*: a fight against an imaginary external or internal world, including the musical images of storms or battle fanfares ("tempestoso"; "recitativo"; "espressivo"; "molto energico e marcato"). This answer or response is in turn cancelled at the end of the section.
4. *The "religioso" topic* as manifested in transcendental pantheism: it is realized by score markings such as: "dolcissimo e armonioso"; "cantabile assai"; "dolce armonioso"; "tre corde"; "tremolando"; "campanella," and ornamenting specific choral textures, modal or pentatonic melodic/harmonic structure, arpeggiated accompaniment imitating church bells, and *campanella* figures.

What is very interesting in Liszt's musical compositions from his Weimar period, whether a piano work, symphonic poem, or operatic paraphrase, is that, independently of any literary or pictorial model (*Tasso*; *Orpheus*; *Prometheus*; *Die Ideale*; *Saint François de Paule marchant sur les flots; Vallée d'Obermann*; *Dante Sonata*, etc.), Liszt uses and maintains the same chain of topics, the same "inner line," i.e. his hidden or secret narrative program, which was probably also significant for him as a kind of vital, spiritual and personal project (cf. Grabócz 2014).

I have presented here examples of narrative analyses that interpret the expressive strategy deployed in certain exceptional musical compositions through the use of topics and their binary oppositions. Currently, the list of analyses of this type is much more substantial, extending to the twentieth- and twenty-first-century works (for example Klein 2005; Grabócz 2009; Tarasti 2012a; Klein and Reyland 2012; and Mirka 2014a).

These semiotic and narrative models can expand our ways of understanding—and describing—new musical forms that do not readily conform to traditional or historical musical structures (ABA, sonata form, sonata rondo, and so on) or even with those that have emerged since the nineteenth century, and in which composers articulate new expressive devices or designs, aiming to develop a particular form of expressive thought and dramaturgy. In conclusion, the narrative approach creates an analytical framework for the comparative study of music, literature, and the arts as a means of exploring commonalities of signification as articulated through time.

Notes

1 He begins by examining the concept of narratology as "story-telling," a mental activity that creates its own norms and patterns ("patterned activity"). He then briefly examines the narrative models used to describe the dramatic patterns or types of plot in music and the identification of agents and "actants" in music. Maus also makes a distinction based on whether the narrative frames are applied to scenic music (opera) or instrumental music (music without lyrics or singing).

2 In his analyses of compositions by Liszt, Brahms, and Mahler, Agawu describes first the units ("Building blocks"), and thereafter he outlines the form and the "meaning" of each piece (2009).

PART V

Music signification and society

18

MUSICAL VERNACULARS AND THEIR SIGNIFYING TRANSFORMATIONS

Marina Ritzarev

When examining issues of nationalism, studies in musicology have tended to oversimplify a complex situation by referring to folk and traditional tunes as signifiers of ethnic or social groups, or even as their key cultural symbols. But a vernacular idiom in music is seldom a static artefact easily available for simple inspection and analysis. Change, the fundamental process that defines and characterizes all aspects of societies, lies at the heart of any ethnic or social group's musical corpus in terms of both performance practices and social functions. Given that the scope of variability is vast and that interrelationships are intricate, the symbolic and interactive meanings between music and society demand a richly contextual approach that embraces the constellation of social, historical, psychological, ethnic, generational, and other conditions that provide access to the complex issues of social affiliations and national identities.

Praxis shows that when societal conditions change, so does the meaning of a tune within society. The same tune can signify different, even conflicting meanings for different individuals or groups, and its signification within a symbolic message can evolve unpredictably. Typical situations might include people's migration between countries, cultural inter-relationships between different social groups—including within the same ethnic community—and repertoires partially shared between ethnically distinct co-territorial communities. The same tune, or, more precisely, a similarly notated but conceivably different intoned tune, can belong to distinct repertoires. These repertoires, as societal instruments, can appropriate a tune while changing its generic framework. The meaning of a song-tune, therefore, cannot be definite: instead, it is completely dependent on the song-tune's location within the repertoire's broader context. For example, a street song of one ethnic group might become a melody for prayer in another group, or a popular love song in one country might become a partisan's anthem in another. Indeed, the social phenomenon of claiming ownership of a tune by several groups, while seemingly paradoxical, is quite common. Its prevalence demonstrates the relativity of the concept of authenticity, how it depends on cultural context and/or individual perception, and, consequently, how limited and unreliable (not to say misleading) a subjective assessment may be. This malleability has increasingly prompted many scholars to place authenticity in quotation marks (see, for example, Nettl 1965, 8–10; Cohen 2007, 7; Silverman 2015).

The fluid nature of authenticity is not limited to songs: it is inherent in cultural reality, the nature of which emerges from the dialectics between authenticity and acculturation. Questions

about "an original source" are often misguided. Cultural globalization, far from being exclusive to present times, is old: pagan cultures routinely borrowed gods and deities from one another, each claiming the deity as its own. Tunes are no different; they are unstable cultural units. The issue is further complicated by the fact that tunes may belong to different repertoires, and both repertoires and tunes undergo evolutionary change as they are interpreted—understood—by passing generations. While folkloric systems might appear to be the most stable element of culture, their inner life is permeated with changes and borrowings, a trajectory inherent in the complex nature of living systems.

That "change is the norm, more than continuity" (Nettl 2005, 279) is a conceded fact (see, for example, Sachs 1962; Merriam 1964; Blacking 1977, 7). The socio-cultural reasons underlying the nature of these changes, however, are the subject of debate. This essay presents a paradigm in which two basic ethnomusicological concepts—continuity and change—are functions of—and, indeed, exemplify—signification.

Vernacular music as a multibody system

My focus is on vernacular music. Vernacular, as used in this essay, includes the corpus usually referred to as folk music and folk song, but it also includes all other types of popular music, regardless of their origins. I wholeheartedly embrace the definition of the vernacular as articulated by Hitchcock: "By *vernacular tradition* I mean a body of *music* more plebeian, native, not approached self-consciously but simply grown into as one grows into one's vernacular tongue, music understood simply for its utilitarian or entertainment value" (Hitchcock 2000, 56).

This umbrella term includes various types of musical repertoires and practices, without drawing clear boundaries among them. This chapter offers some definitions and reassessments of the interactions between these types. Their margin areas, formerly neglected as distortions of "pure" or "true" folk material, acquire significance and function when regarded as part of the vernacular of a culture. In fact, this is a matter of gradation represented on an axis between two opposing cultural tendencies: on the one pole, the adherence to traditional "sacred" values, by which a culture articulates its stability and uniqueness; on the other pole, the continuous encounter with the "other," which is to say new external elements and influences. Between these two poles, all cultural phenomena can be distributed, including the marginal areas that may become legitimate zones of inquiry, loci where cultural changes mainly develop. Such margins and their definitional character are a crucial focus of the model I explore. Treating music as a flexible system is not new (Blacking 1977, 1), nor is considering music of a given population as a system (Nettl 1978a, 7–8). But a model for linking the complexity of meanings in vernacular music requires two additional concepts, more commonly used in approaches to social and economic systems: (1) seeing the vernacular as a complex adaptive system and (2) examining a multibody system in which rigid and flexible elements interconnect dynamically (since all systems must be adaptive to survive). These two pairs of functionally opposed elements, rigidity/crystallization and flexibility/fluidity cooperate in the survival and development of the individual. These distinctions can be grounded analogically, since ethnomusicological studies sometimes apply dichotomies such as a stable core versus a flexible and adaptable superstructure (see Nettl 1978b, 179–80).

Consequently, the vernacular covers traditional folk materials that are usually rooted in rural societies and the ways in which they are absorbed in the popular repertoires of urban societies. By embracing the plurality and the openness of a multibody, flexible, and adaptable system, the

Table 18.1 The constitution of the vernacular

	THE VERNACULAR	
	TRADITIONAL	*INCOMING*
Materials:	folklore, folk music	modified folk + new borrowed
Function:	traditional, canonized	popularized tradition
Definition:	**phylo-vernacular**	**onto-vernacular**

vernacular subsumes materials from a largely crystallized, rigid, and stable tradition, adapting and transforming them into an all-encompassing constellation. It makes them an integral part of a constantly changing environment, sometimes national and sometimes global. This material participates in the process of changing and absorbing borrowed elements. The original function of the folk material has been transformed, and it now borders on popular culture. The vernacular thus naturalizes borrowed elements, integrating them into a new cultural—and sometimes national—environment (see Table 18.1).

The temporal aspect of the vernacular

A constant incorporation of new materials causes the vernacular to change over time. As with biological systems, adaptation to a changing environment is necessary for survival (see Blacking 1977, 5). Unlike biological systems that depend on evolution, however, the vernacular evolves over shorter periods, and changes may occur within the time-span of one human generation. A functioning system has both "crystallized" elements—representing the basic core of a species—and "flexible" ones—supplying its adaptive mechanism. Evolutionary changes in biology differentiate between what a species inherits genetically—phylogenesis—and what could be changed during its lifetime—ontogenesis. Phylogenesis reflects the crystallized outcomes of preceding evolutionary processes. Ontogenesis, on the other hand, reflects adaptive changes occurring during a lifetime. Phylogenetic evolution is slow, while ontogenetic developments are fluid. When ontogenetic changes are stabilized over a sufficient period of time, however, they crystallize and become a part of the phylogenetic taxonomy.

These two categories mirror the complexity of the musical vernacular model. The part of the vernacular that carries traditional values and content is analogous to phylogenetic information. The other part, open to environmental influences in materials and functionality, is ontogenetic. Table 18.1 maps the phylo- and onto-vernacular.

Phylo-vernacular

Phylo-vernacular musical repertoire corresponds with folk materials usually associated with a culture's most ancient, genuine, and tribal core. Nettl states that:

> musical change may be slow in those societies in which the musical system has, through previous change, been adapted to the social system with a certain degree of perfection and thus need not adapt further, assuming musical change as adaptive strategy to a relatively unchanging cultural context.
>
> *(Nettl 2005, 280)*

Characteristically, the phylo-vernacular repertoire has the following traits:

- it exists in closed communities, mostly in agrarian societies that are attached to the land and to collective work; it depends on the community's socio-cultural context;
- it mostly relates to rituals associated with remnants of pagan beliefs (Mazo 1991), sometimes maintained alongside implemented monotheistic religion (e.g., *dvoeverie* in Russia);
- it is sung to lyrics in the vernacular language, with contents related to local landscapes, established metaphors and history, reflecting generations bonded to a land;
- manner and expression of vocalization are determined by local dialect and tradition;
- it consists of musical material of a certain stability, mainly resistant to external influences, its variativity maintained within a stylistic canon (Kouwenhoven and Schimmelpennick 1992, 263; Yung 1996, 29);
- it allows double contrafacta wherein a tune may have different lyrics and a poem may have different tunes (Despringre 1992, 210);
- it is based on participation (see, for example, the proposed taxonomy by Turino 2008), and usually does not separate the performer from the listener; while not necessarily all-inclusive, those who do sing fulfill a certain role as representatives of the community;
- it has a primarily religious and ritualistic function;
- it tends to ignore commercial factors (opposed to one of the most basic popular music features [see Manuel 1988, 1–7]);
- it is usually based on oral tradition;
- lasts for many generations;
- it has formulaic motives and rhythmic patterns, which bestow the quality of crystallized material, recognizable in further transformations as particular ethnic elements.

Stability and uniformity are common denominators of the above features, and they suggest rigidity. The system, however, includes flexible elements, as well. Vyacheslav Mikhalovich Shchurov identifies two opposing tendencies in a local village: one preserving the culture and the other developing the culture. The first example clearly indicates a crystallized musico-generic phenomenon that transcends time and re-textualization. Regarding the preservation of tradition, Shchurov reports:

> Rimsky-Korsakov, in his well-known collection *100 Russian Folksongs*, op. 24, published the wedding song from the Smolensk estate of Engelgardt: "Ne tyosan terem, ne tyosan" (Unpolished is the *terem*, unpolished [a "terem" is a wooden structure built on a top floor, where traditionally young women were kept until their marriage]).
>
> A century later, the tune is still sung, remaining a typical one in the villages of the region. A native singer from the Smolensk region, Agrafena Glinkina, recorded another wedding song titled "Chto ty Pashecka ne plachesh?" (Why, Pashechka, don't you cry?). Both songs are very close in their rhythm and melodic contour, though differ somewhat in their modal details.
>
> *(personal communication with the author, July 2, 2012)*

A second example discussed by Shchurov, however, presents developing tendencies that include change:

> In one large village in south-western Russia, as well as in other localities, a tradition is held to sing the same songs in slightly varying versions. In this case, even inhabitants of

> different streets sing them differently and, in their meetings on holidays and festivities, they should overcome some difficulties to sing together. On the name-days of the village Saint patrons, during the festivities in the central square, guests from neighboring villages divide themselves into artels, each singing in its own way. If there are, say, twenty such collectives in the square, there is a hubbub. Only singing limericks, which have similar tunes, draws all the participants together.
>
> Moreover, studying the life of the tradition of the same village for fifty years, one can see that different generations of the local people sing the same songs in different manner. Sometimes fathers cannot sing together with their children.
>
> *(Ibid.)*

Similar phenomena can also be found in the Chinese tradition (Kouwenhoven and Schimmelpennick 1992, 263; Yung 1996, 29) and in Russian Orthodox Chant (Ritzarev 2006, 22–5, 2008, 13). Clearly, a tendency toward flexibility can be present even in the most rigid phylo-vernacular repertoire, which by its nature, being based on oral tradition, includes some variability and suggests different degrees of change. Nettl distinguishes four types of change, ranging from the radical to the minimal "allowable individual variation," to which natural variations in a canonized chant would correspond (Nettl 2005, 278–79). While a creative drive may empower a rigid folk tradition, which by its oral nature also implies improvisation and variability within the canon, the frames defined by each cultural canon define the degree of flexibility. Thus, curiously, while preservation and developmental tendencies in the phylo-vernacular repertoire are polar opposites, their dialectical interconnectedness contributes to the survival of the system.

Onto-vernacular

Onto-vernacular repertoires characterize mobilized populations that are wider in scope, more open, and usually leaving behind rural life while re-grouping into socio-historical layers of urbanized people. The onto-vernacular typically lasts one or two generations.

The onto-vernacular is open to ethnic diversity. Historically, urban populations are multiethnic: crafters, merchants, scholars, diplomats, courtiers, and wandering entertainers, all contribute to an amalgam of common-practice idiom in any large cultural entity. Newcomers sift their repertoire according to its potential compatibility with the new musical environment. On the receiving end, the absorption of new and exogenous influences is selective, and it is based on the adopting culture's preferences. New idioms are adopted first from popular music. Nettl and others see this process as adaptive strategy and a necessary condition to survival (Nettl 1978b, 146–79; Seeger 1980; Boiko 1992, 2005, 278–79). Characteristically, the onto-vernacular:

- exists in urbanized communities in which social contexts may vary and widen;
- keeps some phylo-vernacular songs surviving, but transforms them into games and circle dances, weakening their connections with the agrarian life and ritual;
- carries texts that often remain intact from their phylo-vernacular function;
- vocal manners and expression tend to level;
- experiences musical changes, losing some elements and adapting others from the new environment;
- maintains the option of double contrafacta, varying tunes and lyrics;
- increases the emphasis on its entertainment function;

- often keeps the participatory element in music-making where collective singing is an important element of communal get-together encounters;
- allows for presentational music-making as a new mode of social life (see Turino 2008), introducing separation between performer and audience;
- incorporates an element of commercialization, approaching the genre of popular music;
- uses oral, written or half-written (lyrics) traditions;
- lasts about two generations;
- crystallized formulas are preserved selectively.

All of these characteristics are not sharply defined, and they admit the wide margins of mixed functions. It is in the prevalence of tendencies within all these functions and their interactions that the main difference lies. For example, the onto-vernacular can be expressed through phylo-vernacular material that functions as a popular song; in other cases, popular song can function as folk material (for example, as what happened with American 1970s popular songs). The contiguity of onto-vernacular functions with popular music seems to require their differentiation. The historically clear-cut division between folk and popular music, therefore, is not helpful in either folk- or popular-music studies, largely because it fails to consider the broad middle ground that is articulated by recently urbanized parties. This middle ground, here understood as belonging to the onto-vernacular, is depicted in Table 18.1 (above) as "popularized tradition." Nettl, who draws attention to the urbanized repertoire (1978b, 171), avers that "we can draw no sharp line" between folk and urban popular music (Nettl 1965, 11). This "folk vs. popular" dichotomy requires a more sophisticated approach. I therefore propose a categorization into three, rather than two, genres: folk (phylo-vernacular), urbanized folk (onto-vernacular), and popular music. While the borders separating onto-vernacular from phylo-vernacular, on the one hand, and onto-vernacular from popular music on the other, are indeed blurred, they nevertheless create a tripartite with the addition of an onto-vernacular category. The careful consideration of social functions and tendencies results in an appropriate categorization of an item into one of the three neighboring repertories: phylo-vernacular, onto-vernacular, or popular music.

Vernaculars in history

The suggested model of the musical vernacular is not a modern phenomenon: in fact, it is present whenever and wherever rural communities join urban ones by moving into cities. A late eighteenth-century *Collection of Russian Folk Songs* was compiled by the Russian polymath Nikolai Lvov in collaboration with the Czech composer Ivan Prach, who transcribed the songs and arranged them for voice and keyboard. In her in-depth study, Margarita Mazo explored this repertoire's musical indicators of urbanization, secularization, and westernization. Her study offers an opportunity to trace rigid phylo-vernacular elements as they appear in onto-vernacular transformations.

The harmonization of these tunes corresponded with the contemporary urban fashion of the times, tactfully balancing folk modality and common-practice musical idiom. The first edition (published in 1790 with one hundred songs sorted by genres [the second edition of 1806 had 150 songs]), included a preface offering a Herder-inspired historical survey of Russian musical folklore and its ethical values, thus relating to it in its phylo-vernacular function. The collection served for two centuries as a source of Russian folklore and folk music, for both Russian as well as Western composers (Mazo 1987, 434–41). Although Prach's transcriptions and harmonizations were severely criticized by nineteenth-century romantically-nationalistic purists, the transcriptions were reasonably accurate (Mazo 1987, 29–32). The melodies, judging by the way they were written,

possibly existed in the urbanized folklore of former villagers who were exposed to Italianized and Gallicized Russian popular music. All of these facts fully reflect the onto-vernacular function as it has been defined in this study.

One of the chief implications of the model presented here is the potential cyclicity of transformations: phylo-vernacular can convert to onto-vernacular and also vice versa. In both cases of conversion, the connection to an agrarian way of life remains basic, but combinations of phylo- and onto-elements can endlessly vary according to the function of particular repertoire. The fluidity of elements and functions reflects another important implication of the model: potential hybridization of phylo- and onto- in cultures of landless, but sedentary communities. These three main processes will be examined below.

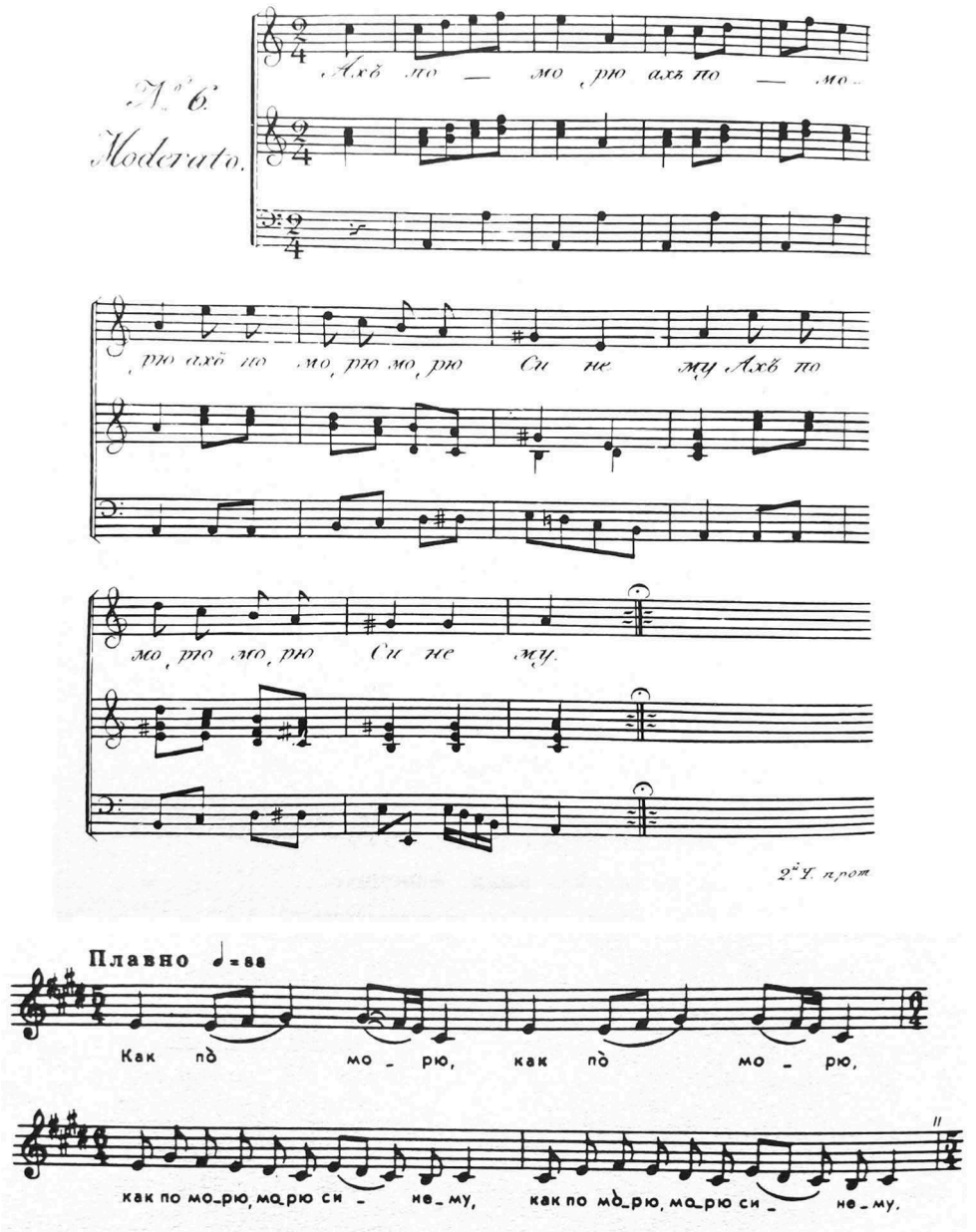
From phylo- to onto-vernacular

In her Appendix D to the 1806 edition of Lvov's *Collection*, Mazo offered numerous variants of the songs, collected in locations over vast and distant areas of Russia and transcribed by nineteenth- and twentieth-century ethnomusicologists (Mazo 1987, 444–78). In about a third of the collection, there are up to three variants for each song. According to the classification system developed here, these examples generally belong to a phylo-vernacular repertoire. Several of these songs may represent earlier versions than those in the Lvov-Prach collection, which was compiled by the end of the eighteenth century in mostly urban areas, and, as such, they reflect some of the changing aesthetic and historiographic values. The nature and order of these changes, however, is difficult to pin down. For example, a twentieth-century transcription is read as a variant of a song in Lvov's 1806 collection (Mazo 1987; see Example 18.1). Both variants share mode, phrase structure (a-a-b-b), and melodic contour ($\hat{3}$–$\hat{5}$–$\hat{1}$, followed by a melodic descent). Lvov's version, however, targeting urban audiences, features a regular meter, a clear beat, and is harmonized using leading tones, while the monodic variant features flexible metric intonation and natural cadences. Melodies travel; therefore, either (or both) can be confirmed as "authentic." Some of these variants were sung by serfs who moved from rural areas to the city—or by their children (and grandchildren)—therefore carrying a strong onto-vernacular component, while others may have been transcribed during visits to rural areas. Other scenarios offer more complicated pictures, factoring in cases in which people returned from cities to the country, or moved from one village to a more remote one. Intentional, unrecorded changes possibly made in various repertoire components blur the situation even further: for instance, replacing a leading tone with a modal, lowered seventh degree to make it sound "more authentic" in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The only assumption that could be safely sustained is that there is a two-way process: phylo-vernacular elements are flexed into onto-vernacular functions, and borrowed elements are adopted and crystallized into an existing phylo-vernacular corpus.

The cultural shift from village to town, from phylo-vernacular to onto-vernacular, is the most widespread and anthropologically natural process. Sometimes, urbanized folk tunes (or even urban popular songs) return to the village in a new guise and become phylo-vernacular again, reintegrated into its context (Nettl 1965, 11, 13; Despringre 1992, 211).

From onto- to phylo-vernacular and vice-versa: immigration and urbanization

Cases where an entire onto-vernacular repertoire becomes phylo-vernacular exist as well. Their presence vindicates the need for a more sophisticated differentiation between the



Example 18.1 Two versions of "Akh (Kak) po moryu." Above: Lvov-Prach collection, 2nd edn. 1806 (Brown, Mazo 1987, Facs. 179); Below: Kotikova. *Narodnye pesni Pskovskoy oblasti* [Collection of Folk Songs of Pskov region]. Moscow: Sovetsky Kompozitor 1966, no. 73 (Brown, Mazo, 1987, 462, ex. D-25)

various kinds of the vernacular. A large group of twentieth-century Israeli folk songs that have a strong Russian component are an informative case study. The process began in the 1880s, with a large repertoire that was brought to Israel (until 1948 called "Palestine" under Ottoman and subsequently British mandate) by immigrants from the Russian Empire, including Russia, the Ukraine, Poland, Byelorussia, and Moldova. This "Russian component," however, consisted mostly of popular songs composed in the 1920s and 1930s by renowned Soviet poets and musicians who, responding to politically driven demands "from above," composed stylizations of Russian folk songs intended for mass consumption. This decidedly onto-vernacular repertoire, composed within an urban environment after folk models, was adopted by Jewish agricultural settlements in Palestine with lyrics translated to Hebrew. Inspired by the ideologies of socialist utopia, Zionism, and Tolstoy's Life and Labor Communes, and joined during the mid-1940s by Jewish Holocaust survivors, these popular songs served as sources of moral and emotional endurance. Practices of collective singing, translation and/or re-textualization with references to local landscape and epos, anonymity, plurality of variants, contrafacta, and references to national holidays exemplify aspects of the phylo-vernacular. With modernization and a constant move from rural to urban areas, however, this function soon acquired an onto-vernacular flavor: new rhythms, Mediterranean ethnic stylizations, and popular-style instrumentations infiltrated the repertoire (Ritzarev 2012, 38). Even today, many of the phylo-vernacular practices are prevalent: collective singing is an extremely popular pastime among Israeli urban populations, including the societies' youth. Moreover, while this repertoire originated within the Ashkenazic (European Jewry) sector, it attracts young people from Sephardic (Jewish Middle-Eastern and North-African) communities, and it therefore becomes part of a phylo-vernacular Israeli tradition wherein hundreds of memorized song tunes are performed by large groups to lyrics projected on slides. The practice of collective singing increases during wars and after terrorist attacks, often sublimating the feeling of national mourning into a kind of communal secular prayer (Eliram 2006), while simultaneously highlighting the songs' phylo-vernacular function.

Immigration is therefore a key factor in the exchange between phylo- and onto-vernacular functions. Bianco describes an Italian community that immigrated, en masse, from the Rosetto village in South Italy to a newly founded village, called Roseto, in the United States. The repertoire they brought with them functioned as a phylo-vernacular symbol, including "Italianized" onto-vernacular elements, that helped establish their self-definition as a coherent community. Nevertheless, the texts of the songs went through an onto-vernacular series of changes that reflected new associations to the landscape, climate, and other conditions in the new land. Their repertoire, therefore, simultaneously combines phylo- and onto-vernacular elements, and it represents complex, but common give-and-take processes between the two functions:

> Folktales and ballads that are nearly forgotten in Italy or remembered in fragmentary or *Italianized forms* [emphasis added] have been found in America in long and well-preserved versions. New stanzas have sometimes been added to the songs to reflect the new situation, while princes, dukes, castles, and towers have often become the city of Chicago, a motel on a highway, or a casino and its landlady …
>
> *(Bianco 1978, 58)*

Conservation of repertoire or survival in diaspora

Two types of survival are evident: survival at the place of origin and survival in the diaspora. The former includes a phylo-vernacular repertoire (like other folk traditions). This

repertoire can survive, at least in great part, only if it stays within its original, closed community. The onto-vernacular repertoire, even if it stays within its originating community, does not survive more than one or two generations because the community itself changes ethnically, socio-politically, and culturally. The second type of survival is associated with diaspora conditions. National and cultural diasporas, in their migration, often preserve repertoires that no longer exist in their place of origin. This "phylo-ization" of onto-vernacular repertoires in diaspora situations is a general phenomenon, occurring, for example, within Himalayan Tibetan diaspora (Diehl 2002, 64), Chinese religious music in Korea (Howard 2014, 348), and Irish (Moloney 1992, 557) and Polish (Nettl 1978a, 9) music in North America. Paradoxically, it is precisely the remoteness of these societies that enables their survival through cultural artefacts. Diaspora conditions will conserve an onto-vernacular repertoire if it is transferred to a closed community where it crystallizes, becoming phylo-vernacular. Even then it is only for a limited period of one or two generations, after which it transforms to onto-vernacular because of urbanization and modernization. When a phylo-vernacular repertoire is in the diaspora it is strengthened intentionally, usually as some minority's sign of dignity (Katz 1970) and generally inscribing into the trend of "folklore revitalization."

The Irish case

Many cultures are unique fusions of ethnic, geographic, political, social, and historic conditions, and they reflect equally unique interplays of phylo- and onto-vernacular functions. But within this wealth of complexes, Irish music offers a fascinating case of a transportation of traditional dynamics. Its corpus has survived exile, transplantation, discrimination, and modernization (Moloney 1992, 89). Its phylo-vernacular materials not only reflect agrarianism, but they also represent a constant cultivation of the Celtic identity, the Gaelic language, and a distinctive musical style. Ireland's geo-political marginalization and the resulting waves of emigration to America led to the formation of two Irish communities: Ireland-Irish and American-Irish. In 2016, 32.3 million Americans claimed Irish ancestry, about five times the 6.62 million combined populations of the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland.[1]

Both societies reinforce a sense of community by cherishing their ancient Celtic identity and therefore their phylo-vernacular legacy, including single phylo-elements imposed over onto-vernacular borrowings. Remarkably, this sense of identity holds true even within the popular, "commercial" Irish output—"authenticity" is still highly valued among young Irish audiences of popular music bands (O'Flynn 2009). Oral transmission of a rigid corpus of phylo-vernacular—the a cappella *sean nós* Gaelic-language songs—although performed within an urban context, is tightly bound to traditional ritual. In addition, ballads that feature improvisation as an inherent element remain a stable genre (Moloney 1992, 568).

The "Celtic style" (both in structure and expression) is imposed on any borrowed repertory, including the traditional klezmer-like corpus that includes polkas, mazurkas, waltzes, and marches, even while it maintains the same function in communal rituals such as weddings, wakes, baptisms, and so on. Since the seventeenth century, Irish urban popular songs have been transcribed in many collections, opening the door to centuries of interactions between oral and written traditions. Like the scenarios in Russia, Israel, or the Roseto village, a strong phylo-vernacular component was transferred when the Irish immigrated to America, even while part of it was already extinct in Ireland. Cultural interactions between old and new

communities constantly swap musical materials, an ongoing process that prolongs their endurance and thus expands their phylo- and onto-vernacular repertories.

The paradoxical phylo-vernacular of landless communities

Although one important characteristic of phylo-vernacular functions is an attachment to a specific land, there are at least two examples of "landless" ethnic communities in which phylo-vernacular music is sustainable and unmistakable: the Gypsy-Roma style and the European Jewish Klezmer music (Ritzarev 2005/6). Both cultures are known for their hybrid nature, composed of material and elements borrowed from host societies and then appropriated as their own.

While hybridity may seem to contradict the concept of the phylo-vernacular, these repertoires are built on historical layers. Some of these layers are crystallized and used in rituals; thus, they function as phylo-vernacular. Moreover, the Gypsy-Roma sometimes preserve folklore of ethnic communities that are now extinct (Wilkinson 2001, §3). In other words, they have the gift of phylo-vernacularization.

While any phylo-culture has its unique expression, a vocal emotional expression combined with specific phonetics and voice modulations became the Roma's principal crystallized phylo-vernacular factor. This trait is just as characteristic as a tunes repertoire, but it eludes exact transcriptions (Beckerman 2013b, 686). Cruz, discussing Afro-American spirituals culture and its acceptance by white liberal society, coined the term "ethnosympathy" (Cruz 1999, 125–26). To paraphrase Cruz, I suggest the concept of "ethno-despair" or "ethno-dysphoria" to mark the strong emotional message common to Afro-American, Gypsy-Roma, and Jewish musical expression. Nettl contends that the sad musics of unhappy

> minorities kept in national seclusion … do for society what other domains of a culture fail to do—provide relief from everyday sameness, a way of communicating with the supernatural when other forms of communication are directed to humans, a kind of luxury among necessities … Music may be an antidote, an expression of anticulture.
>
> *(Nettl 2005, 283; see also Lomax 1962, 442–43)*

The onto-vernacular properties of Gypsy-Roma and Klezmer music are evident in the ways in which borrowed material fulfills entertainment, presentation, and even commercial functions. Still, there is something odd in this particular type of the onto-vernacular. First, it seems to lack a "crystallized" phylo-vernacular layer, given that these communities are not divided into "rural" and "urbanized" ones. Second, this onto-vernacular repertoire has lasted for centuries, thus it functions, in fact, as phylo-vernacular.

Musical repertoires of landless people are not divided into phylo-vernacular and onto-vernacular; instead, they tend to integrate both functions. Their crystallized repertoire embeds borrowed materials into unique emotional expressions, negating the initial functional differences. These repertoires are hybridized on several levels: the amalgam of their vernacular functions is adjourned by a mixture of various borrowed folk traditions, their traditional manner of performance, and the popular music surrounding their various locations, even when these components may appear mutually exclusive. As multibody systems, they blend opposing crystallized and fluid tendencies, generating a musical corpus that is flexible, complex, and vital.

A repertoire referred to by members of a culture as "traditional" is probably constructed from layers of borrowed materials that are crystallized. The types of borrowed materials, as well as the choice of the core, rigid element, vary among cultures. Sometimes it is the musical *structure* that functions as the phylo-vernacular core. On the one hand, the borrowing could be from another genre of the same culture, like the Latvian *Sutartinės* polyphony absorbing refrain songs into its structure (Boiko 1992) or the Persian *maqamat* incorporating local folk tunes into their structure (Nettl 1978b). The borrowing could also be from other sources, such as Irish traditional music that integrates foreign tunes into its structure (Moloney 1992, 572–73). At other times, a *mode of expression* can function as a rigid, "crystallized" core, like the landless cultures of the Roma and Jewish Diaspora communities. Afro-American jazz, in some senses a music of a landless people, also synthesizes both expression and structure in its rigid core. But once transferred to "white" musicians, jazz music combines its rigid structure with a variety of other national modes of expression.

The politics of the phylo-vernacular

The cultural and socio-political value of phylo-vernacular materials as symbols of national identity is undeniable, stemming from the millennia-old ethos of agrarianism, which is deeply rooted in our consciousness as an indispensable element of civilization. As international activities develop, national and ethnic symbols gain importance.

Cultural representations of phylo-vernacular materials form part of national and social agendas. While genuine phylo-vernacular typically articulates its own aesthetics, stylistics, historical conventions, and political messages, collections that are created as representations of one national or ethnic group for the rest of the world differ substantively. The formula is old: recognizable elements of a musical phylo-vernacular (usually in melody, instrumentation, or in both), aptly stylized to suit the message, are always present in official depictions of the phylo-vernacular. A characteristic sender of such a message would be a peripheral agrarian country that seeks acceptance into the European family of countries. The phylo-vernacular connotes the agrarian, which, in its turn, is associated with peacefulness, traditional values, and stability.

The main European agrarian superpower—nevertheless set on the periphery—was Russia. Indeed, the Lvov-Prach *Collection*, sponsored by the Imperial court in 1790, met the interior and foreign policy goals of the regime. Completed under the auspices of the Russian Academy, it proudly presented home grown cultural treasures, and it thereby constructed a national identity. The whole project worked in tandem with the official nationalistic strategy of Catherine II, characterized by the popular aphorism attributed to her: "people who sing and dance do not think evil." The cover design of the *Collection* transmits the country's prosperity, hence indirectly its political power (see Figure 18.1). Rather artificially within Russian conventions, it presents the image of a man sitting and singing under a tree. The tree suggests peasantry (phylo), but the man's dress and general looks suggest his (onto-) urbanized environment (Ritzarev 2008). This image drastically contradicted the miserable state of Russian peasantry as described in Alexander Radishchev's *Journey from Petersburg to Moscow*, published and immediately banned in the same year, 1790. It was particularly around this time, however, during the Russian-Turkish war (1787–1792) and one year after the outbreak of the French Revolution, that the image of a happy and compliant Russian people had to be presented to evoke Russian victories both in the battlefield and in European diplomacy.

Figure 18.1 Cover design of the Lvov-Prach *Collection*, first edition (1790)

"The audience was provided with high quality entertainment, enjoying melodious songs while being shown ideal pictures of happy singers … encouraging singers to promote the aesthetics of folklore … appealing to the desires of an international audience" (Piotrowska 2016, 127–28). While this quotation would fit into the eighteenth-century Russian official speech, it was actually written more than 200 years later, referring to a short-lived international song contest—the *Intervision*, organized and funded by Soviet authorities in 1977–1980, as the Eastern bloc's answer to the popular *Eurovision* West-European song contest.

Alleged phylo-vernacular materials for political ends as manifested in a "peaceful competition" among nations were part of the agenda of the Eurovision contest of the 1990s. It included instances of both displaying and avoiding the phylo-vernacular features of peripheral European countries, at the time confronting the challenge of the new politico-economic entity of the European Union. In the Eurovision contest, three kinds of messages could be detected through the use—or avoidance—of phylo-vernacular characteristics:

- Compliance. Lyrics in English, the modern lingua franca; music in the overall Western common-practice idiom, all meaning "We are like others and deserve to be accepted to the European family".
- Self-confidence. Lyrics in the vernacular; music and/or costume design marked with some phylo-vernacular elements; general impression of a friendly onto-vernacular, all meaning "We are small, proud of our uniqueness, but compatible with the European family".
- Defiance. Lyrics in the vernacular; emphatic use of phylo-vernacular musical, costume design and staging elements, all meaning "although you may not like us, this is who we are."

While elements of the phylo-vernacular may express national pride, using an onto-vernacular style is communicative: the more onto-vernacular, the more the desire to be understood. A limited use of "soft" phylo-vernacular traits articulates a wish for good relations, while "hard" phylo-vernacular characteristics convey a defensive attitude of self-marginalization.

Conclusion

The proposed model of the musical vernacular critically revises eighteenth- and nineteenth-century notions, wherein national identity was defined by what was considered the *only* genuine folk music. While the importance of collecting and studying folk materials is undeniable, an overdetermined focus on agrarianism and the bestowal of the collected materials with a "fixed," "true," or "authentic" national identity only results in partial understandings and an underestimation or refutation of hybrid or "inauthentic" materials. As has been demonstrated, it is precisely the hybrid forms, by necessity embedded in changing societies, that more accurately reflect the complex and dynamic nature of vernacular interactions with and within cultures.

Note

1 US Census Bureau release number: CB16-FF.04; (4.76 million; DB of Ireland's CSO) (1.86 million; Northern Ireland Statistical Bulletin NISRA NYE-16).

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MULTIMODAL REINFORCEMENT AND WORLDS OF SENSE

A political approach to musical emotions

Oscar Hernández Salgar

Cultural studies are ripe with complex theoretical approaches to power, coming from French post-structuralism, feminism and queer theory, post-colonial and decolonial theories, just to name a few. Connecting these insights with serious discussions about music and power is challenging. The nature of power is such, that if musical sound means something to anybody, this meaning is inevitably political, given that it is a part of the permanent struggle of meanings that we call culture.

Surprisingly, however, it seems that music semiotics—one of the disciplines that study music signification—often lies apart from any political concern. Although music semioticians increasingly deal with cultural perceptions and cultural backgrounds and the way they affect the interpretation of music, their focus is mainly on musical texts, and they do not show a particular interest in the actual hearing subject (which is often assumed under the form of an "ideal listener"). The psychology of music, with its experimental designs and quantitative methods, offers powerful tools to account for processes of musical cognition in concrete subjects, but its rather superficial approach to musical structures or the cultural complexities of musical meaning limits its ability to explain the relationship between music signification and power. That relationship is better understood from the perspectives of fields such as sociology of music and popular music studies. However, much of the production in these disciplines—with few relevant exceptions like Tagg or Echard—follows the assumption that musical meaning comes primarily from speech about music, and has little to do with the structural properties of musical sound.[1]

This essay offers conceptual and methodological tools that are the result of trajectories derived from three different clusters of disciplines: music semiotics, the psychology of music, and the sociology of music. This blend of approaches, coupled with strategies found in cultural studies, results in a series of insights that I explore to propose an original approach to the relation between music signification and power.

Five insights are discussed in separate sections. (1) Exercising power consists of taking actions that guide or orient the actions of others. Power means to structure someone's possibilities for

action. (2) Emotions expressed or induced by music are often the main way in which music helps to guide others' actions. (3) Music is never only music. Because it occurs in concrete listening experiences, its existence and perception necessarily involve a complex of stimuli that function in any situation, beyond Reybrouck's "intermedial contexts" (2015, 11). (4) Music's power to guide others' actions relies heavily on the interaction between the musical sound and other modes of communication that are part of the musical experience, as either reinforcing or contradicting elements. (5) Multimodal reinforcement can lead to immersive experiences in which the emotional contents expressed by music and other modes seem unavoidable and "natural." These kinds of experiences delimit the possibilities of action by creating a totalizing space I elsewhere described as a *world of sense* (Hernández 2016).

After addressing each one of these ideas, the last section presents some thoughts on the ways in which this theoretical model can be applied to specific analyses, limited to situations where perception and cognition are captured by an immersive experience. It is not limited, however, to the exacerbation of emotions in situations such as political campaigns or massive social movements. On the contrary, many of our daily experiences, no matter how small, increasingly involve music—and the resulting musical emotions in particular—in combination with other modes of communication as a means to suggest courses of action. This kind of imperceptible nudging seems to be central to the apparent freedom of choice that characterizes the contemporary world.[2]

Power, emotions, and music

Foucault says that what characterizes a relationship of power is that it implies a proactive influence upon the actual or potential actions of others (1982, 789). Violence or consent are just two out of many means that can be used to achieve such ends: exercising power is to structure the field of possible actions that might be taken by subjects who may perceive themselves as free.

In the *societies of sovereignty* described by Foucault, the object of power—a divine power invested in the monarch—was to decide over death rather than to administer life (Deleuze [1990] 1999). But in the disciplinary societies that emerged at the turn of the nineteenth century, power relies more on knowledge than on force. New legions of professionals were needed to create mechanisms and institutions dedicated to generating productive bodies and subjects. Foucault calls the technologies associated with this type of societies "bio-politics," an extension of the State over bodies and subjects that need to be managed to control life. While power in the societies of sovereignty affects individuals through the use of force, the goal of bio-politics, on the other hand, is to control and actively produce populations through the use of theories, statistics, and demographic records (Foucault [1976] 1978, 141–45).

Deleuze ([1990] 1999) goes further and describes how power shifts from disciplinary societies to societies of control. In the latter, structures of molds that formerly organized human life are replaced by modulations that tailor the mechanisms of power to the individual. This change is evident in the history of Muzak, a company that began producing background music in the 1930s, with the goal of inducing greater productivity in industrial settings. In recent decades it has focused on enhancing sales in commercial environments, and creating moods appropriate to various social and financial agendas (Jones and Schumacher 1992).[3]

Lazzarato sees this as an example of the emergence of a new technology of power that ensures the modulation of memory and attention through audiovisual and telematics networks that act from a distance (2006, 93). The aim of Noo-politics,[4] as he names it, is to

constitute and organize "publics" (as opposed to administering populations). One important thing about these technologies is that, in affecting memory and the intellect, they also have an impact on desires and emotions, which could be of concern for anyone interested in the political role of musical sound. Nevertheless, the fact remains that for Lazzarato emotions seem to come second in relation to intellectual processes.

Other authors, instead, consider emotions as a key to understanding the motivational structure of actions such as consumption. Eva Illouz, for example, says that, while emotion is not strictly action, it is "what orients and implicates the self in a social environment" (2009, 382). Emotions can be expressed and induced without the intervention of any rational process, and thus, the action that follows does not necessarily respond to the *nous*.

In fact, for ancient Greeks, emotions were created in the *thymos*. Authors like Fukuyama (1992) refer to thymos as "spiritedness" or the human desire for recognition, according to Plato's use of the term (*Republic*, Book IV, 440 e-f). But Koziak shows how, in Homeric times, this word denoted more generally emotions, desire, or an internal urge (1999, 1081). In the twentieth century, Sloterdijk (2010, 23) identifies a thymotic change toward a limitless eroticization, echoing the impact of the new political economy on the shift from feelings like rage and pride to feelings like greed and desire (2010, 191).

Sloterdijk's concern with thymos is not an isolated case. It can be seen as part of an affective turn that has emerged in the last two decades in the social sciences, reflecting the understanding of the primacy of emotions as a place of political struggle in the contemporary world (Clough and Halley 2007; Beasley-Murray 2008; Gibbs 2010; Nussbaum 2014; Arfuch 2015; Massumi 2015). Many approaches to the issue seem to identify a specific technology of power that controls and moderates emotions to regulate the behavior of human groups. In this respect, music plays a vital role in *thymo-politics* (Hernández 2016).

The use of music and its concomitant emotions as a means of controlling aspects of daily life has been discussed before (see, for example, DeNora 2000). The exact mechanisms by which music relates to emotion and to action, however, have yet to be studied closely. Questions as to what exactly is a musical emotion, and to what extent can it be actually used as a part of a thymo-political apparatus, remain open.

Music, emotions, and human action

Two different approaches to emotions have a common starting point in the concept of *affect*, as outlined by Spinoza (1632–1677). In the third part of his *Ethics*, he says: "By affect I understand affections of the body by which the body's power of acting is increased or diminished, aided or restrained, and at the same time, the ideas of these affections" (cited in Smith 2012, 59). Damasio develops this definition in the field of neurobiology by describing emotions as reactions to stimuli that can positively or negatively impact the body's capacity to act; feelings, unlike emotions, are the result of a more developed process that involves the cognitive assessment of that response in light of previous experiences (Damasio 2007, 80–81).[5] On the other hand, Deleuze and Guattari take from Spinoza the idea that affection is "the passage of this state to another state as [an] increase or decrease of potential-power through the action of other bodies" (1994, 154). They introduce, however, a difference between *affection* and *affect*. For them, affect does not refer to changes of state that occur in lived experience, but to a condensation of such changes in an expressive material that remains beyond human existence. That is why one of the aims of art is "to wrest the affect from affections as the transition from one state to another: to extract a bloc of sensations,

a pure being of sensations" (167). In this sense, the methods and techniques of art are nothing but tools that allow that "extraction" in order to materialize affections in an expressive language. Despite their common origin in Spinoza, the approaches of Damasio, and Deleuze and Guattari delineate different paths to understanding the role of emotion in music. Are musical emotions just a physiological response to musical stimuli? Or, instead, the condensation of lived emotions in an arrangement of sound material? Where lies the affection that should be addressed by a theory of musical emotions?

Music psychologists approach the issue at hand from yet another viewpoint: Juslin and Sloboda (2010, 76), for example, distinguish between two phenomena: first, listeners can *perceive* that certain emotions are being expressed by musical sound without necessarily experiencing those emotions. Second, an emotion can be *induced*, or experienced, by listeners. In the first scenario, various studies show that, in similar cultural environments, there is some level of agreement on the expressive qualities of a number of musical elements (Tagg and Clarida 2003; Gabrielsson and Lindström 2010). Thus, for example, the musical expression of joy in Western societies is usually achieved by fast tempi, ascending melodic lines, brilliant timbres, loud dynamics, major mode, and simple harmonic progressions (Juslin and Laukka 2004).[6] There is a consensus that "emotional expression in music is rarely or never exclusively determined by a single factor, but is a function of many factors" (Gabrielsson and Lindström 2010, 392). This is to say, for example, that "happiness" can be expressed musically in a minor mode as long as other elements correlate with the sense of "happiness." In general, however, music's ability to express emotions through the use of certain surface characteristics is well known and culturally constructed codes of emotional expression are regularly manipulated by film composers and for commercial use.

More difficult is establishing the relation between musical characteristics and the *induction* of emotional states. On many occasions, emotions induced by a composition can contradict the emotions expressed by its sound structures. This phenomenon has not been investigated fully: specific emotional responses are difficult to assert, let alone measure. Juslin and Laukka (2004, 224–25) suggest some of the mechanisms by which music can induce emotions: (1) musical expectancy, (2) arousal potential, (3) mood contagion, (4) associations, and (5) mental imagery. Of these, only musical expectancy and arousal potential are directly instanced in specific features of the sounding material. We are now faced with two new questions: how does the emotional expression of musical material relate to the actual emotional experience of human subjects? Can human action be guided, influenced, or nudged by the emotional expression of musical sound?

Zbikowski asserts that competent listeners' responses to emotional stimuli are adaptive and proactive, while physiological responses are rather diffusely reactive and not highly synchronized (2010, 42–43). Using Langer's idea that the development of musical discourse over time acts as a Peircean icon of the dynamics of actual emotional experiences, Zbikowski (2010, 37) emphasizes the importance of musical syntax in the study of musical emotions, and marks that, by working as an icon of emotional dynamics, music can partially activate some of the physiological responses that characterize an emotional experience, thus facilitating the courses of action related to that experience. Yet, the question as to how can such a musical "icon of emotional dynamics" trigger a behavior, remains open.

Music as a multimodal experience

Zbikowski uses a multimodal simulator model proposed by Barsalou (2009) to explain how certain features of music can be mapped onto a different mode (visual, verbal, kinetic, etc.),

thus triggering simulations of emotions. As he puts it: "Part of the reason we characterize certain pieces of music as 'happy' is that listening to such music reactivates some of the neural structures associated with experiencing emotions related to happiness" (Zbikowski 2010, 48). This perspective offers a solution to the dichotomy between the perception of emotions in music and their induction as emotions felt by the listener. If musical sound can produce simulations of emotions, it is because we have associated the music with certain previously known emotional experiences. Furthermore, even this partial re-enactment of an emotion can suffice to facilitate actions related to that particular emotional state. Barsalou, however, sees concepts as "typically situated in background settings, events and introspections" (2009, 1283), using the term "situated conceptualizations" to explain how concepts are ultimately based on lived experiences. The construction of a category (like "dog," "peace," "bicycle," or a specific musical composition) involves, beyond the perceived characteristics of the specific stimulants, the multimodal information embedded in the accumulated experience of their perception. When we hear the same music repeatedly in similar situations, the simulator we create for that composition includes, with its perception of sound-as-sound, the combined totality of stimulants—people, spaces, emotions, visual elements, tactile sensations, smells—that participates in and defines the experience. Thus, unlike being based on simple "associations," the meaning of music, like all meanings, is necessarily multimodal: every new experience must exist in previous experiences, and its meaning is always a complex of several modes.

Another important characteristic of music, given the various parameters on which it operates, is its *semiotic density*. Turino describes "focal awareness" as a central factor in the perception of a musical sign (2014, 189). He does not discuss, however, what happens when, while listening to music, one's focal awareness is diverted toward signifying elements external to the music heard, such as sad faces, quiet conversation, dark colors, or rain. Does distracted listening exclude music signification from the individual experience?

According to Barsalou's theory of simulation (2009, 1281), the perception of an entity initiates feature-detectors in relevant neural systems, forming an overall pattern of activation. This information is integrated by conjunctive neurons in association areas, both in inter-modal and intra-modal forms, meaning that any experience, in fact, is multimodal. When we ride a bicycle, for example, we see the spinning wheels below, hear the chain, and feel the wind and the movement. After we have had this experience repeatedly, any one of these perceptual data can trigger "a multi-modal simulation of a multi-component situation with each modal component simulated in the respective neural system" (2009, 1283).[7] According to Barsalou, therefore, whenever we listen to music, we inadvertently perceive many other things that in time become strong associations that we use to construct meaning and that guide our actions in the world. Musical sound plays an important role in *any* musical experience, whether involving attentive listening or not.

Multimodal reinforcement and emotions generated by music

Referring to Hendrix's Woodstock version of the "Star-Spangled Banner," Turino says that the different signs occurring together in musical sound can operate "in consort (i.e. creating parallel effects), or in conflict (unusual or opposing effects)" (2014, 189). Beyond differences between Hendrix's performance and a more traditional one, however, there are additional, extra-musical differences: the physical, historical, cultural, and emotional contexts of Woodstock participate in the creation of the category "Hendrix's Woodstock version", that

contradicts the traditional, internally congruent combination of signs and symbols that form the category "national anthem."

Several studies suggest that reinforcement or contradiction between different modes in a message can influence behavior, given that enhanced accuracy and speed in categorization may be explained by the fact that emotionally congruent visual and musical stimuli are integrated earlier in perception than are incongruent ones (Sollberger, Rebe and Eckstein 2003; Meier, Robinson and Clore 2004; Spreckelmeyer et al., 2006). These results are consistent with studies that examine how music influences the judgment of emotional visual stimuli (Hanser and Mark 2013). North, Hargreaves and McKendrick (1999) showed that music affected customers in a British supermarket: French music raised the sales of French wines while German music led to higher sales of German wines when positioned in shelves marked by their respective national flags. Clearly, different modalities can reinforce each other, producing a message whose components are semiotically and semantically congruent. This kind of experiences can be expected to prime meanings, values, and behaviors that are related to the same semantic field.

For example, the combination of lighting, colors, neat cleanliness of walls and floors, and even the sounding environment in a hospital can reinforce messages of "asepsis" and "quiet." As a result, patients and visitors will (generally) abstain from throwing things on the floor, screaming, or running through the corridors. This type of controlled behavior would not be just a rational response to verbal (spoken or written) instructions, but a result of the subject's immersion in a previously known structured environment that—through a web of multimodal signifying materials—cues values, emotional states, possible gestures, and preferred forms of conduct.

Unlike the stillness expected in a hospital environment, experiences in which music is at the center of multimodal reinforcement may lead to other types of desired behavior. The effect of a concert hall, for example, is to establish an arena where every element—from lighting to decoration to acoustic design—is intended to enhance the experience of the music (while reinforcing ideological constructs of the artwork as a timeless creation). A more specific form of multimodal congruent components, that reinforces a musical message, is a performer's physical gestures, providing a spatial visualization of an emotional dynamic that is also embedded in the musical syntax. At the same time, visual or verbal elements can evoke extra-musical associations that reinforce related content. For example, a contemporary performance of a Rameau composition in an eighteenth-century French rococo theater, may suggest the light solemnity of galant style. The richness of musical elements can relate to the theater's architectural and visual complexity, and by that reinforce and signify the excess and superficiality associated with the court of Louis XV. All this creates a situation where the listener is immersed in an ethos of "exuberant-yet-elegant-and-sophisticated-joy," which is supposed to be enjoyed and admired. I call this a *world of sense*: a situated experience of multimodal reinforcement that—via the interaction between verbal and non-verbal material—"clarifies" what feels good and what feels bad, what is desirable and what is not, what is natural and what is necessary, and above all, what courses of action are more plausible.

Music and the worlds of sense

Football (American Soccer) games provide interesting examples of multimodal reinforcement experiences where music occupies a central position. The supporters of the Shamrock Rovers Football Club in Ireland use music to actualize their community by "the creation of an

expressive and evocative atmosphere through constant singing, chanting, clapping, body movement, handmade signs, and use of marine flares and smoke bombs" (Jack 2013, 1). This performance of a collective identity relies on the combination of a host of different modes, contributing to a re-enactment of values, emotions, and behaviors of aggression and anger, thus structuring options of group actions. As Jack puts it, "Participating in chants and the creation of atmosphere changes individuals' perspectives regarding their relationships with outgroups such as Bohemians [supporters of the rival team]" (2013, 5). Indeed, very often this atmosphere leads to actions such as direct confrontation with the rivals.

A similar participatory experience is practiced by fans of the Argentinian soccer team San Lorenzo de Almagro, reinforcing *aguante*, a term that can be translated as "endurance" or "stamina," but that involves much more (Herrera 2018). *Aguante* refers to a set of values that characterize "true fans." Music plays a crucial and audibly imposing role in this fan-support, since San Lorenzo fans sing for the entire 90-minute game without repeating chants. Additional signs, however, contribute to the actualization of *aguante*: flags, banners, outfits in the team's colors, slogans, bodily motions and gestures, all contribute to a dense semiotics that defines or realizes steadfast support of the team. Not knowing the lyrics or not singing loud enough become indices of not being a true fan: being immersed in a *world of sense*, therefore, is not a passive experience, but demands certain actions from participants. Herrera (2018, 20), for example, comments on how he experienced an aggressive demand to sing, but found himself tagged as an "obvious outsider" for ignoring the lyrics, a labelling that points at the degree of cohesion that can be reached through multimodal reinforcement.

Given the competitive-to-bellicose context and strong group identities that are displayed in these kinds of scenarios, it is no surprise that much of the hostile verbal content of the chants consists of direct or indirect offenses to others: gays, women, or ethnic minorities, even if the majority of participants do not consciously share in the literal meanings of those offenses. In contrast to claims that "to act in concert does not mean to act in conformity" (Butler 2015, 157), active participation in a performance that goes against one's values creates a cognitive dissonance that requires resolution. Music seems to provide mechanisms conducive to acceptance of behaviors that would, without the "world of sense," be rejected: "chants, constantly repeated in what seems like a mundane activity, erode notions that people might hold right" (Herrera 2018, 35). I add, however, that beyond the "moving-and -sounding-in-synchrony," this effect is the result of the immersive and totalizing experience of a whole set of multimodal signifying materials that reinforce related content in a way that is shared—and actively performed—by a community.

In every intermodal experience, some modes are more relevant in articulating different meanings around a semantic field of related content than others. A research project conducted at the Universidad Javeriana in Bogotá compared the role of music in multimodal reinforcement experiences in three different religious rituals: a Catholic mass, a Pentecostal cult, and a Muslim prayer (Hernández et al., forthcoming). Verbal content was clearly the most important mode in the Muslim prayer and the Catholic mass, while non-verbal sounds were of central importance in the Pentecostal cult. Although each rite included a sermon, in the latter the very structure of the rite was determined by three contrasting musical sections that correlated with the emotional response of participants as measured with an EEG (electroencephalography) device. Intercalated among the musical parts, the prayers showed a progressive pattern in which clapping, praying, screaming, and the vocal tone of the pastor formed a series of *crescendi* that were perfectly aligned with the verbal imperative of "surrender to a superior power" and with the emotions expressed immediately thereafter by music. The distribution of architectural elements in space

contributed to reinforce this message, since the white and blue lighting of the area around the altar, where the band was playing, contrasted with the dark red section where the parishioners were located. Both the sonic syntax and the visual content reinforced the idea of "delivery," thus producing an immersive narrative that correlated with the behavior exhibited by the participants: closed eyes, raised arms, crying, and screaming.

These types of correlations between emotional response and performance components, including music, were not found in the Muslim and Catholic rituals, in which structures are predetermined by rules of long-lasting traditions that give a special prominence to verbal content. Assistants in the mosque wore Arab-style clothes, the walls had fragments of the Koran and photos of Mecca and Medina, and both the sermon and the Koranic recitations were made in Arabic, creating linguistic barriers. Nevertheless, there was no such thing as musical sections that could provide an emotional narrative. The only music present was that of the recitations, the meanings of which were subordinate to the semantic content of the verses. This was evident because the emotional valence of the participants decreased when the verbal discourse referred to negative concepts, such as anger and death, but it was not affected by the melodic fluctuations of the recitation.

The Catholic mass, on the other hand, was celebrated in a Baroque-style church and all the music was played in a synthesizer by one musician. There was a great variety of genres including dance music such as waltz, and salsa, but there was no dancing at all. The corporeal behavior of the more than 1000 participants did not seem to be affected by the sonic environment and only responded in a synchronized way to learned formulas that are expected in this kind of ritual. In this predictable setting, there were more than a dozen short musical interventions, which seemed isolated and did not create an expressive syntax capable of provoking coordinated emotional responses in the listeners.

Conclusion

Intermodal reinforcement can be used to highlight related contents, re-enact associated values and behaviors, and establish priorities for action in a way that seems natural and even necessary for participants. Music is only one of many elements that can be a part of such reinforcement, but it contributes unique syntactic and semantic traits. In soccer games, the non-verbal musical sound of the *en-mass* chanted slogans conveys a sense of energy and enthusiasm. Within this kind of experiences, music seems to provide a sense of emotional cohesion to contents, cardinal for the effectiveness of a world of sense: its ability to express emotions and to prime the emotional qualities of related information makes it a powerful tool for channeling thymo-political agendas.[8] In the case of the Pentecostal cult, for example, the use of pop ballads in combination with praise lyrics seems to be especially effective for reinforcing the idea of total self-immersion that is constantly being expressed in verbal discourse and physical gestures.

All the examples analyzed consist of live, situated experiences in which participants have direct contact with different signifying materials. However, a similar reinforcement effect can be achieved by a sum of perceptions and information obtained in different moments and through different channels, that can be actualized in later experiences. In other words, music signification is a process that relies largely on situated conceptualizations; that is, lived experiences that associate sounds with different types of contents. These experiences can be immediate and simultaneous, or mediated and deferred in time. The point is that music associated with a semantic field can be important for its actualization in a thymo-political experience, creating a world in which the dominant thoughts, values, and actions of a majority are transformed into facts beyond question.

Notes

1 This apparent reluctance to study the relation between power and musical sound (in its non-verbal form) in sociology of music and popular music studies, may be attributed, at least partially, to some of the criticism of Adorno's work that has been developed in the last decades. For a further discussion, see Hernández (2012, 2016).

2 It is by no means a coincidence that Richard Thaler was recently awarded the Nobel prize for Economics after explaining how economy can be improved by nudging people to make "better choices" without forcing specific outcomes (2012, 428).

3 Nowadays, Muzak has changed its name to Mood Media. The first sentence one can see at entering their web page is: "We put people in the mood to buy," and they promise to do so by using not only sound, but sight and scent in order to "inspire" and "create a more memorable experience." See https://us.moodmedia.com/(accessed December 12, 2018).

4 The term Noo-politics comes from "nous," the Aristotelian higher part of the soul: the intellect (Lazzarato 2006, 93). Noo-politics refers to the control of intellect through telematics devices that affect memory and attention.

5 From this point of view, words like sorrow, sadness, joy and happiness correspond to feelings, instead of emotions, because those states are not limited to an automated response, but imply complex processes that have an impact on memory and attention.

6 By September 2015 mass-media celebrated a study by Jacob Jolij (University of Missouri) that declared Queen's "Don't Stop Me Now" as the happiest song ever. This shows how easy it is in mass-media culture to accept certain musical elements as markers of universal emotional expression.

7 It is important to bear in mind that situated conceptualizations are not limited to external perceptual information, but also include simulations of internal states, such as (for the case of a bicycle) "effort, happiness, the goal to reach a destination, planning a route and motivation to push ahead at maximum speed" (Barsalou 2009, 1283).

8 The positive valence of San Lorenzo's chants could explain, for example, why it is so easy for fans to minimize the meaning of offenses towards women, gays or ethnic minorities that are so evident in the lyrics.

20

READING MEANING IN AND OUT OF MUSIC FROM THERESIENSTADT

The case of Pavel Haas

Martin Čurda

Scholars, performers, and audiences continue to be fascinated by the music composed in the Nazi concentration camp/ghetto of Terezín, better known under its German name Theresienstadt. Between 1941 and 1945, this eighteenth-century fortress, comprising what was originally a garrison town, became a place in which Jewish people from the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia (and other Nazi-occupied territories) were imprisoned, before being transported to extermination camps, such as Auschwitz (Adler [1955] 2016).

Theresienstadt is well known for the remarkable concentration of elite musicians, artists, and intellectuals among the inmates, and for the vibrant cultural life that developed there, despite atrocious living conditions and constant threat of deportation. Cultural activities began as clandestine in the early days of the camp's existence. However, after the Nazis established the Council of Elders as a form of Jewish self-government within the ghetto in July 1942, cultural events were legitimately organized through the institution set up to manage "leisure activities" ("Freizeitgestaltung") (Nemtsov and Schröder-Nauenburg 1998, 25; Kuna 2000, 15). The apparent benevolence of the Nazis was in fact part of the cynical propaganda campaign. Claiming that Jews were being merely resettled (not imprisoned and systematically killed), the Nazis sought to showcase Theresienstadt as a "model settlement" ("Mustersiedlung") and prove that the Jews were treated well by the Nazi regime (Kuna 2000, 16).

This charade culminated during the inspection of Theresienstadt by the International Committee of the Red Cross in June 1944. Extensive "beautification" works had been ordered in specific parts of the ghetto (those to be visited by the committee) prior to the visit and several musical events were scheduled to take place on the day, including the performance of Verdi's *Requiem*, Krása's children's opera *Brundibár*, and an outdoor concert of popular orchestral music (Kuna 2000, 17–19). The Nazis also used this carefully constructed Potemkin Village to shoot the infamous propaganda film titled, significantly, *Der Führer schenkt den Juden eine Stadt* (*The Führer Gives a City to the Jews*; Prager 2008).[1] After this, the Nazis had no more use for the artists, most of whom were transported to Auschwitz and killed between September and October 1944 (Kuna 2000, 19–20).

This historical context raises pressing questions concerning the significance of the surviving works from Theresienstadt and poses serious challenges to those who try to answer them. Dealing with questions of meaning in music is notoriously difficult in any case, but in the context of the Holocaust, it becomes further complicated by ethical and ideological problems. Personally, I have always felt deeply uneasy when discussing works composed in Theresienstadt. On the one hand, I am compelled by ethics, compassion, and piety to understand this music as a kind of testimony of the composers' suffering. On the other hand, I am aware of the intricacies of interpreting meaning in music and I see it as a matter of my academic integrity to avoid drawing superficial parallels between life and work.

Of course, biographical interpretations of music are by no means limited to music from Theresienstadt, but there seems to be more at stake here. To claim that Beethoven's late quartets have nothing to do with the composer's personal ordeal is a respectable aesthetic stance, but to insist that the late works of Haas, Klein, Krása, and Ullmann have nothing to do with their experience as prisoners in Theresienstadt might be perceived in terms of denial, cynicism, and blasphemy. In general, the idea of the aesthetic autonomy of art is problematic, but in the context of "Holocaust art" (art created in the camps by the inmates) it seems utterly unsustainable. If, as Adorno suggested, "to write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric," it seems similarly barbaric to regard "Holocaust art" as art, rather than as a document of the horrors of the Holocaust (Adorno [1951] 2003, 162; Hofmann 2005).

In the title of his article on Gideon Klein's Trio, Michael Beckerman asks the question: "What kind of historical document is a musical score?" (Beckerman 2010). Of course, there is no easy answer. To begin, we need to specify what exactly is meant by "a musical score." First, there is a musical score as a physical artefact, i.e., a piece of paper with musical signs (notation), which may be accompanied by verbal and/or numerical signs. Second, there are the physical properties of the paper (such as worn edges) and the graphological features of the handwriting, in cases where the score inspected is a manuscript, may offer valuable historiographical insights.

When we start reading, we notice that some of the verbal signs (such as lyrics and expressive markings) are part of "the music," whereas others (such as dating and marginal notes on weather and the like) are not. Significantly, we treat both groups differently. The "extra-musical" signs will be expected to refer (in the manner of newspaper reports) directly and truthfully to the corresponding objects, persons, events, and concepts existing "out there" in historical reality. The same is not expected of signs that constitute part of the musical text.

Thus, my answer to Beckerman's question would be as follows: insofar as historical inquiry is concerned with objectively verifiable facts about the world out there, the musical score is a historical document, but the music is not. By "the music," I mean the musical (musical-*cum*-literary) text, a complex of signs organized according to principles particular to the artistic medium and constituting a closed work, which, as a composite sign, has an oblique relationship with the world beyond itself, a relationship which must be interpreted by the recipient. The approach to be taken is not historiographic, but hermeneutic. Before we can assess the relationship between a piece of art and the circumstances in which it was created, we must turn our attention to the problems of its coding and decoding. This will require not only information about historical, social, and cultural contexts, but also the knowledge of the specific language of the particular artistic medium (its syntactic principles, styles, genres, and so on) and the idiom of the individual artist.

The aim of this essay is to critically review the methodological and discursive strategies of interpreting music from Theresienstadt, focusing specifically on the case of Pavel Haas

(1899–1944). Along with Viktor Ullmann, Hans Krása, and Gideon Klein, Pavel Haas has been firmly established in the wider consciousness as one of the "Theresienstadt composers." This label tends to obscure the individual profiles of the artists, who were rooted (prior to their incarceration) in very different backgrounds in terms of age, cultural affiliations, compositional schools, professional networks, and so on (see Nemtsov and Schröder-Nauenburg 1998, 35). Musical compositions from Theresienstadt are rarely analyzed with respect to a particular composer's earlier works or to the broader tradition of Western art music. This is partly an issue of finding a suitable genre of academic writing. "Life-and-work" monographs typically lack sufficient focus to present in-depth readings of specific works (Peduzzi 1993; Slavický 1996; Červinková 2003; Schultz 2008), while studies attempting to cover the music in Theresienstadt in its relative entirety cannot pay enough attention to the individual artists' various pre-war affiliations (Karas 1985; Kuna 2000). Critical discourse thus runs the risk of unconsciously perpetuating the group identity inflicted upon individual artists by their Nazi oppressors.

Interpretations of works from Theresienstadt tend to be biased by pre-conceived ideas, such as spiritual resistance, which has, in fact, dominated much of the discourse on music in the Holocaust (Gilbert 2005, 1–20).[2] Of course, spiritual resistance is not an invalid concept, but it should be used with caution. It has strong ethical and ideological connotations, and it comes with the assumption that the population of the camps was homogeneous, unified in a heroic struggle against the oppressors. Artists and works that do not fit this narrative tend to be marginalized—or even dismissed—as somehow ethically deficient.

This type of rhetoric has been used as a polemic regarding questions of leadership and influence among the composers in Theresienstadt—an issue that concerned Haas (Peduzzi 1999a). In his article "Terezínské legendy a skutečnosti" (Legends and Facts about Theresienstadt), Haas's biographer Lubomír Peduzzi took issue with the way in which Haas was portrayed by Joža Karas in his seminal book *Music in Terezín* (Peduzzi 1999b). Karas referred specifically to the following:

> As a moving spirit behind the musical activities in Terezín, Klein has to his credit the emergence of another prominent composer, Pavel Haas. A man in his forties, Haas came to Terezín with undermined health. The miserable conditions there further affected his severe depressions, resulting in total indifference to the very busy musical life of Terezín. According to his [Klein's] sister, Eliška (Lisa), Gideon Klein could not reconcile himself to seeing an artist of Haas's calibre not participating in the musical activities. So, one day, to wake him from his lethargy, Klein put in front of him several sheets of manuscript paper, on which he himself drew the musical staff, and urged Haas to stop wasting time. And indeed, Haas composed several pieces during his stay in Terezín, although only three of them have been preserved.
>
> *(Karas 1985, 76)*

This anecdote is seemingly innocuous and there are few obvious reasons to doubt its validity. As Peduzzi himself pointed out, Haas had long-term health problems, he was forced to leave his family with two small children (his daughter and his nephew), and he later saw his father die in the camp.[3] Peduzzi's criticism, however, was concerned primarily with the way this story was used in academic and critical discourse to raise the profile of Gideon Klein. An eloquent example can be found in the otherwise insightful articles on Klein by Robin Freeman (2005, 2006). Referring directly to the anecdote related by Karas,

Freeman takes every opportunity to contrast Klein's "active and supportive" approach to others with Haas's "yearning to go home" (Freeman 2006, 39). Ultimately, he goes further, from insisting that Klein encouraged Haas to compose, to claiming that Klein influenced what Haas composed:

> The Study for string orchestra by Pavel Haas, such exceptional stuff from him, is inconceivable in style without the Allegro vivace [recte: Molto vivace] of the Klein Trio. Even the tripping lightness of the counterpoint seems to follow on from the younger man, who gave him back his taste for writing music when he had all but given up.
>
> *(Freeman 2005, 18)*[4]

Unsurprisingly, Peduzzi criticized the "myth about a 'broken composer'"—and he used the rhetoric of spiritual resistance to do so (Peduzzi 1999b, 46–47).[5] To demonstrate that Haas (too) made an effort to raise the spirits among the community of inmates, Peduzzi invoked the text of Haas's male choral work *Al s'fod*, which he contrasted (with a degree of sarcasm) with Klein's madrigals on Hölderlin's texts:

> I wonder how much consolation and strength G. Klein gave his fellow prisoners with his madrigals, particularly the one which sets the following text by Hölderlin: "Ich bin nichts mehr, ich lebe nicht mehr gerne" (1943)? Such subjective, morbid moods may have […] been experienced by many Theresienstadt prisoners, but I question if the inmates needed to hear this kind of thing or whether they were waiting for a word of encouragement, provided for example by Haas's choir *Al s'fod*: "Do not lament and do not cry when times are bad! Do not despair, but work, work! Thrust a path to freedom and pave it for a bright day!" (1942) Such was Haas in Theresienstadt: determined, not reconciled with the reality but unbroken, [retaining] the fighting spirit he showed in the *Suite for Oboe* [*and Piano*] and the *Symphony*, in which he reacted through his art (as early as 1939–41) against the [Nazi] occupation of our country, their war against Poland and France, and their attack on the Soviet Union.
>
> *(Peduzzi 1999b, 47)*[6]

Peduzzi's argument is based entirely on the positive value attached to the notion of spiritual resistance through art. Klein, whose work does not conform to the idea (at least not on the surface), is criticized on ethical and ideological grounds.

Peduzzi's choice of Haas's works is telling. Significantly, there is no mention of Haas's *Four Songs on Chinese Poetry*, which possess neither the defiant spirit of the earlier works (composed before the composer's deportation to Theresienstadt), nor the beneficial social function of *Al s'fod*. Rather, they convey feelings of grief and melancholy. Perhaps fearing that the *Four Songs* might be seen as containing too much of those "subjective and morbid moods" which supposedly betray deficiency of character, Peduzzi elsewhere directed attention to the work's "optimistic" ending and to the references to the Hymn to St. Wenceslas (the patron saint of the Czech nation), through which he wished to link this work to the patriotic and defiant spirit of the *Suite for Oboe and Piano* (1939) and the *Symphony* (1940–41) (Peduzzi 1959, 1963, 85–88).

Much has been written about the four-note ostinato underpinning the first and third of Haas's *Four Songs on Chinese Poetry*. Most commentators agree with Peduzzi that this is

a symbolic reference to the Wenceslas chorale (see, for example, Karbusický 1997; Beckerman 2017, 391). Indeed, the motive corresponds with the four notes underpinning the word "*Václave*" (Wenceslas!) in the hymn. Moreover, the opening line of the poem ("*Domov je tam*" [My home is there]) can be seen as a reference to the incipit of the Czech national anthem ("*Kde domov můj?*" [Where is my home?]). The idea seems compelling, but what are its implications for the interpretation of the work? Does it prove that Haas retained, as Peduzzi suggested, "the fighting spirit he showed in the *Suite for Oboe [and Piano*] and the *Symphony*"?

I believe that this claim is misleading. The *Four Songs* may contain a Wenceslas reference, but it is rather subdued compared to the full-length quotations found in the previous works, both of which also contain allusions to the Hussite chorale "You Who Are the Warriors of God". The song cycle also contains none of the topical allusions to religious chant and the military, used in the *Symphony* to portray (in accord with the popular legend) the twofold role of St. Wenceslas as a saint and a warrior (for a discussion of *Symphony* see Čurda 2020). The patriotic elements, most likely, were suppressed as a result of censorship in Theresienstadt, but even this explanation is not satisfactory. The Wenceslas reference could hardly be regarded as a secret subversive code, especially given its subtlety. The *Four Songs* are different in essence (qualitatively, not quantitatively) from Haas's earlier patriotic works. They contain an intimately personal and profoundly human reflection on the themes of loss, suffering, and hope. Furthermore, there may not be a Wenceslas reference in this work at all. It has become a bit of a cliché to seek Wenceslas allusions in Haas's music (what Beckerman has aptly called "*Svatý Václave* hunting").[7] It is hard to pass a definitive judgement in the case of *Four Songs*, but I agree with Beckerman that there is no Wenceslas quotation in *Al s'fod*.[8]

A number of more or less plausible suggestions can be made about potential thematic or motivic allusions concealed in the four-note ostinato. Associations with death seem to be particularly popular among commentators. The motive has been related to the repetitive four-note motive in the duet of Harlequin and Death in Ullmann's opera *Der Kaiser von Atlantis* (Karbusický 1997, 152), to the opening "cross" motive of Dvořák's *Requiem* (Ibid.), and to the plainchant melody of *Dies Irae* (Debenham 2016, 71–72). Yet another parallel could be suggested with the four-note ostinato underpinning the "Idylle" from Erik Satie's 1915 *Avant-dernières pensées* (*Penultimate Thoughts*). In this piece, there are fragments of an inner monologue (such as "my heart is cold in the back" and "the moon is on bad terms with its neighbors") inscribed between the piano staves throughout the piece.

It would be misleading, however, to assume that the significance of a particular motive necessarily resides solely in a reference to another composition. Such an approach would easily produce simplistic results: for instance, because Haas alluded to Satie's *Idylle* in order to communicate the dark, anxious feelings ("my heart is cold") he experienced during what he suspected to be the penultimate days of his life. Allusions, quotations, and other intertextual references constitute only one means of music signification; a wide range of hermeneutic strategies can be used to analyze the repertoire in a more nuanced way: the theories of markedness and correlation, gesture and agency, musical topics, semantic ambiguity, musical narrative, intertextuality, and so on.[9] Unfortunately, such methodologies are almost completely absent from the existing literature on the issue.

Since a detailed analysis of Haas's *Four Songs* cannot be undertaken here, I turn to the issue of the cycle's "optimistic" ending. One of the most striking features of the cycle as a whole is the alternation of seemingly incongruous moods (see the detailed analysis in Čurda, forthcoming, chp. 6). The odd-numbered songs are melancholic and permeated by the above-

discussed four-note ostinato. The second song, however, is cheerful, featuring a dance-like ostinato and a tuneful melody associated with carefree whistling in the text. The return of these motivic features and the lifted spirit in the latter part of the last song (which becomes gradually transformed from sadness to joy) has been interpreted by Peduzzi as the work's "optimistic" conclusion (Peduzzi 1963, 85). Karbusický even associated the ending with the vision of liberation:

> The concluding song offers a suitable opportunity for the [expression of] hope for reunion. The vision of freedom transforms the anxious mood into an expression of joy. […] The "la la la la … " singing suggests an almost childish joy at the prospect of returning home. At the same time, the defiant whistling […] emerges once again, completing […] the image of rejoicing in regained freedom […].
> *(1997, 164)*

And yet, the euphoric spirit of the conclusion is hard to reconcile with the melancholic atmosphere that dominates the cycle (with the exception of the second song). One would almost expect to find some clues in Haas's music suggesting the presence of dark undertones lurking under the joyful surface, but the search for such subversive elements of grotesque distortion or ironic subversion is inconclusive. The "la la la" singing is not "childish" enough to create an ironic distance.

What is the significance of the oscillation between contrasting moods (melancholy—joy—melancholy—melancholy/joy) throughout the cycle? Karbusický's answer to this question is that the "mutual relationship between Haas's four songs corresponds with the sonata cycle," specifically with its nineteenth-century version in which "the lyrical movement only came after a scherzo, so that the finale could even more dramatically deploy the fanfares of the promised and successfully achieved victory" (1997, 163–64). The model of the sonata cycle comes with hermeneutic assumptions rooted in the nineteenth-century tradition: the "heroic" construal of sonata form and the identification of the artist with the hero. This paradigm may be appropriate for Smetana's "autobiographical" quartet "Z Mého Života" [From My Life] (suggested by Karbusický 1997, 163–64), which supposedly reflects the composer's struggle with deafness and deteriorating health, but it cannot be extended to Haas's *Four Songs* without a considerable degree of distortion.

I contend that the notion of a linear, teleological narrative leading from conflict to resolution is fundamentally incompatible with the conceptual basis of Haas's song cycle, which is characterized by the dominance of circular motion, repetition, and stasis. This revised reading is already apparent in the repetitive four-note ostinato, as Karbusický himself observed when he related Haas's four-note motive to Ullmann's four-note motive, associated with the words "*Tage*, *Tage*" (Days, Days). In both works, he argued, that the circular, repetitive motion symbolizes the "hopelessness of life in Theresienstadt, absurdly running in circles" (Karbusický 1997, 152).

Thus, I argue that the succession of the songs does not portray a linear trajectory from darkness to light, but rather a cyclical oscillation between darkness and light (and the correlated binary oppositions, such as night/day, melancholy/joy, death/life, and so on). The fact that the sequence ends at a life-affirming moment should not be mistaken for any kind of teleological resolution or victory. The semblance of cyclical closure, which results from the return of thematic material from the second song in the fourth song, is "canceled out" by an analogous motivic correspondence between the first and the third song. The whole is thus not only balanced, but also potentially open-ended.

Midway through his article, Karbusický briefly deviates from his main line of argumentation predicated on teleology and makes a point in which he recognizes the cyclic nature of Haas's composition. He suggests that Haas's work conveys the sense of "consolation in the anthropological constants of existence" and invokes the following passage from the Book of Ecclesiastes to illustrate the idea: "What has been, is what is meant to be [or will be]; what is meant to be, has already been. There is nothing new under the sun, since the God renews what has passed" (Karbusický 1997, 153). Thus, if there is any redemptive message in the concluding section of the *Four Songs* (beyond the immediate joy of the moment), its core is not the promise of resolution and victory, but the acceptance of a philosophical view which enables one to embrace reality in all its ambiguity, and it thus helps to shift focus from the vicious circle of frustrated individual agency towards the life-affirming cosmic cycle of perpetual transformation. Haas's songs from Theresienstadt convey both the despair of "death in the middle of life" and the joy of "life amidst death."

The literary text set by Haas in *Al s'fod* and the *Four Songs* makes it relatively easy to see the relevance of these works to the experiences of the ghetto's inhabitants (as a community and as individuals). The contextual interpretation of instrumental music involves additional challenges. Composed for an orchestra of inmates directed by Karel Ančerl (Peduzzi 1993, 111), Haas's *Study for Strings* arguably performed a similar social function as *Al s'fod*; the very experience of collective music making undoubtedly somewhat relieved the pressure of imprisonment. As a piece of instrumental music, however, the *Study* could not carry an equally straightforward message for the members of the community.

Haas was perfectly capable, as his war-time *Symphony* demonstrates, of writing instrumental music that conveys the sense of patriotism, quasi-religious hope, and subversive satire. In the case of the *Study*, however, he wrote a piece of "objective," "absolute" music. In fact, of all Haas's works, *Study for Strings* is the most representative surviving example of the composer's engagement with neoclassical aesthetics, which favors objective construction and "pure" music over subjective expression and "extra-musical" meaning. The composition is characterized by rational design (apparent from systematic manipulation of metro-rhythmic parameters and tightly controlled overall formal proportion), "anti-sentimental" motoric drive (resulting from polyrhythmic and polymetric combinations of repetitive motivic fragments), and the use of old-style contrapuntal techniques that hark back to the Baroque tradition (the work includes fugal sections and passages with hymn-like cantus firmus).

In what way, if at all, does this rationally constructed, neoclassical composition reflect the circumstances of those imprisoned in the ghetto? There is an unmistakable allusion to Moravian folk music in the dance-like theme, written in Lydian modality. This, in my opinion, is neither a patriotic reference to "home" nor an evocation of a pastoral idyll, but rather a popular ingredient contrasting with the serious contrapuntal style of the preceding fugue. The most striking feature of the whole work is the contrast between the outer sections, characterized by vigorous rhythmic drive, and the slow middle section, marked by a sudden and unexpected cessation of rhythmic activity.

It is pertinent here to invoke Beckerman's view on the significance of "middle" sections of musical compositions. Referring specifically to works by Gideon Klein composed in Theresienstadt, he writes:

> I have become a great believer in middles … [W]hat is placed in the middle is often what the thing is really about. It is the secret that … is too valuable, too delicate, too

> dangerous, or too dependent to touch the real world. So in middles we find … confessions, erotic tensions, funeral marches, the unaccountable, the delicate and the inscrutable; expression writ large.
>
> *(Beckerman 2009, 28–29)*

Beckerman's approach to music from Theresienstadt is based largely on the premise of "censoring environment" in the camp, which forced the composers to maintain a certain "façade" while incorporating secret subversive "codes" into their works (Beckerman 2013a, 35–36). The purpose of this strategy, according to Beckerman, was to expose the falsehood of Nazi propaganda, which shamelessly put forward the image of Theresienstadt as a model ghetto. This argument is especially compelling in the case of *Study for Strings*, since a fake performance of the composition is featured in the above-discussed Nazi propaganda film.

There is no evidence, however, to suggest that Haas could have known, while composing *Study*, that the work would be misused by Nazi propaganda. Moreover, I suspect that "intimate" middle sections such as those described by Beckerman can be found throughout the repertoire of Western art music; they are hardly particular to works from Theresienstadt (although they may carry particular significance in this context). In fact, there are a number of instances in Haas's own pre-war music of subjective, contemplative, lyrical episodes being inserted between more exuberant, dynamic, or even humorous sections.

For example, the final movement ("The Wild Night") of Haas's early String Quartet no. 2 "Z opičích hor" (From the Monkey Mountains [1925]) paints a musical image of a dizzying carnivalesque rave, which is temporarily suspended at one point, giving way to an incongruous dream-like, lyrical episode, quoting a love song that the composer had once dedicated to a beloved girl (Čurda 2016). Similarly, in his 1935 *Suite for Piano*, Haas inserted a "Pastorale" between two energetic, dance-like movements, producing a whole cluster of binary oppositions: the ancient, rural, and religious connotations of "Pastorale" contrast with the modern, urban associations evoked by the ragtime-influenced, jazzy idiom of the surrounding "Danza" and "Postludium." In both of these cases, moments associated with nostalgic reminiscence and subjectivity are confined within interpolated musical episodes.

There is a precedent for a similar drop in rhythmic activity in the first movement ("Landscape") of Haas's "Monkey Mountains" string quartet. The momentum suddenly drops in the middle section and is resumed in the final section. Significantly, the resulting dynamic trajectory, which follows the pattern "escalation–repose–finale," is also replicated on a large scale in the succession of the four movements of the composition. In fact, the material of the middle section of "Landscape" (the small-scale repose) returns in the quartet's slow third movement (the large-scale repose) entitled "The Moon and I." It is also noteworthy that the slow sections in "Landscape" and in *Study* are both marked by an iambic rhythmic pattern, which the composer associated with the "warm song of the human heart" in his published commentary on the quartet (Haas 1926, 106).

Beckerman suggests that there is "a chilling similarity" between the middle section of *Study* and the so-called "Windmill Scene" from Haas's opera *Charlatan* (1934–37), a nocturnal, horror-like episode associated with war, violence, madness, and death (Beckerman 2013a, 35). The resemblance is not motivic, but rather topical: both are instances of a kind of nocturnal music, associated with stillness, darkness, and dysphoric mood. In *Charlatan*, the "Windmill Scene" contrasts with the preceding daytime scenes, which show the fairground performances of the title character (a seventeenth-century quack doctor). The neoclassical musical idiom of *Study* is very close to the quasi-historical "fairground" music from *Charlatan*, while its contrasting middle section is similar to the

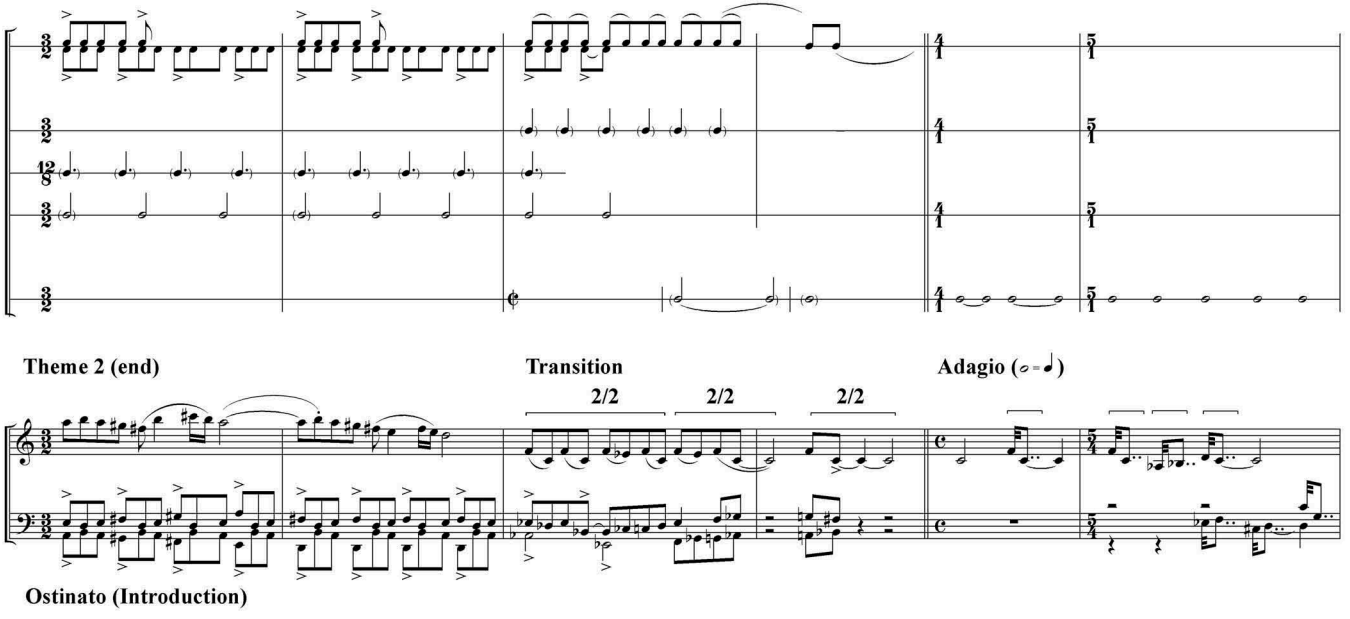
"Windmill Scene" in the use of slow-moving, repetitive music characterized by densely chromatic voice-leading within a claustrophobically narrow pitch-range.

Further insight can be gained from the analytical investigation of the role of the Adagio in the compositional design of *Study*. As a student of Leoš Janáček, Haas developed a compositional language characterized by the use of ostinati, fragmentary thematic materials, and layered textures consisting of superimposed rhythmic and melodic patterns. Haas drew on Janáček's theory of *sčasování* (noun, adj. *sčasovací*); the term is derived from the root "čas" (time) and designates compositional processes concerning rhythm and meter (Burghauser 1984–85, 138). An important part of this theory is the notion of "rhythmic layers," based on a hierarchical model of rhythmic and metric relationships, in which the "*sčasovací* base" (defined by Beckerman as "fundamental temporal unit") functions as a common denominator, from which "higher" rhythmic layers are derived through subdivision, for example: one whole-note (base) = two half-notes (first layer) = four quarter notes (second layer) = eight eighth notes (third layer), and so on (Beckerman 1994, 82). In some of Haas's instrumental works, rhythmic procedures play a crucial role in the formal design. The overall form of "Landscape," for example, is delineated largely by changes of the underlying ostinato patterns, and the accumulation of rhythmic energy in its first part is achieved by diminution of rhythmic values and superimposition of ostinato layers.

The compositional design of *Study for Strings* is based on a more systematic application of the same principle. The composition begins with an eighth-note ostinato, marked by a slight metric ambivalence between $\frac{3}{4}$ (2+2+2) and $\frac{6}{8}$ (3+3), which soon prevails. The first theme (starting m. 17) unfolds in groups of three quarter notes (in $\frac{3}{4}$) on its first presentation, but it is later (m. 47) repeated in $\frac{4}{4}$. The second, developmental section of the piece, is conceived as a fugue (starting m. 60), which enables rhythmic and metric reconfiguration and textural superimposition of thematic material. Diminution (m. 101) and augmentation (m. 104) of the theme may be regarded in terms of its "transposition" from the original quarter-note layer to the higher eighth-note layer, and the lower half-note layer, respectively. The fugue culminates with the superimposition of the theme's original, diminished, and augmented form in a contrapuntal texture (mm. 104–25). At this point, a number of rhythmic layers are simultaneously "activated"; the whole structure of *sčasování* thus becomes "energized."

Having achieved its climax in the dance-like Lydian theme (starting m. 120), the work's rhythmic energy suddenly drops to near zero. In the following Adagio (m. 143), the "higher" rhythmic layers become extinguished (see Example 20.1). All that remains is the iambic pulse, marking the beginning of each whole-note beat—the lowest, fundamental rhythmic level (whole notes are notated as quarter notes throughout the Adagio).[10] This reduction of the movement's "rhythmic life" to its bare essence, the elementary "heart-beat" brings to mind the existential polarity between life and death, suggesting a state on the edge of survival.

The Adagio ends with the return of the fugal subject (m. 160). There is a strong sense of agency, even physical labor, in the way the movement struggles to resume its previous rhythmic activity one layer at a time. This process begins in measure 157 with the incomplete iteration of the fugal subject: the four accentuated half notes (notated as eighth notes) of the theme's head, marked molto espressivo and moving in dissonant chromatic parallels, appear as four heavy, painful steps, through which the layer of half notes is established. Having lifted the music from the whole note stillness of the Adagio, the theme subsequently undergoes gradual rhythmic diminution. Eventually, the lost momentum is re-established, producing a sense of transcendence: resembling a cantus firmus, a new theme unfolds in long values on top of



Example 20.1 Pavel Haas, *Studie pro smyčcový orchestr* (*Study for Strings*), 1943 (Berlin: Bote & Bock; Prague: Tempo Praha, completed and revised by Lubomír Peduzzi 1991), mm. 139–44

a vibrant ostinato texture that activates all rhythmic layers, from eighth notes to whole notes (m. 201). Finally, the accumulated momentum is discharged with the return of the dance-like Lydian theme and the concluding coda (Figure 20.1).

This process of "re-conquering" rhythmic layers is, I believe, what the Theresienstadt survivor Thomas Herbert Mandl referred to in the following commentary:

> I learned something about the kind of person Pavel Haas was when I played violin in Karel Ančerl's Symphonic String Orchestra at the performances of Haas's *Study for String Orchestra*. It suddenly became clear to me that not only was Haas a gifted master of melody and rhythm, that his personality was informed by a will to conquer and overcome ["sieghafte Wille"] (especially apparent in the theme of the fugue) and that it was this that helped him to triumph over the degrading conditions of his internment.
>
> *(Mandl 1999; translation in Debenham 2016, 83)*

Mandl's testimony taps into some of the crucial questions concerning *Study*. Did he read meaning *out of* the musical structure, or did he read meaning *into* it? Or did he strike a happy balance between the two? Is *Study* an encrypted historical document, concealing subversive codes under its neoclassical façade, or is it "merely" a brilliant piece of compositional craft and musicianship—"pure music"? Or is there a third option somewhere in the middle?

I do not believe that Mandl broke a secret code; he did what all people are psychologically conditioned to do: interpret patterns of movement of an abstract, inanimate object (the musical structure unfolding in time) as if they were intentional behavioral actions of an animate, anthropomorphic agent (whom Mandl identified with the composer). My original interpretation was based on an analysis of metro-rhythmic (*sčasovácí*) processes, proving the capacity of purely musical structures to carry profound meaning.

Whether or not *Study*, as a work of art, was intended to function as a sign for something beyond itself (i.e., beyond the musical structure), it is highly likely to be perceived as such and interpreted from various positions. There are three points to bear in mind. First, this is a kind of sign which aspires to a comparatively high degree of autonomy in that it draws a great deal of attention to itself, to the way it is crafted, to the compositional structure. To disregard this would be to miss the point (or a significant part of it, anyway). Second, there is no single, definitive interpretation of this sign. The danger of the popular belief in secret

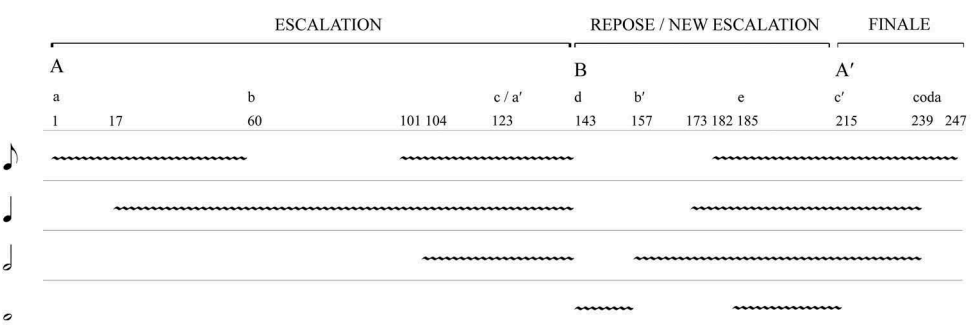


Figure 20.1 Rhythm and Form in *Study for Strings*

codes hidden under the façade of music from Theresienstadt is that it implies the existence of a definitive, "true" meaning, which is expected to be revealed once the code is broken. Third, we need to be aware of and honest about the assumptions and expectations with which we approach these works. If we have too good of an idea of what "the truth" should look like, we will not stop until we find it, even if inventing the code is what it takes.

Let me conclude with a paraphrase of Beckerman's opening question: is a musical score required to be a historical document? In a recent paper, he argued that all "music created in or around the camps" belongs to a "grey zone" and that everyone who enters this troubled realm is bound to grapple with this irresolvable dilemma (Beckerman 2020).

No approach is unambiguously right, but some approaches are less wrong than others. It should not be forgotten that art with the adjective "Holocaust" is still primarily art—a medium which is governed by its own laws of signification and which requires specific strategies of interpretation. It may reflect specific historically and autobiographically significant events, but it cannot be reduced to a chronicle-like record of these events. We have to examine this art on its own terms if we are to understand and appreciate its intrinsic aesthetic value and the true nature of its relationship to the circumstances in which it was composed. This approach is the only way to mediate between the two extremes which are equally unacceptable: to disregard the historical context, which would be disrespectful to the composers as victims of Nazism, or to take a reductive approach, which would be disrespectful to the composers as artists.

Notes

1 The film excerpt of this performance is on www.youtube.com/watch?v=E9gSzo0x4ak [accessed November 7, 2018].
2 The Introduction to Gilbert's book is titled "Redeeming Music—'Spiritual Resistance' and Beyond." The relevance of this notion to music in Terezín is obvious from the title of Milan Kuna's above-cited monograph: *Hudba vzdoru a naděje* (*Music of Resistance and Hope*).
3 Elsewhere, Peduzzi quoted the following testimony of Richard Kozderka (Haas's friend from Brno): "In the final years of his life, Pavel Haas was very sad, pale in the expectation of horrors [to come]" (Peduzzi 1993, 12).
4 According to Beckerman (2010), the three movements of Klein's trio are dated September 5, September 21 and October 7, 1944, respectively. Haas's *Study for Strings*, on the other hand, was performed in Terezín on September 1 and 13, 1944 and it was composed as early as 1943 (Peduzzi 1993, 109 and 133). It is therefore highly unlikely that Klein's *String Trio* could have had any influence on Haas's *Study for Strings*.
5 Peduzzi gave compelling evidence about chronological inconsistencies in the testimony of Truda Solarová, on which the above cited passage from Karas's book (itself flawed with numerous factual errors) is based. See Solarová 1965, 245.
6 All translations from the Czech are mine—M.Č.
7 Michael Beckerman, "Pavel Haas's *Al S'fod* and Performance as Ouija Board" (unpublished paper delivered at the Pavel Haas Study Day, Cardiff, January 30, 2016). I am thankful to Michael Beckerman for sharing with me his unpublished work.
8 Ibid.
9 A partial list would include Maus [1988] 1997; Hatten 1994; Cumming 1997; Sheinberg 2000; Klein 2005; Monelle 2006; Almén 2008; Mirka 2014a.
10 Note the markings in the Boosey & Hawkes score: "quarter note = whole note" in m. 143 and "eighth note = half note" in m. 160.

21

FKA TWIGS AND POPULAR MUSIC SIGNIFICATION

The challenge of fluid clarity

William Echard

From the start, popular music studies provided a home for varied theories of music signification. One reason is the field's engagement with diverse forms of cultural theory, such as critical sociology, cultural studies, ethnomusicology, and communications studies. As a result, popular music studies became good at showing how music is similar to other signifying systems, and at analyzing how this similarity enabled music to be part of broader social practices. Another, more problematic effect, is that within popular music studies it has not generally been easy to discuss the specificity of music and of musical experience. Even those popular music theorists who have sought to grant music a degree of singularity have generally avoided any form of essentialism or non-social determinism. This tension—between music's specificity and its mutual entanglement with other signifying systems—is one of many points on which popular music theory finds itself negotiating between the need to describe clear oppositions and differences, and the need to account for the ultimate fluidity and contingency of such boundaries. Other examples include the tension in Adorno's early criticism between a suspicion towards systematization and a tendency towards absolutist ideological judgements (a tension broached with notable concision in Adorno's Preface to *Negative Dialectics* [1973]), or the attempt within British cultural studies to accommodate both top-down structuralist models and studies of fandom (see, for example, the manner in which both of these themes run throughout the chapters of Hall and Jefferson [1976]).

From these particular concerns of popular music studies, a number of distinctive theories of music signification have arisen. For a contemporary researcher, it is necessary to make choices and often desirable to find commonalities between the alternative models. Each researcher will likely arrive at a somewhat distinctive synthesis, and the purpose of this essay is to describe one such hybrid model. In my research, I fuse an approach to music signification that embodies aspects of Peircean semiotics, the theory of embodied cognition, and critical theory. By describing this approach and my reasons for adopting it, I do not wish to be prescriptive; instead I address how approaches to signification in popular music studies are distinctive relative to other traditions, and offer one model for possible selection and combination of various source theories.

Early approaches to popular music signification, such as those discussed below, were broadly influenced by British cultural studies and French structural semiology, and tended to focus on developing typologies and hierarchies of musical codes and associated social

codes (for a summary see Middleton 1990, 172–76). As in many such theories, the idea of competency was central, but it was often framed sociologically to emphasize that competencies are multiple, continually negotiated, and contingent (Middleton 1990, 175). In the long run, probably the most influential theory of this type has been that of Philip Tagg (2000; Tagg and Clarida 2003). Code theories of this kind remain widely useful, partly because of their interdisciplinary nature and their ability to place music in a broader context. Over time, however, the larger structuralist ambitions that often accompanied such theories came to be discussed less and less often in popular music literature. Much of this earlier work centered on linguistic concepts—especially those engaging segmentation and distribution, paradigms and syntagma—that are no longer widely used in popular music studies (see, for example, Middleton 1990, 176–80; 183–200). Informal typologies of code are still relevant, often implicitly, but without significant theoretical elaboration.

Aside from music's involvement in general social codes, some theorists have sought to address music's unique signifying resources. Middleton, for example, argues for the idea of primary signification: modes of signification and kinds of meaning proper to music alone (1990, 220–24). This concept has been expanded by John Shepherd and Peter Wicke, who argue that "while specifically musical social processes occur in the context of wider social processes, and are informed and, indeed, partially constituted by them … these musical social processes nonetheless remain irreducible conceptually to wider social processes" (1997, 41). For Middleton, and also for Shepherd and Wicke, proper music signification is to be sought in embodied experience. Towards this end, Middleton developed a theory of gestural signification in music (1990, 225–27), and similar work has been done by Shepherd and Wicke (1997). For theories of this type, musical specificity is rooted in the coupling that occurs between musical sound and embodied experience (indexicality as realized in entrainment), and in various forms of resemblance (iconicity) between musical and other sorts of movements and gestures. In sources such as those discussed above, the cultural-theoretic implications of such a view have been developed to a considerable extent, but a correspondingly developed methodology for the analysis of musical sound has not. Also, while structuralist semiology was a major influence on early theories of signification in popular music, discussions of gesture and embodiment in that literature did not extend to creating a fully articulated semiotics of musical embodiment.

A similar theory of musical gesture and embodiment was developed largely in parallel (and beginning slightly earlier) by theoreticians more interested in the study of Western art music, including Lidov (1987, 1999), Hatten (1994, 2004), and Cumming (2001). Theories of this kind are akin to the popular music theories in that they emphasize music's relationship to embodied experience: they account for music's indexical connection to bodily states, its ability to iconically model such states, and its tendency to encourage physical entrainment. But unlike theories of popular music, little emphasis was placed on what these features and processes of music might mean for a synthesis of musical and cultural theory. Instead, in works such as those of Hatten, Lidov, and Cumming, the emphasis was on describing mechanisms of musical persona and affectivity, and showing how a theory can address questions about the history of style development. One factor that enabled these strides was the adoption of a Peircean semiotic model in preference over a Saussurean one.

Although these two groups of writers (those working within popular music studies, and those more concerned with Western art music) did not visibly draw from one another's work, I find it productive to combine them into one hybrid model of musical gesture—one

which is centered on Peircean semiotics, but is also committed to cultural and critical theory. In addition, I argue for a synthesis of this approach to musical gesture with theories of embodied cognition, rooted in the work of Lakoff and Johnson (Lakoff and Johnson 1980, 1999; Johnson 1987). Theories of music and embodied cognition that I use include those developed by Saslaw (1996), Zbikowski (1997, 2002), Larson (1997, 2001), Brower (2000), and Cox (2001, 2016). There are also early explorations into how such a theory might address the specific interests of popular music studies (Echard 1999; Fast 2001). A recent, highly elaborated theory of this type is presented by Allan Moore (2012).

For the most part, studies of embodied cognition did not explore the overlap with semiotic theories, and some (especially Moore) made a point of explicitly distancing themselves from it. My own work, by contrast, is situated as a fusion of all the traditions and models discussed above (Echard 1999, 2005, 2006 especially 123–41, 2011). The main elements of this theoretical synthesis are:

1. A general commitment to music's identity as a cultural practice, and to critical theories which offer a dialogic, pluralist, and pragmatic view of such practices. Especially important here are theories of musical code and of topicality (Echard 2017).
2. A Peircean theory of musical gesture and embodiment, which can help to explore the distinctive experiences and resources properly associated with musical signification.
3. The theory of embodied cognition as an overarching framework for explaining the mechanisms through which music achieves its effects, and the nature of the links between musical meanings and more general social meanings.

This approach is an effective way of reconciling the various strands of popular music signification theory. It allows for a smooth coordination between musical and social analysis, and between phenomenological aesthetic reflection and other forms of engagement. To demonstrate the sort of interpretation enabled by these choices, I offer a sample reading of one song by an important contemporary artist, "Water Me" by FKA twigs. The discussion is limited to twigs's work around the time of *EP2* (2013), so readers should be familiar with the music, videos, and associated commentary for that recording. Videos for all songs on the *EP* are available through twigs's website (https://fkatwi.gs/) and on YouTube. The videos, in order of release, are "How's That," "Water Me," "Papi Pacify," and "Ultraviolet." A representative sample of commentary is cited at the end of this chapter.

FKA twigs is an artist who exemplifies a balance of fluidity and consistency, and who can therefore engage the full range of theoretical models available in the literature of popular music signification. Early reviews associated her with a wide range of genres, including experimental electronic pop, trip hop, experimental R&B, a general air of Britishness, choral and liturgical music, and classical minimalism. In general, the earliest reviews and commentaries overwhelmingly emphasized pop and R&B, prompting twigs to issue a widely-noticed complaint:

> It's just because I'm mixed race … When I first released music and no one knew what I looked like, I would read comments like: "I've never heard anything like this before, it's not in a genre." And then my picture came out six months later, now she's an R&B singer … If I was white and blonde and said I went to church all the time, you'd be talking about the "choral aspect." But you're not talking about that because I'm a mixed-race girl from south London.
>
> *(FKA twigs quoted in Beaumont-Thomas 2014)*

A mixture of genres is clearly evident throughout "Water Me," which evokes experimental electronic music (in its textural and rhythmic manipulations), folk ballads or hymns (in its simple formal structure and melody), and contemporary R&B (in its generally soft and sensual character and in some of the specific production techniques). But aside from its complex genre identity, twigs's music stands out for its challenging and experimental sonic profile. Features that frequently attracted comment are the unusual approach to groove and rhythm as well as the frequent juxtaposition of clear vocal melodies and song forms with unexpected and noisy interjections. The seeming contradiction between noisy, glitchy experimentalism and quiet, intimate romanticism was also often noted. This particular combination of sonic elements suggests a persona and aesthetic poised between the commercial and the avant-garde; this balance was emphasized further by twigs's dedication to producing music videos for nearly all of her songs and the degree to which fashion and visual design are integral to her output.

There are at least two other major ambiguities that shape twigs's persona. First, the transmedial nature of her work questions the viability of treating music signification in isolation, but at the same time her strikingly original sonic world invites exploration on its own terms. Second, her overall persona contains elements of passivity and receptivity, but also embeds equal measures of control and self-actualization. Like many contemporary pop and electronic artists, twigs's work is produced collaboratively, and an especially large amount of attention was attracted by her collaboration with the experimental Venezuelan producer Arca. twigs, however, is also generally framed as an auteur who directs her work with others to realize her distinctive vision (see, for example, Breihan 2014; Sherburne 2014; Skrainka 2014; Taylor 2014; Greenberger 2015; Obrist 2016). One reason underlying this vision is that, despite the ambiguities and multiplicity of twigs's identity, both her persona and her musical style have been consistent from project to project.

The synthetic model of music signification described here is well-suited to navigating these types of complexities and ambiguities. The discussion that follows focuses on musical affectivity, although occasional remarks on genre and topicality are also important. First, I will name and describe an especially widespread aesthetic feature of twigs's work, with special attention to how it can be found in "Water Me." Second, I frame these points in more explicitly semiotic terms.

For the kind of analysis that I demonstrate, it is helpful to start by selecting an evocative yet precise metaphor—one that gathers a range of features and suggests a focus for a common interpretation. This metaphor should be suggestive both with respect to the music's energetic and spatial features, and also with respect to general social codes. With that in mind, one aesthetic feature that runs throughout twigs's work is what might be called "jitter within a frame." Audio manifestations include a wide range of techniques for the perturbation of otherwise-metastable textures, rhythms, and formal structures. Examples of these techniques can be found throughout "Water Me," and are discussed below. Visual examples can also be found. Most of twigs's early videos feature a single subject, or a small number of subjects, in a nearly static tableau. These subjects are viewed in a seemingly single moment, even while they are presented from multiple angles or at multiple speeds, sometimes both backwards and forwards. A slow transformation is often featured: one example is the gradual enlargement of twigs's eyes over the course of "Water Me," as are the fluid body in "How's That," and the slow destruction of the vehicle in "Breathe." Finally, there is the exploration of a boundary: in "Water Me," achieved by the slow welling and temporary escape of a tear drop; other examples include the wireframe body in "Weak Spot" and twigs's own mouth and throat in "Papi Pacify."

To return to music, the cumulative effect of these devices is a distinctive form of musical time—not exactly stasis, but more like a *spatialization of time* or *projection* in the sense of a mapping.[1] twigs's work often provides the experience of exploring singular moments as if they are extended into extra temporal dimensions. The shape and texture of musical time becomes an object of contemplation, which suggests the creation of a new temporal dimension as a vantage point to be occupied while contemplating the first.[2] These kinds of spatial metaphors are fairly abstract when applied to temporality, but they are resonant with more straightforward sorts of textural devices common in twigs's work. For example, consider the prismatic quality of the vocals in "Water Me": the main melody is clear and straightforward, but the backing vocals introduce a constantly shifting focus, multiplying aspects of the melody in unpredictable ways (see Table 21.1, A section). This prismatic and shifting multiplication of the voice is further intensified by the use of vocal samples for many elements of the arrangement. My decision to frame the temporal procedures in terms of spatial metaphors, as a kind of projection, is motivated partly by a desire to make these sorts of parallels clearer.

When these types of projective and perturbing effects are applied to a rhythmic pattern, they contribute to a distinctive groove. Anne Danielsen characterizes a groove as a form of nonteleological musical time in which "we do not notice the passing of time because we move together with time" (2006, 155–56). She contrasts groove with a different sort of non-teleological time, more often found in avant-garde music, in which there is an impression that time has stopped altogether. The metaphors I have given above convey the sense of both processes happening at once. twigs's grooves and visual patterns achieve a kind of reconciliation by making time an experience of projection—the temporal dimension which we contemplate from multiple angles is in a sense frozen, but we continue to move with time in the extra dimension of contemplation.

In the creation of grooves, a crucial role is played by glitches and manipulations of micro-timing. Predictable rhythms are constantly perturbed. An example in "Water Me" is the slight forward-shifting of the vocal sample riff (Table 21.1, A section, mm. 3–4). We also include micro-ambiguities in the placement of certain punctual rhythmic sounds, such as the finger snaps (Table 21.1, m. 2, first beat) and the inhalations (Table 21.1, Introduction One, 3rd beat of each measure). In this respect, twigs's work is part of a widespread and fairly recent shift in popular production style. Danielsen notes that "since the 1990s [computer-based rhythmic music] has involved ever-increasing experimentation with and manipulation of the microtiming of rhythmic events," especially in rap and R&B, where a common technique is to create confusion or ambiguity of basic pulse placement (2010a, 1). "At a phenomenological level, this [technique] is experienced as a peculiar, almost vertiginous blurring of the pulse we typically rely on to locate ourselves in the play of rhythm in a given song" (ibid.). Various effects can arise from ambiguous beat placements, including: shifts in perceived global tempo; local tempo variations that do not affect global tempo; or a generally unstable sense of tempo (Danielsen 2010b, 26–27). A related technique is the layering of periodic sounds that imply different rhythmic grids. In the case of twigs, this technique creates a single layer pulling against an overall dominant grid (albeit one that is itself perturbed by variations in micro-timing). Examples in "Water Me" include the wooden clacking sound (Table 21.1, [0:24–0:43]) and the new musical parts (introduced in Table 21.1, B-section [2:10–2:28]).

There is another effect that emerges from micro-timing variations, and that is closely related to my metaphors of temporal spatialization and projection. As a result of certain manipulations, a listener might begin to experience a temporally extended beat rather than a point-like one (Danielsen 2010b, 29). This effect is an important contributor to the

Table 21.1 "Water Me" by FKA twigs, analysis

(**VSR**=Vocal sample riff; **VPSH**= Higher vocal pad sample; **FS**=Finger snap; **VPSL**=Lower vocal pad sample; **WC**= Wooden clacking)

	Measures [Timing]	***Element***	***Beat-stabilizing aspects***	***Beat-destabilizing aspects***
Introduction One (12 measures [0:00–0:43])	1–4	**VSR**	Repetitive, close to rhythmic grid	
		Higher pulsing drone		Echo and reverb. Seemingly random rhythm
		VPSH	Attacks in mm. 2 and 4 (emphasizes structural points)	Echo and reverb. Highly modulated. Enters on offbeats
	2, 1st beat [0:03]	**FS**	Punctual sound, emphasizes downbeat	Too occasional to create a sense of pulse. Echo and reverb. Several successive attacks spread ahead of and behind the downbeat
	3rd beat of each measure	Inhalation	Quite frequent and predictable	Temporally extended (not highly punctual)
	4–12	**VPSL**	Similar to **VPSH**, more centering due to lower pitch	Similar to **VPSH**
	9–12	Sudden thinning of texture to **VPSL** and a single **FS**		Removal of almost all established beat markers
	[0:24]	**WC** enters	Periodic and stable	No clear relationship to previously established rhythmic grid
	[0:34]	**WC** *accel.* to a medium-fast pulse train		Still periodic, but now too fast to perceive in terms of beats
	Unmeasured [0:34–0:43]	**WC** pulse train continues, no other sounding elements, *rit.*	The single sounding event is strongly temporal in emphasis	The highlighted temporal effect is not beat-related
Introduction Two (8 measures [0:43–0:59])	1–8 1–8 6	**WC**	Continually sounding 8th-notes	Seemingly random amplitude and filter modulation. Occasional unpredictable double-attacks
		Low bass drum	Emphasizing each downbeat	Very low pitch and reverb make exact placement difficult to hear
		New vocal sample riff (**VSR2**)	Quite stable and predictable	
		FS	As before	As before
	6	Single hi-hat strike and down-gliding tom strike		Punctual but singular
	7–8	High vocal stabs	Emphasize downbeats	
A Section (16 + 2 measures [1:00–1:35])	1–18	Instruments	Similar to Intro Two	Similar to Intro Two
		Main vocal line	Simple and predictable structure. Foursquare.	Relaxed pacing and placement of notes.
		Backing vocal line	Initially doubles beginning of phrases	Drops out in the second half of each of the first two phrases, creating a shifting textural effect.
	9 [1:15]	Backing vocal line		Disrupts earlier pattern by being absent at the start of the phrase, creating a sense of instability. Re-enters suddenly at m.10
	11 [1:19–1:21]	Sudden stop-time and abrupt *gliss.* sound		Amplifies the vocal texture instability of mm 9-10. Another punctual but singular sound
	3–4 [1:03–1:07]	**VSR2**		Shifted slightly forward of the beat, with intensified echo. Produces substantial pulse ambiguity for two measures.
Remainder of Form [1:35–3:20]	[1:35–2:10]	A section repeat	Begins to reveal the simplicity of the formal structure. Continues with many small disruptions, most of them variations on the textures and techniques already established.	
	[2:10–2:28]	B section	Starts almost imperceptibly as two new elements fade into the tag of the A-section: a "ha-ha" vocal part and a new synthesizer pad. Both heavily modulated, echoed, and rhythmically repetitive without being fully predictable or locked to the grid.	
	2:28 –3:04	Final full A section		
	3:04–3:20	Partial A section and Tag		

character of many of twigs's grooves, in which the experience of an extended beat seems to allow one dimension of musical temporality to be flexibly explored from the vantage point of another one: individual events that are shifted through adjustments of micro-timing in a manner that emphasizes their individuality and invites scrutiny without entirely abandoning the metastability of the overall rhythm.

These effects do not rely only on literal temporal manipulation. Many of twigs's timbral and textual choices are also a factor in creating a feeling of an extended beat and of spatialized or projected musical time. Danielsen argues that timbre and register can have a strong effect on perceptions of the beat:

> The dull sound of many rhythmic events in the bass register in hip-hop-related styles, for example, is probably not coincidental, because a deep sound with an unclear attack point … will immediately establish a wider time window for the beat shape of the pulse, thus increasing our rhythmic tolerance for the groove as a whole.
>
> *(Danielsen 2010b, 30–32)*

Similarly, sharper sounds have a more precise effect on marking out the beat, but they also produce greater confusion if used in certain ways. It is significant that two of the most widely-remarked timbral choices in twigs's productions feature upswellings of low frequency sound (which can enhance the extended, rather than point-like, quality of the underlying pulse), and the introduction of sharp periodic sounds (clacks, ticks, etc.) that pull against the dominant rhythmic grid.

It can be instructive to describe many of twigs's micro-shifted events as "glitches," especially because of the congruence between these sonic effects and certain visual strategies in her videos.[3] The "glitchiness" of twigs's music is usually recognizably digital in origin, and it also reinforces the avant-garde resonances of her work. Kelly argues that the "digital glitch," as a sonic strategy, "had already been signaled in the varied practices of the crack and the break throughout the twentieth century … The 'noising up' of the digital was part of the noisy project of twentieth-century experimental music." He goes on to remark that the glitch became widely assimilated in a range of genres, and that "these sounds are now simply another part of the sound palette of the digital producer" (Kelly 2009, 7–8 and 10). Like Kelly, Demers considers the "glitch" to be the sound of noise and of error, and it re-enforces the connection between popular genres such as techno and the avant-garde by suggesting that the experimental genre of "microsound is often synonymous with the genre of minimalist posttechno known as glitch" (2010, 72). As Demers notes, musics that explore glitches and microsound are often both quiet and noisy. twigs has occasionally made remarks that show she is aware of this dynamic: "I love annoying sounds, beats, clicks. Kakakakaka! … I don't see anyone else doing that now. It's got loud noises in there, the structures aren't typical, it's relentless. It's like punk" (FKA twigs, quoted in Beaumont-Thomas 2014).

I conclude with some remarks of a more explicitly semiotic nature by commenting on twigs's general relationship to semiotic transparency and opacity, and how this creates ambiguity in her work concerning which of several alternative personae are signified at any given time. Many of the devices discussed above break down the transparency of various musical components and draw attention to their semiotic

nature. Operations of this type are a key concern for many forms of semiotic analysis. As Lidov notes:

> Transparency and opacity are relative and unstable. As we become accustomed to a sign, we tend to stop noticing that it is one; it becomes transparent. On the other hand, a sign that has become inconspicuous can be made opaque by a new context … Fluctuations of sign consciousness are a fundamental phenomenon for semiotics.
>
> *(Lidov 1999, 8)*

Sometimes twigs creates opacity on a level that feels fundamental, as when the result is a new sense of physical immediacy for sound itself. This aspect of her work connects to general tendencies in experimental electronic music. Kelly notes that one effect of glitches is that the usual transparency of the technology becomes opaque, and that "mediation itself has become the object of sound creation, composition, and performance" (2009, 31). Similarly, Demers argues that an ongoing focus of electronic music cultures is to highlight their own sonic material—its creation and destruction—as an object of overt interest (2010 chapter two, and especially 43–45). This resonates with remarks made by twigs:

> When it comes to sound, I'm a massive geek … I often write over just drums, with no melodic information or key changes. Then I put in everything I can think—everything, everything—until it's just a massive wall, sometimes with no BPM, no structure, nothing. It's usually three in the morning by then, and I'm like, "OK, I have to stop." Then the next day I'll go in and just chip away at it and keep on chipping.
>
> *(FKA twigs, quoted in Vozick-Levinson 2014)*

Aside from foregrounding material as such, twigs here (and in her work) raises questions of semiotic priority. Normally transparent frameworks, those which are often assumed to precede and regulate the creation of material, are presented as emergent, secondary to the material itself. Given twigs's background as a dancer and the prominent place of dance in her work, it is not surprising that this foregrounding of sonic material is often closely connected to a foregrounding of embodied experience, as when she remarks that "I try and make it as visceral as possible … I want people to hear the sinews in the drums and the clicking sounds. I want it to feel physical, like it's in your body, because that's how I feel" (Pasori 2015). This kind of literal connection to embodiment is not to be diminished, but twigs has also made remarks which point to the potential of gestures and energetic configurations as signs of embodiment in a more abstract and general sense, iconically related to their bodily sources but not entirely limited to them:

> If I was feeling a certain way and you told me to express it, I feel like I'd be able to express it with my body, or express it with a shape, or express it with a sound, you know? … The thing that I find exciting is that even two years on, it's still so definite that it can be translated to another medium of express[ion]. I never feel like I lose sight of what I originally intended.
>
> *(FKA twigs quoted in Stone 2015)*

While authorial intent is not necessarily a crucial consideration for our immediate purposes, twigs's remarks show that a semiotic model of musical gesture is not inappropriate

to her work. Her tendency, however, to disrupt transparent norms and to render them opaque is active on this level as well. Most of the time, the indexicality of musical gestures is understood as grounded in human bodies. While twigs's work relies on the same sorts of iconism that generally accompanies human-specific indexicality, the cybernetic and post-human elements of her style (along with the fact of computer-based production) problematize indexicality. This has implications for her overall persona.

Perhaps the most abstract manipulation of semiotic opacity in twigs's work has to do with her conversion of the beat to a kind of extended gesture. This middle-ground reveals fundamental aspects of musical temporality that are often obscured. Consider the following remarks from Lakoff and Johnson concerning the cognition of time:

> Very little of our understanding of time is purely temporal. Most of our understanding of time is a metaphorical version of our understanding of motion in space … In physics, time is a more primitive concept than motion and motion is defined as the change of location over time. But cognitively the situation is reversed. Motion appears to be primary and time is metaphorically conceptualized in terms of motion.
>
> *(Lakoff and Johnson 1999, 139)*

In normal temporal experience, this conceptualization is a matter of observing and comparing iterative events (Lakoff and Johnson 1999, 137–38). twigs subverts the usual transparency of this process, micro-manipulating events in ways that test the iterative structure. This subversion, in turn, draws attention to the spatial rubric in which events and motions depend, and also highlights the experiential primacy of motion.

We find in twigs's work a wide range of ways in which normally transparent semiotic processes are made opaque. Her work produces a strong sense of presence and sensuality, and it exemplifies a powerful aura of virtuality, but arguably not chaos or harshness. There are several reasons for this assessment. First, "the glitch" and other of her common strategies are *micro*-perturbations and upswellings, heard relative to a metastable frame (albeit with stretches of ambiguity and sometimes confusion). As signs, devices such as a "glitched beat" or a "glitched movement" continue to refer back to their more simple and transparent forms. A projection does not replace the original object. Second, in terms of expectation and conventionalized codes, twigs's anomalies on the level of genre and of musical style are stabilized at the level of idiolect.

But even with these elements of stability, there is a powerful feeling of virtual affectivity: a sense that "the glitch" hints at some underlying force or potential yet to be fully actualized, or in the process of becoming de-actualized. For some gesture theorists, such as Shepherd and Wicke, the embodied experience of music always involves something like Kristeva's semiotic *chora* (see for example Shepherd and Wicke 1997, 76–78). My preference for describing these dimensions of musical experience is to evoke Deleuzian virtuality (see Echard 2008). But whichever overarching metaphors and ontological frameworks we prefer, the point is that when we ask which object or situation should be understood as the source of these glitches, irruptions, and upswellings, twigs's work presents an ambiguity. The perturbations could be read in terms of entropy, or randomness, or simple failure. But they also evoke hidden forces and desires, and they feel like traces of something liminally situated between virtuality and actuality. There are several possible narratives that the effect might evoke, which is to say different objects might be signified as the source of these instabilities. We might hear them as the Id of the machine, which is to say the emergence of a new

subjectivity (not a full-blown AI or cyborg consciousness, but the initial stirrings or potential underpinning of these). Or, they might be a residue of the human, lingering within a post-human or cybernetic condition. Or, we might sense the uncanny valley, a simulacrum of desire and vital essence where none actually exists (and where none is forthcoming). Or finally, we could follow a broadly psychoanalytic perspective and hear the pulsion of the subjective unconscious. twigs's work hints at all of these possibilities at various times. The resulting hybridity of her persona is not only evident in the more abstract and metaphorical effects, but also in the way they align with some simpler aspects of social codes. For example, electronic music, as a genre, tropes topics of sensuality and eroticism (arising from its connection to dance cultures) with those of science and technical experimentation (arising from its roots in academic contexts and its technologically complex means of production). This trope is explored in twigs's work using many of the same devices we have interpreted in more gestural and affective terms.

My reading of FKA twigs is suggestive rather than comprehensive: it illustrates how it is possible to draw from a range of existing models of popular music signification by deploying them in a coordinated manner. I have offered interpretations that address the specifics of musical sound and of musical experience while at the same time illustrating how these are rooted in broader social and practical frames. I trust that some impression was given of how a specifically semiotic version of the theory of embodied cognition can be an especially flexible and powerful tool, enabling engagement both with music's more fluid, ineffable features and its more fixed, code-like ones.

Notes

1 Mathematically, a projection usually involves constructing a lower-dimensional representation of a higher-dimensional object. My use of the word is a little different, in that I am describing a higher-dimensional experience of a normally one-dimensional temporality.

2 This effect relies on listeners adopting a certain attitude, in which so far as possible they immerse themselves in the musical temporality so that they experience it as congruent with their own temporal experience. By contrast, if a listener were from the start to observe the musical temporality dispassionately, with an attitude of detachment, there would be no experience of a new dimension opening up since the listener would already be experiencing things as if from a separate temporal dimension.

3 In addition to the devices already described, a major source of "glitch" in twigs's music is the frequent appearance of short, punctual sounds which are also singular (in "Water Me," for example, Table 21.1, second introduction, m. 6, and A section, m. 11).

22
LOST INNOCENCE
Signifying East, signifying West

Edward Campbell

At least since the work of Helmut Lachenmann, it is untenable to hold that sound is innocent or without connotation. For Lachenmann, a composer can never recapture the virginity of musical material since every musical fragment or gesture, every sequence of notes, contains within itself sedimented history that must be taken account of. Lachenmann takes as an example the pastoral connotations of the sound of a cowbell in the Alpine pasture. When Mahler uses cowbells in his Sixth Symphony, their pastoral connotations are unavoidably present and stand in need of acknowledgement. It is on this basis that Lachenmann finds fault with Stockhausen's *Gruppen* for three orchestras which, in the absence of such reflection, "involuntarily affirm[s] a completely Mahlerian pastoral aura which is stronger than its underlying structure" (Kaltenecker 1993, 8). In composing his own *Intérieur I* for solo percussionist, Lachenmann feels the necessity of coming to terms with the cloud of connotations surrounding cowbells as they appear in the pastoral Alpine setting and in Mahler and Stockhausen in order to use them in a reflective manner. In this way, Lachenmann recognizes, as a starting point for composition, that the historical connotations within traditional material cannot be neglected or abandoned, and that they must be consciously integrated into a composer's use of the material. The composer cannot draw innocently from the past, appropriating traditional elements for composition, without first emptying them of their conventional meanings and thus rendering them capable of bearing new meanings.

What Lachenmann theorizes, in the context of twentieth-century Western compositions, is of much wider application and offers a possible way of thinking about some of the recent relationships between Western art music and various musics from East Asia. This chapter considers the functions of signification and connotation in the music of several post-World War II composers born in China and Japan who have integrated aspects of their own traditional musics within works that are composed largely in the traditions of Western art music. Focusing on their use of particular instruments, gestures, timbres, and sonorities drawn from these distinctive cultures, the signifying potential of such phenomena and events will be examined while identifying a range of musical signifying units including some that may be considered as topoi within their respective cultures.

Yayoi Uno Everett notes that "as the repertory of art music has moved beyond the Orientalist and exotic paradigms of cultural appropriation, it invites a careful negotiation between collective discourses and individual subjectivities in building avenues for interpretation" (2004, 2). With this in mind, and following the work of Ratner, Agawu, Monelle, and others in the field of topic theory within the Western classical period, Tarasti's identification of mythic semes in selected compositions of Wagner, Sibelius, Stravinsky, and Grabócz's recognition of isotopies in the music of Liszt, it is arguably the case that contemporary Chinese and Japanese composers equally draw on a rich store of musically signifying units from multiple aspects of their respective cultures which operate on various levels within their work. If understanding topoi is deemed "necessary in interpreting classical music" (Monelle 2006, 4), it is safe to assume that the identification of variously signifying units may be of no less importance in understanding new music composed by Chinese and Japanese composers working in the Western tradition.

Japanese music and expression: Takemitsu

According to Luciana Galliano, Japanese music is primarily concerned with expression, and she observes that Japanese poetics always emphasizes emotion—that is, the emotional experience of the artist—as a feature having significant value (Galliano 2002, 12). David Ahlstrom remarks on the great sensitivity of Chinese and Japanese artists to "the transitoriness of the solitary event, which they could see as the perfect expressive moment of the expressionless, silent Absolute" (1976, 65). Luciano Berio attributes the impenetrability encountered at times by Western listeners in the face of Japanese music to a confusion of "the structure of the signifier with the structure of the signified" (2002, ix). Japanese musicians do not produce music to communicate a message or aesthetic concepts; their music is instead "the expression of an instantaneous, illuminating, and higher level of understanding that is achieved not through intense investigation and *thought* but through the joyous liberation of *experience*" which occurs in the moment (Galliano 2002, 9).

Toru Takemitsu (1930–1996) addresses the subject of expression often, stating unequivocally that "music does not exist to describe natural scenery" or as a form of self-expression (1995, 3–4). Comparing the Western focus on expression to the Confucian idea of music as ceremony and pertaining to the dignity of "refined procedures," Takemitsu explains that:

> the bells of Westminster Abbey speak in terms of first person singular: they have an individual motive with a distinctive statement. The Japanese temple gong, however, speaks without personal identification: its sound seems to melt into the world beyond persons, static and sensual.
>
> *(10–11)*

For Takemitsu, sound penetrates the listeners, linking them to the world (13), and he suggests that any attribution of "'meaning to sound' refers to something other than mere naming and differentiating. It concerns a total image" (16). As Wade observes, such an image connects musical genres and the use of specific instruments to:

> some particular group of people and performance context; who made the music, for whom, and where really mattered, with implications of social status and morality. *Gagaku* … was the music of the imperial court and of the Buddhist temple and

> Shinto shrine ceremonies; *koto* … was the instrument of elite and upper middle-class citizens; the *nō* drama … was the special purview of the elite and especially the *samurai* class; *syamisen*-accompanied songs … were particularly associated with the popular theater and adult entertainment world.
>
> *(2005, 14)*

From 1868—the beginning of the Meiji era (1868–1912) when Japan opened itself up to the rest of the world—traditional music was either neglected or rejected in favor of Western art music, and many Japanese composers of Takemitsu's generation had great difficulty relating to traditional instruments. Takemitsu's widow, Asaka, noted that while later generations of Japanese musicians have been able to accept traditional instruments, the immediately post-war generation "could not think of these sounds without envisioning the feudalistic ideals and apprentice systems associated with them" (Takemitsu 2010, 48), and with their putatively nationalist associations and connotations. It took some time before they could listen to these instruments with an appreciation of their unique qualities and potential. Takemitsu attempted to overcome the class connotations surrounding not only instruments, but also traditional musical genres, by bringing together, for the first time, previously separate and independent elements from different musical traditions, not with the intention of removing their long-established value, but rather in order to enable new possibilities (Miyakawa 2012, 175).

One level of associations and connotations have developed around particular aspects of traditional Japanese instruments. "*Sawari*," the buzzy, idiosyncratic sound quality produced by the *biwa* (a short-neck fretted lute) is used to heighten drama and accompany stories of war (Wade 2005, 48) and, as Takemitsu noted, "in a book from the Edo period (1615–1867), the *biwa* player is advised to try to imitate the sound of the cicada" (1995, 64). Other examples of instrumentation that carries traditional connotations in Takemitsu's compositions abound. For example, he highlighted the importance of the performer's breathing when playing the *shakuhachi* (bamboo flute), noting that the master performer, striving "to re-create the sound of wind in a decaying bamboo grove, reveals the Japanese sound ideal: sound, in its ultimate expressiveness, being constantly refined, approaches the nothingness of that wind in the bamboo grove" (51). In *Landscape* for string quartet (1960), the instruments imitate the sonority of the *shô* (a free reed, multi-piped wind instrument from the *gagaku* imperial court ensemble), with its harmony based on the superimposition of fifths. Beyond the connotations carried by those traditional instruments that were favoured by Takemitsu, Wade notes that Japanese drumming recalls those priests in Shinto shrines who sought to communicate with the spirits, entertaining them, banishing demons and "drumming the 'voice' of Buddha, celebrating the harvest and other agricultural rites linked to the spirits of nature" (Wade 2005, 59). Finally, the *koto* (plucked string instrument, played horizontally, like a Western zither), pertains to the temples where it was played by Buddhist priests, scholars and noblemen in their search for a mental state of contemplation (69).

Different approaches: Matsudaira, Satoh, and Yuasa

The degree in which contemporary Japanese composers are willing to accept and include Japanese traditional music styles and elements in their compositions vary widely, from close, respectful adherence to complete rejection of part or all national and historical references.

Like Takemitsu, Yoritsune Matsudaira (1907–2001) acknowledged some misgiving concerning the strict boundaries and classifications posed by the aesthetics of traditional Japanese music. He therefore rejected the *shakuhachi* and the *shamisen* because of their historically established social and emotional connotations (although he tolerated the *koto* (Galliano 2002, 89). Nevertheless, while believing that the music for these instruments lacked autonomy and abstraction, the music of the *gagaku* tradition did become an important element in his compositions from 1936 onwards. For Matsudaira, *gagaku*'s rich historical and social connotations, having been the music of the imperial court, were not of an emotional nature; he appreciated the abstraction of the *gagaku*, which he related to its sophisticated, ornamental role in the life of the court. His sense was that whatever "emotional symbolism" had pertained historically to the *gagaku* repertoire had faded to the degree that the music now consisted solely of abstract, "elaborately structured" sounds (Benítez Joaquim and Kondō 1998, 95). As Matsudaira states, "when I treat *gagaku* sources I feel two things: nostalgia and mockery. These two sides always appear: nostalgia towards the aristocracy, and self-mockery" (cited in Ryôsuke 1998, 25). While he used *gagaku* melodies in works composed before 1945—the second movement of his Sonata for flute and piano (1936) features a melody from the Choho period (999–1004)—it was not until after the war that he began to use aspects of *gagaku* in more complex ways, acknowledging that it helped him to discover a "personal, Japanese style of expression" (Galliano 2002, 84–85). Indeed, the Ministry of Education in Japan, starting in April 2002, revised the music curriculum and made the teaching of traditional Japanese instruments compulsory for middle-schools (Everett 2004, 9).

An opposite view is held by Somei Satoh (b. 1947), a composer of contemporary traditional music, intensely aware of the spirituality surrounding Japanese instruments and the traditional connotations of instruments and sounds. For Satoh, the fact that contemporary Japanese musicians are educated to listen with "Westernized ears" is problematic:

> I think that shamisen, *biwa* and *nōkan* are involved with religion—the sense of tradition and meaning behind it. We listen to them and hear the music, but we hear something else behind it. Koto less so. Today every student has forgotten that learning music is to learn *tao*—enlightenment. They look at technique
>
> *(quoted in Wade 2014, 97)*

Jōji Yuasa (b. 1929), a leading composer of the Japanese avant-garde writing within the traditions of Western art music, takes yet another view: in his early years as a composer he realized that "rather than unconsciously receiving my own tradition, I wished to consciously inherit and extend it, while at the same time exploring the universal language of all human beings" (1989, 177). For Yuasa, this implied the retention of a way of thinking and perceiving rather than the simple "adoption of superficial phenomena such as the pentatonic scale, or the simple usage of traditional instruments such as the shakuhachi, biwa, and koto" (Ibid.).

As these comments show, the integration of traditional Japanese instruments in the context of Western composition remains a contested territory in which the personal relationship of individual composers to the two traditions and the connotations of traditional music and instruments and their contemporary meanings remain serious questions.

Symbolizations of nature: water, gardens, and plants

The evocation of nature found in the music of Debussy was the partial product of the composer's exposure to Eastern music and culture. Perhaps even more remarkably, its concern with nature figuration and symbolism has been taken up and developed in turn in the work of later Asian composers. Many of Debussy's compositions such as *La mer* (1905), *Jardins sous la pluie* (1903) and *Reflets dans l'eau* (1905) are based largely on water figurations. Takemitsu, who revered the music of the French composer, likewise composed several works in which water and rain are central, most particularly in his "Waterscape" series of compositions (from *Garden Rain* [1974] to *Between Tides* [1993]). He stated in 1980 that he conceptualized musical form as "liquid form," and that water and sound share a certain transitoriness (Takemitsu 1995, 132–33). The Chinese composer, Tan Dun (b. 1957), composed a *Water Concerto* (1998) where the splashing and gurgling of water-sounds replace the instrumental suggestions of water as raindrops, the flowing of a river, or the play of waves. He tells us that in the concerto he transposes early memories "of beautiful laundry sounds, and swimming sounds, body popping sounds, water dancing sounds, water teasing sounds, water popping sound, into [his] orchestrations" (http://tandun.com/composition/water-concerto-for-water-percussion-and-orchestra/, accessed April 19, 2018). Tan also composed a *Water Passion after St Matthew* (2000) which opens and closes with water sounds. Water is also an important source of signification in several works by Toshio Hosokawa (b. 1955), who attempts, in his orchestral piece *Circulating Ocean* (2005) "to express in sound the flow and change of water by apprehending sound as water" (Hosokawa 2014b, booklet, 3). Water symbolism reappears in other works by Hosokawa, including his piano concerto *Lotus under the moonlight (Hommage à Mozart)* (2006), this time in conjunction with that of the flower, in this case a lotus blossom:

> The lotus flower is symbolized by the piano, the water and nature by the orchestra (…) the sustained note centered on F sharp represents vibrations on the water's surface; the lower notes represent under the water; the lowest register represents the darkness of the mud at the bottom of the pond. The high notes, having passed beyond the surface, suggest the boundless sky.
>
> *(Hosokawa 2014a, booklet, 3)*

The idea of the "lotus" or of "blossoming" reappears in several of Hosokawa's compositions, including the horn concerto *Moment of Blossoming* (2010) and *Blossoming II* (2011) for chamber orchestra. Each of these compositions begins with a sustained note in the middle register, out of which "a song (a fragment of melody) as the flower" emerges. Perceiving music as "plant-like development and growth" he believes that "to express musically the energy of a flower's blossoming carries deep meaning" (Hosokawa 2014b, booklet, 2).

Takemitsu realizes the idea of "garden" in a highly formalized way, making the relationship between subject and its musical expression far from straightforward (Burt 2001, 103). *Arc* for piano and orchestra (1963–66/1976), which was composed with old Japanese gardens in mind, is described by Takemitsu as both a musical and a metaphysical garden. He compared the time-cycles of grass and flowers, trees, rocks, sand, and earth in relation to one another in terms of "the speeds of activity of various elements in the instrumental texture" (Burt 2001, 168). The piano soloist is "an observer strolling through the garden," grass and flowers appear through the agency of "a group of undetermined soloistic, rapidly changing mobile forms"; trees "do not change as rapidly as grass and flowers," rocks are

"unchanging except as they appear from different viewpoints" and are given to sustained pitches in the lower register while sand and earth are "enduring and stable" and are represented by the continuous sound of the lower strings (Takemitsu 1995, 95–96). In contrast to all of this, in *Garden Rain* (1974) it seems that the Japanese Garden is embodied by the global form of the music (Burt 2001, 168).

Wind and breath

For Takemitsu "good music is like wind blowing smoothly in the bamboo thicket" (Okajima 2007, 56). The sound of wind becomes a more explicit focus for his music in his *How Slow the Wind* for orchestra (1991) and *And Then I Knew 'twas Wind* (1992) for the Debussyan combination of flute, viola, and harp. The connection between the various "nature" sounds, however, is not simple. Considering the historical aesthetics of the *shakuhachi*, Koji Matsunobu notes for example that the term *amadare*, which normally means "rain drop," is a *shakuhachi* expression, signifying "a waterfall motion," just as *Fusei*, which means the "voice of the wind," indicates the playing of "higher, piercing sounds" which might, iconically, relate to drops of water (Matsunobu 2013, 66). Like Takemitsu, he states that "the ideal beauty of the *shakuhachi* is attained through windlike expressions as if 'wind passes through a decayed bamboo grove'" (66). Garden and wind references come together in the *Tribute to Noguchi* concert at the UNESCO Japanese Garden in Paris, with works composed by Yoshihisa Taïra (1937–2005), in honor of the sculptor Isamu Noguchi (1904–88). One composition, *Aiolos* for flute in G and harp, was stimulated by the structure and spatial composition of the garden. Taïra said that he "immediately became aware of the breath of the wind wafting in the sounds from afar" (Taira 1989, booklet, 6), simulated by effects of flutter-tonguing and overblowing.

Bells

Bells are found all over the world and feature prominently in musical contexts. In his *Nirvana Symphony* for male chorus and orchestra (1958), Toshiro Mayuzumi (1929–97) draws on his research into the acoustic material and timbre of Buddhist temple bells in the ancient city of Kyoto. Having made recordings of hundreds of bells, Mayuzumi analyzed the properties of their formants, discovering that they had "an extremely complex overtone structure" in that "the first ten harmonics did not include the second and third harmonics (the octave and the fifth) or any multiples thereof." He then used this idiosyncratic series to produce two pentatonic scales that form the pitch material for the symphony (Herd 1989, 137; Galliano 2002, 185). By dividing the instrumental resources into three groups and placing them in different parts of the auditorium, he invites the audience to experience a "surround-sound" effect as the selected tones fuse within the space of the hall. The simultaneous performance, in an incessantly repeated tone cluster, suggests the tolling of temple bells.

Ceremony, ritual, tradition, and chant

Religious and para-liturgical practices are rich sources of topoi in Japanese music. The eponymous Buddhist doctrine is central to Mayuzumi's *Nirvana Symphony* in which the second, fourth, and sixth movements feature the repetitive chanting of sutras. In the second movement, "Suramgamah," a male chorus chants this sacred scripture of the

Rinzai Zen Buddhist sect, rhythmically, in Sanskrit; the fourth movement, "Mahaprajnaparamita," has a text from the Tendai Buddhist sect. The repetitive chanting of the male voices in both movements is set out in 12 parts "at various random pitch levels" and, with its regular phrasing, rising climaxes and sudden releases of tension, it creates a sonic experience akin to the communal prayers heard in Buddhist temples (Herd 1989, 137–38).

Toshio Hosokawa also acknowledges the importance of *Shômyô*, the 1200-year old ceremonial chant of Japanese Buddhism, of the Tendai sect and the Shingon sect. Hosokawa's *New Seeds of Contemplation* (1986/95) was composed for *Shômyô*, in this case sung by four monks and a *gagaku* ensemble of five players. This chant also influenced his approach to melody and song in his Lieder, choruses and opera, as well as the melodic aspect of instrumental works such as his *Chant* for cello and orchestra (2009) (Hosokawa 2014a, booklet, 3).

Pentatonic scales in traditional and new Chinese music

Many contemporary Chinese composers have worked extensively with Chinese folk music, which is based for the most part on pentatonic scales, arguably the most obvious symbols in contemporary Chinese music. As Funa Wang notes, many new Chinese piano pieces have drawn on pentatonic scales or melodies from traditional Chinese folk songs and instrumental music (Wang 2017, 11). The five pitches of the Chinese pentatonic scale—*gong*, *shang*, *jue*, *zhi*, and *yu*—carry rich symbolic significations, relating them to bodily organs, directions or locations, elements, flavors, odors, and colors (Table 22.1). In Western terms, if *gong* is C natural, the five pitches of the scale will be C-D-E-G-A.

In the 1980s and 1990s, Bright Sheng (b. 1955) integrated aspects of Chinese folk and contemporary Western Classical music (Chen 2012, 65–66); the four movements of his piano composition *My Song* (1988) draw on aspects of folksong, either authentic or newly composed with the characteristics of folk music. The first movement features heterophony; the second juxtaposes two pentatonic scales; the third is a newly composed "savage dance," while the fourth movement, "Nostalgia," features *San Shi Li Pu* ("Village of Thirty Miles"), a well-known Chinese folk song (Chen, 67–69). Replacing the pitch of F in the original pentatonic melody with an E changed the signification of the original melody into "feelings of sadness."

The influence of Beijing opera style

Certain aspects of Beijing opera are important for some Chinese composers, most notable among them Qigang Chen (b. 1951) and Tan Dun. Two main musical styles in Beijing opera: *er huang* and *xi pi*, carry clear connotations and associations, but also share specific melodic characteristics

Table 22.1 The five pitches and their associations (Wang 2017, 18)

Pitch Names	*Organs*	*Locations*	*Elements*	*Flavors*	*Odors*	*Colors*
gong	heart	center	earth	sweet	fragrant	yellow
shang	liver	west	metal	spicy	fishy	white
jue	spleen	east	wood	bitter	muttony	blue/green
zhi	lungs	south	fire	sour	burned	red
yu	kidneys	north	water	salty	rotting	black

related to the use of pitches and intervals (Wang 2017, 28–29). *Er huang* is a "lyrical and sorrowful aria," generally found in serious or emotional sections; *xi pi*, in contrast, is livelier and more cheerful. Qigang Chen, who studied in Paris with Olivier Messiaen in the 1980s, has made extensive use of Chinese folk melodies and elements of Beijing opera. His piano concerto *Er Huang* (2009) is based on the melody of an *er huang* aria titled *Er Huang yuan ban*. In the course of the piece, Chen combines elements from the Chinese tradition—such as pentatonic melodies that suffuse the piece as piano and orchestra imitate the sound of Chinese instruments—within an essentially Western compositional style (Wang 2017, 33–34). Chen also employs the piano and orchestra to suggest "the acrobatic fighting and dancing" which is the most dramatic aspect of traditional Beijing opera and which is usually accompanied by percussion instruments (54), the most important instruments in the traditional Beijing opera ensemble.

The first theme of Qigang Chen's *Instants d'un Opéra de Pékin* for piano (2000, rev. 2004) is *xingxian* (walking strings), a melody taken from Beijing opera which is used as background music when the operatic character *Chou* gives a speech and "moves around the stage" (Chen 2012, 58). Since no exclusive characteristic or tempo is associated with *xingxian* in Beijing Opera, its use can be free. For Xi Chen, any pianist wishing to perform the composition needs to know about Beijing opera and understand its *qiyun,* or its spiritual resonances (Chen, 63; 46). Looking beyond the music of Qigang Chen, Xi Chen (84) stipulates that performing Chinese piano music always requires

> a knowledge of traditional Chinese aesthetics and performance practices, as well as familiarity with Chinese musical culture past and present … traditional Chinese folk songs, instrumental music, opera, and other genres … an understanding of the different styles and characteristics of traditional music and of Chinese philosophical ideas.

Chen's use of Beijing Opera's characteristic elements began with *Poème Lyrique II* (1991) for baritone and nine instruments. With a text based on an ancient poem by Su Shi (1037–1101), the baritone part includes "sliding tones and exaggerated vibrato singing" which further enriches the expressiveness of the text since in Beijing opera syllables can be "extended, glided, or vibrated," in order to emphasize or dramatize aspects of the text (Li 2012, 16). As Nancy Rao notes, Chen assigned different symbolic meanings to various pentatonic scales in line with specific sections of the poem relating, for example, to ideas of separation and reconciliation (2002, 205). Qigang Chen's music for the ballet *Raise the Red Lantern* (2001) is pervaded with stylistic aspects of the Beijing Opera, and Chinese instruments are included within the Western orchestra including cymbals, gongs, woodblocks, and castanets, which bring it close in sound to that of Beijing opera. In addition to this, he also integrates other idiomatic characteristics from the opera including "non-verbal and non-tempered vocalization, the *xipi* and *erhuang* melodic styles with slide tones" and the idiosyncratic percussion rhythms of the Beijing opera (Li 2012, 16–17). As Li notes, these traditional elements resonated well with Chinese audiences while also pleasing Western audiences with their exotic sound.

Signification in Chinese music is dynamic. As Winzenburg recognizes "today, non-Western instruments added to works otherwise scored for Western ensembles serve multiple purposes, as agents of exoticism, acts of multicultural inclusion, and new forms of political and social affirmation" (2017, 199). An increasing number of international percussion concertos draw on a wide range of Chinese percussion instruments, often in conjunction with percussion instruments from other continents (197). Chen Yi's *Percussion Concerto* (1998) includes Chinese cymbals, tom-toms, finger bells (*pengling*), bass drum (*dagu*), temple

blocks, Peking gongs, and (Tibetan) bowl chimes alongside a variety of other percussion instruments, as does Tan Dun's *Percussion Concerto "The Tears of Nature"* (2012), which features Chinese big drums and Tibetan singing bowls. The augmentation of the percussion battery employed within Western orchestras, including instruments from an international array of sources, arguably deserves greater scholarly attention, especially with regard to the signifying potential of individual instruments, techniques and timbres, in relation to their original and specific performance contexts and connotations, transforming the orchestra into one great cosmopolitan melting pot of available timbres.

Tan Dun and the bells of *heaven earth mankind (symphony 1997)*

Tan Dun, who became acquainted with the Beijing opera during the Cultural Revolution, relates that he later drew on some of its techniques, aspiring to combine the old and the new in his music (Lau 2004, 29). This is true not only for his vocal works. In his *Eight Colors* for string quartet (1986–88), for example, he incorporated timbres of Beijing Opera, Buddhist chanting, and traditional operatic elements are found in many of his works.

Tan's *Heaven Earth Mankind (Symphony 1997)* was commissioned by the Association for the celebration of the Reunification of Hong Kong with China, and was first performed in the city with the composer conducting on 1 July 1997, "the first day of Chinese rule in Hong Kong since 1842" (Hung 2011, 610). As Lawrence Witzleben explains, the internationalism displayed at the premiere was "pan-Chinese" in nature, with Tan Dun conducting and Yo Yo Ma on the cello (2002, 126–27). The significance of the 2400-year-old bronze bells from Wuhan, which Tan used to great effect in this composition, is an interesting element in itself. While the original, ancient bells were replaced for the performance with full-size replicas, as Witzleben notes, these were "nonetheless imposing both visually (they hang on an L-shaped multi-tiered rack towering above the performers) and sonically (they span five octaves, with 12 pitches in most octaves, and with many bells able to produce two distinct pitches)" (124).

Yu Siu Wah, in an extended study of the work, notes the confused nature of the connotations stimulated by Tan's cultural borrowings in relation to the already complex political nature of the occasion. In Tan's use of the bells, their long-submerged traditional connotations, dating from the days of imperial China, resurface along with clear prescriptions relating to their use, concerning those authorized to use them and the circumstances for proper use. As Yu makes clear, "for those Chinese who had a basic education in Chinese culture, it was inevitable that imperial associations would naturally come to life again with the reappearance of the bell-chimes" (2004, 67). Their use represented a clear statement of the sovereignty and power of the central government, something that is particularly evident in the commercial recording of the composition's sixth movement, where Tan introduces a recording of "a street performance of Cantonese operatic singing," a "suicidal duet" from an opera symbolizing "the downfall of a city" and which also incriminates those Ming officials who worked for the "new Manchu regime" (58–59). Loaded already with connotation, this recording is then faded out as it is taken over by the sound of the bells. For Yu, this "drowning out of Hong Kong's local culture by the majestic bell-chimes from the mainland is aurally significant," (59) a conclusion which Witzleben agrees is "unavoidable" (2002, 127). Taking this point in conjunction with others, Witzleben holds that "if this [composition] is intended as a political statement, it is muddled, to say the least," while, for Yu, the symphony "is a deliberate effort to confuse two different practices and traditions" (2004, 71). It seems that both Tan and Ma were

politically ambivalent as to the use being made of the symphony at its premiere and correspondingly non-committal as to its significance, with Tan simply stating "what we want to say is all in the music" (Hung 2011, 611).

Conclusions

With their personal and national histories, Chinese and Japanese composers have had different attitudes to their respective traditional musics. Post-war Japanese composers experienced a period of distancing themselves from traditional music and its social, cultural, and nationalist connotations. For Chinese composers, the Cultural Revolution was a double-edged sword in that it denied them access to Western music, while at the same time opening up the riches of their own traditions.

The distinctive histories of the two countries, coupled with the fact that the majority of composers discussed here work in the Western art music tradition, meant that each composer had to come to terms with traditional music and its connotations in order to employ it. The post-war generation of composers in Japan came to a number of idiosyncratic solutions for integrating different aspects of traditional music into their works, with Takemitsu's preference for certain instruments, Matsudaira's rethinking of the inner possibilities of *gagaku*, Yuasa's attachment to Japanese aesthetic thought, or Satoh's quest for new meaning within traditional music. At the same time, the new generation of composers in China came to value their own musical culture to the point of integrating it significantly within their composition. Given the frequently uncertain nature of political and cultural life in China in the twentieth century, particularly in the era of Mao Zedong, the question of cultural connotation in music, as elsewhere, was somewhat complex. For Frederic Lau, this generation moved beyond what Chou Wen-Chung called "superficial orientalization," using Chinese elements suggestively and evocatively (2004, 27–28). It appropriated traditional musical elements, but not always in context, and at times undermined the original intentions of the musical elements they were drawing upon. While for Lau, this practice is "refreshing and unique" for Western listeners, it also allowed Chinese composers to forge a new, modern Chinese identity, albeit somewhat conflicted in its oppositions (35–36).

The identification of signifying units and the question of musical connotation has been pervasive throughout the chapter; a range of musical symbols and topoi has been identified in relation to musical instruments, water, Japanese gardens and plants, bells, wind and breath, ceremonial, ritual, tradition and chant, pentatonic scales, Chinese folk music and Beijing Opera. The list is by no means exhaustive and offers only a glimpse of a much greater signifying universe that remains to be explored.

Everett comes close to Lachenmann in recognizing the embedded nature of meaning and how signification and connotation are implicated in multi-level musical apparatuses or assemblages (2004, 11). Nevertheless, the irruption of Chinese and Japanese music within what we still term the Western art music tradition undoubtedly has something of the epochal about it. Without wishing to petrify music history in the given of any particular moment, the work of all of the composers discussed in this chapter clearly indicates a new, significant stage in the creation of music that shares elements of both Eastern and Western cultures. Given that we cannot hope to say what it all means, these repertoires are surely indicative of continuing global changes beyond music, while at the same time suggesting that the meeting of cultures and the play of cultural significations and connotations will continue to inspire awe and wonder in us, while keeping us busy for a long time to come.

PART VI

Music signification and emotion, cognition, and embodiment

23

FOUR FLAVORS OF PRE-MODERN EMOTION

Michael Spitzer

We have no history of emotion in Western music, a remarkable lacuna, given the affective turn in the humanities (but see Plamper 2015). The problem is even more acute following Dixon's (2003) thesis that the modern quasi-scientific concept of "emotion," per se, was only invented in the nineteenth century, and that earlier conceptualizations of what we term "emotion" were less personalized, less fixed, and sometimes more abstract or theological, as in the intellectual "affections." Although there are several studies of pre-modern emotion in music (for example, Leach [2011] on Machaut; McKinney [2010] on Willaert), we do not yet know what an overall historical framework might look like. The present essay argues that music from 800 to 1630, roughly from early chant to Monteverdi, unfolds four discrete paradigms of emotion: (1) "Augustinian Ascents," where Saint Augustine's theology of divine love is reflected in the surging contours of early chant; (2) "The Thomist Descent" where Thomas Aquinas's emphasis on affective reciprocity—taking other persons seriously—is enacted in the dyadic core of early counterpoint, in which emotion is defined reciprocally between tenor and cantus in songs and motets; (3) "Humanism," or the diffusion of Neo-Platonism and Galenic humoral physiology and the affective "ether" breathed by polyphony in Josquin and others; and (4) "The Swerve," or subjective atomism that flows in the wake of the reception of Lucretius's *De Rerum Natura* and Petrarch's sonnets. Even Machiavelli's theory of "countervailing passions" has something to say about the cut-and-thrust of violent emotions in Monteverdi's fourth book of Madrigals, with their animated, fragmentary textures.

Augustinian ascents

Saint Augustine of Hippo (354–430), philosopher and church father, was the most important and influential theorist of emotion in the West. His model of spiritual ascent in stages to a level of transcendence has influenced countless emotional narratives, from Dante's *Divine Comedy* to Romantic and modernist texts, such as *Wuthering Heights* and *Ulysses*. All of these works, in Nussbaum's words, are "Augustinian ascents" (Nussbaum 2001, 527). The Augustinian ascent differs from Plato's familiar ladder towards perfection (Taylor 1989), by taking the radical step to substitute Platonic perfection with love, which, for Augustine, was the core human emotion. Compared to love, perfection is too inhuman

to interest a Christian theologian. Equally inhuman is the denial by the Stoics of emotion in favor of their ideal state of *apatheia*, "in which one neither trembles from fear nor suffers from sorrow" (Augustine, *City of God*, XIV, 9, quoted in Dixon 2003, 41), causing human beings to rather lose all humanity than win true peace. Love engages the messy realities of human nature and experience. In addition, in terms of Augustine's ambition to explain lower and higher realms of experience, love is philosophically more useful than perfection, because it embraces physical and ideal extremes—both erotic desire and yearning towards the divine. In other words, Augustine's system emphasizes the relation of two types of love kept apart in Greek thought, sexual love (*eros*) and divine love (*agape*).

For Augustine, sexual love is a "passion," whereas divine love is an "affection." Affection is divested of the negative, physical qualities of love moored in sexuality, such as pain, sadness, and anger, and yet it remains an emotion, albeit of a more contemplative kind. Affection thus blends the physical and cognitive aspects of emotion, aspects that the Western tradition has tended to caricature as being crudely at war with each other (Dixon 2003, 2). A non-cognitive view of emotion cannot capture Augustine's quintessential affection of hope as a conscious act of the will. Hope may be voluntary and reflective, but it is an emotion all the same, just as longing for otherworldly joy is a kind of emotion. Hence the emotion of love, in its desire or yearning, does double duty as both an activity—an act of volition—and as a wished-for end-state. Love's dual aspect, as an active volition and a goal, makes Augustine's model systemic as well as highly dynamic. In the first respect, it is systemic because all emotions are considered not in themselves (as discrete categories, in modern parlance) but in relation to love as a regulative category. Although Augustine adopts Cicero's four-fold typology of the basic perturbations of the soul (desire [*cupiditas*], fear [*timor*], joy [*laetitia*], and sorrow [*tristitia*]), these four passions are understood in relation to love in terms of whether they help or impede the will's ascent to love, via love. "For what are desire and joy but the will in harmony with things we desire," he writes. "And what are fear and sadness but the will in disagreement with things we abhor" (Augustine, *City of God* XIV.6, quoted in Dixon 2003, 47). Alternately, Augustine says that:

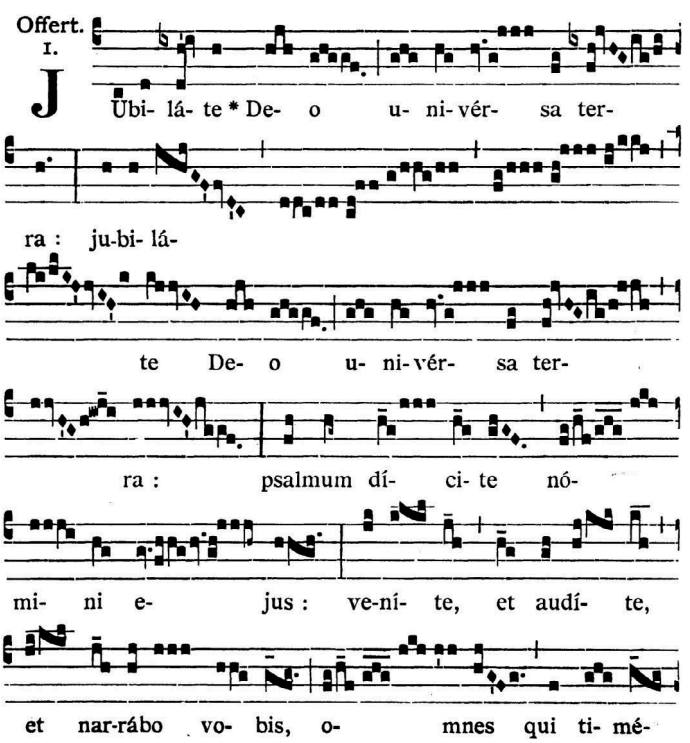
> Love which strains after the possession of the loved object is desire; and the love which possesses and enjoys that object is joy. The love that shuns what opposes it is fear, while the love that feels that opposition when it happens is grief.
>
> *(Augustine,* City of God *XIV.7)*

Only God is the permitted object of love as enjoyment (rather than as an object of desire), and Augustine equates that achieved state with joy. Insofar as happiness is the goal of life, it is equated with love of God. Hence joy, like other emotions, is an aspect of love governed by the will. Augustine's specific words upend many contemporary assumptions: for example, that emotions are discrete, or static, or involuntary, or easily separable from cognition. In these respects, Augustine's ideas illuminate how emotion works in early music.

So what of music? "Do not seek for words," Augustine counseled, "as though you could explain what God delights in. Sing in jubilation" (cited in Cattin 1984, 162). Augustine's recorded attitude to music tells us two things: that he associated song *in general* with the category of joy as achieved love of God; and that the intensity of this emotion exceeded the expressive capacity of language. At first glance, neither of these claims would trouble a contemporary listener. The reality, however, is that early medieval approaches to text expression are diametrically opposed to our own. While it was generally understood that melismatic music represented the ineffable sound of angelic singing, the texts, by contrast,

often referred to the mundane. Rather than expressing angelic delight, the words acted as a screen, shielding us from its emotional intensity. The apparent disjunction between music and text also worked in reverse: sometimes, the music is impassively nondescript, so as to avoid expressing a particularly vivid text. The dialectic elaborates the Boethian aesthetics of consolation (after Boethius's *The Consolation of Philosophy*, written AD 524), a standpoint opposite to the mimetic paradigm which sees music as an imitation of human emotion. Music's function is to praise God and to comfort us; to alleviate suffering rather than to represent it. A physical corollary to this view is that people imitated the music, rather than the other way around. The singer's breathing, bodily sway, and inner affective life were all entrained by the chant's rise and fall. And the collective unison of chant effected a quasi-religious merger between the choristers and the music whereby "listening and singing become one" (Crocker 2000, 6). This identification makes it counter-intuitive to separate the expression from the articulation of emotion, as if a listener could stand apart from the music to assess its character. To state it otherwise, the "joy" that Augustine extolls is arguably an emotion that is felt through collective participation, rather than something that is represented by characteristic melodic features.

In the spectrum of early chant idioms, the "jubilation" of the *Jubilus* marks an extreme point of melodic freedom, where chant is ecstatically liberated from the constraints of text setting and breaks into joyful melismas. More specifically, *Jubilus* marks the melismatic continuation of the Alleluia chant on its last syllable; indeed, Alleluias became traditionally the most "jubilant" parts of mass settings, and they were believed to represent the music of the angelic hosts. Jubilation reached a peak of sophistication in the monumentally long



Example 23.1 Jubilate Deo universa from the *Graduale Romanum, Solesmes*, 1961, 69

Offertories which Apel believed to represent the "dramatic climax" of chant composition (Apel 1990, 375). A particularly famous Offertory chant is *Jubilate Deo universa*, recorded in a twelfth-century manuscript but which probably dated from much earlier. Each of the first two syllables of "Jubilate" are chanted on a single note, then the melody breaks into jubilation on the third syllable, "la"—so explosively that when the phrase is repeated, "la" becomes a 48-note jubilation, surging and ebbing in waves of emotion (Example 23.1).

It is easy to imagine these "waves" of jubilation embodying the rise and fall of the will in Augustine's theory, striving towards the Divine, attaining it momentarily with the crest of the melisma, only to sink back to earth at the end. The chant's joy is also more like an Augustinian affection than a worldly passion. Modally diffuse, metrically amorphous, and, most importantly, rather slow, *Jubilate Deo*—in terms of its emotional content—is communicated as sedate and reserved when compared to the more viscerally joyful expression of medieval dances and tavern songs (see McGee 1990).

Thomist descents

Augustinian emotion is essentially individualist, a fact epitomized for Nussbaum (2001, 535) by how the Saint struggled to distance his feelings of grief for the death of his own mother. Thomas Aquinas's (1224–1274) philosophy of emotion, discussed at various points of his *Summa Theologica* (hereafter *ST*), differs in its attitude to other people: at the heart of his conception of love as an emotion is *reciprocity*. In musical terms, the shift from Augustinian individualism to Thomist reciprocity paralleled the gradual shift from monophonic chant to contrapuntal procedures wherein signification in music is expressed through the interaction of one voice with another; as a result, music signification emerges from *relations* between and among melodic lines.

Following Aquinas's model of emotions as layered and co-present, melodic lines interact with each other contrapuntally, engendering chain reactions that create a truly dynamic expression of "emotion as movement towards or away from an object" (Aquinas, *ST*, 1ii, Q.22–22). Most significantly, Aquinas inaugurates a humanistic concern with everyday life that would culminate three centuries later in the Renaissance. The point of Aquinas's focus on the passions is to counterbalance an over-emphasis on faith. While exegeses of the *Summa* abound, one overarching strategy to be extracted from the work—and most relevant to this essay—is the negotiation between the sacred and secular, the religious and amatory.

Love is central to Aquinas's theory because it drives a person either to approach or to avoid an object through like or dislike. What he deems the "concupiscible" passions (love, desire, joy, hate, and sorrow) are most convergent with love, because they are *directly* pleasurable or painful. By contrast, the "irascible" passions (hope, despair, fear, courage, and anger) are blocked by some kind of obstacle and are thereby marked by difficulty and struggle (*ST*, 1, Q.81). Aquinas's theory of emotion resonates with the cycle of consonance and dissonance in music. In his discussion of matrimony (*ST*, supplement to part 3, Q. 55), Aquinas discusses "affinity" as leading to desire. The resonance of Aquinas's theory of emotion with the cycle of consonance and dissonance in music is obvious. Similarly, as the music is set into motion, one note leads to another. A typical thirteenth-century polyphonic motet begins with the "affinities" of its "perfect" musical harmony, usually an octave or a fifth. Dissonances introduce "irascible" struggle, overcome when the piece resolves to the joy of a perfect consonance. The counterpoint is also hierarchical, the voices rising from a foundational tenor, through an inner motetus, up to the generally more florid triplum. All the voices are unified by the "love" enshrined in the perfection of musical harmony.

Why, then, do the legions of medieval music theorists, including Tinctoris, seldom, if ever, refer to the passions or to Aquinas's treatise? Early music theory was essentially practical, not speculative. Despite this silence, there is more than a grain of truth in Rosenwein's delightful conceit:

> The whole sequence [of Aquinas's passions] worked rather like the three-and-four voice motets that were being sung on the streets of Paris as Thomas was writing. The first theme, in the treble, is sounded by love, soon joined by desire. In chimes the tenor voice of hope or despair, lamenting or anticipating the possibility of obtaining the beloved. The bass line, always slow and somber, often taken from a liturgical text, is represented by anger, slow to bear and yet ready to achieve its own very different "good" objective. And then comes the end: rest and pleasure.
>
> *(Rosenwein 2015, 154)*

Rosenwein's analogy captures the spirit, if not the accurate practice, of how motets were written. Another oblique shaft of light is cast by Brand's account of improvised polyphony in medieval Sienna, revealing how its spiritual hierarchy mapped onto the layout of the church:

> Two clerics chanted the Gradual slowly from the stairs that divided the choir from the presbytery, the deliberate tempo underscoring their labors "in laments of penitence" and struggles to "climb from one virtue up to the next." Afterwards, the cantor joined his subordinates and all three ascended to the pulpit to sing the Alleluia with organum, thus amplifying its joyous (rather than penitential) character while concomitantly evoking the traditional association of this chant with angelic choirs.
>
> *(Brand 2016, 65)*

The music rises both literally and figuratively. So, is affective layering intrinsic to medieval contrapuntal texture, rising from negatively to positively valenced emotions, from somber tenor (Rosenwein's "bass") to jubilant cantus? While true up to a point—insofar as lower voices naturally tend to move more slowly—the seriousness of a tenor is deepened when it carries, as a cantus firmus, a liturgical chant. Nevertheless, this hierarchy is always subject to creative play, which can sometimes even upend this apparently natural order.

Humanism

On the face of it, emotion theory seems to disappear in the Renaissance at the moment humanist thinkers and artists consciously strive to arouse emotion by emulating classical rhetoric. The upsurge of rhetorical manuals, culminating in music with the taxonomies of Zarlino (1517–1590) and Burmeister (1564–1629) in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, reflects a practical, case-by-case approach. But was it really true that there were no major *theorists* of emotion between Aquinas and Descartes (1596–1650)? The thrust of Renaissance philosophers such as Pico della Mirandola (1463–1494) and Rudolph Agricola (1444–1485) is an intellectual skepticism and impatience with systems, so the avoidance of theorizing about emotion was not a surprise. That said, the outstanding Renaissance thinker on emotion was the Spaniard Juan Luis Vives (1493–1540), sometimes referred to as "the

father of modern psychology." Focusing on rhetoric, he emphasized the complexity with which emotions interact with each other. Vives notwithstanding, the central sources for Renaissance thinking on emotion are two traditions which are familiar to the point of invisibility: Neoplatonism and the Galenic medicine of the humors. Although this material has been extensively discussed (see Tomlinson 1993; Gouk 2000), its relevance for musical experience has never been addressed. It has struggled to shake off its image of fascinating yet irrelevant superstition; see, for instance, the short shrift Taruskin gives the "magical" songs of Marsilio Ficino (1433–1499), the major figure of the hermetic tradition (Taruskin 2010, I, 615). For this reason, I shall approach these ideas circuitously, via a concrete example.

Josquin's motet, *Ave Maria … virgo serena* is a touchstone on account of its exemplary contrapuntal perfection (see Milsom 2012, 234–42). In examining how the motet signals a shift in emotional style, I explore aspects of "affective rhythm" and "affective space" of Humanist emotion in music.

Affective rhythm

Josquin's counterpoint exhibits two kinds of musical "wonder," both of which are related to its onsets and climaxes. First, hearing this music live, in a church or cathedral space, can fill a listener with awe. A second type of wonder is created when the texture builds to a saturation point with all voices present, drowning the listener in an overwhelming sonorous harmony. Josquin's practice became stereotypical for the High Renaissance, and is further exemplified in the music of Palestrina.

Affective rhythm is the oscillation between being touched by the music as it articulates the vocal onsets of individual parts, and being engulfed by the music as it projects textural climaxes. This respiratory rhythm, akin to inhalation and exhalation, relates to the "aspirative prayer" that the thirteenth-century Carthusian prior, Hugo de Balma, speaks about when discussing the link between breathing cycles and ritualistic repetition (Martin 1997, 35). It was a practice that could be taught as a daily regime, as in the popular "Exercise on the Passion" by Louis de Blois (1506–1566), abbot of Liessies in Hainault (Butler [1919] 2005, 117). Josquin also produces a meditative effect through a simpler harmonic expression (compared to Machaut and Dufay) that reflects a mantra-like repetition of what we would now call tonic and dominant chords. Finally, where we like to model emotion as a goal-orientated journey along a path, the model here is a spatial one of filling a receptacle, as is captured by Josquin's text:

> Hail, thou whose conception,
> Full of solemn joy
> Fills all things in heaven and earth
> With renewed gladness.

Emotion, then, is a spirit ("gladness") which "fills," alternately filling ourselves and filling the cosmos in a connected cycle.

Affective space

Because all of the voices in the motet share melodic ideas through imitation, they also share the musical affect. Rather than being encapsulated within a single or pair of voices, as in the layered, hierarchical textures of medieval motets, the emotion is now diffused throughout

the entire musical fabric. Lowinsky compared this shift from hierarchical to equal-voiced polyphony to the contemporary "Copernican Revolution" ([1941] 1989, 6–8). There are distinct aspects to Josquin's affective space.

- The Chant: besides imitating each other, the voices also elaborate the titular chant, and thereby they absorb the chant's affective character. This absorption is especially concentrated because, as Milsom demonstrates (2012, 212), Josquin exploits the fact that one half of the chant melody perfectly interlocks with the other half with no changes required in the contrapuntal line.
- Group Emotion: familiarity has masked how counterpoint challenges our modern conceptions of subjectivity. In Josquin's textures, the musical persona is divided—or multiplied—so that the emotion of the text is not individuated within a single voice, but shared by the group. As such, it epitomizes *group emotion*. The Flemish mystic, Denis the Carthusian (1402–1471), complained that polyphony's breaking of the voice into parts (*fractio vocis*) is the sign of a "broken soul" (in Huizinga [1919] 1996, 322), a position that explains the contemporary hostility to complex counterpoint on theological grounds. The practical aim of multiplying voices, however, was to amplify the text through a bigger and more lavish sound. In short, the seat of emotion is not the individual persona, but the text with its chant melody. Affect in Josquin thus approximates to the post-modern, technical, sense of "affect" when it is opposed to "emotion" proper (Massumi 2002, 51; Clough and Halley 2007, 2).
- Individuation: still, affect can fluctuate between poles of the general and the individual. Josquin's motet ends famously with a highly personal appeal to the Virgin to "remember me." Taruskin suggests that "the entrance of all four parts together on a 'hollow' or 'open' consonance on 'O'" sounds "like an amplification of a single voice" (2010, I, 571–72). By extension, this is also true of the whole of the final chordal, syllabic setting of the prayer. Individual pathos has been associated with low-energy syllabic song since the medieval *planctus* ("song of lamentation"). In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, chordal recitation—because it eschewed flamboyance—could be expressive of penitential humility, an idiom much in vogue during the sixteenth-century counter-reformation. The penultimate verse in Josquin's motet moves in the opposite extreme, with the highly melismatic and plural jubilation of the "angelic virtues." Hence, if the *Ave Maria*'s measured counterpoint begins at the center of affective space, its range expands to fill its heights and depths, flexing "up" towards angelic jubilation, genuflecting "down" to a grounded, personal humility. It is elegant that Josquin reserves these extremes for the motet's final two verses; in many of his works, such as in the great motet, *Miserere mei Deus* and the masses, the poles of affective space are combined with great rhetorical freedom.
- Mimesis: imitation (as in "imitative counterpoint") is an over-determined concept. Just as the voices imitate each other, they imitate the affect of the text. They also reach out beyond the plane of the musical canvas to represent external reality. Akin to the contemporary discovery of perspective in painting, the musical analogue for perspective was modal harmony (Lowinsky [1941] 1989, 10–11). Last and by no means least, harmony was a facet of Universal Harmony and the Great Chain of Being, the mutual reflection of the Boethian *musica mundana* and *musica humana*. If Aquinas re-discovered Aristotle, the humanists returned to Plato.

The swerve

> When [Savonarola's] power was at its height and his words still filled the citizenry with pious fear and loathing, he devoted a series of his Lenten sermons to attacking ancient philosophers, singling out one group in particular for special ridicule. "Listen women, they say that this world was made of atoms, that is, those tiniest of particles that fly through the air. Now laugh, women, at the studies of these learned men."
>
> *(Greenblatt 2012, 220)*

In the winter of 1417, Poggio Bracciolini, papal secretary to the Antipope John XXIII, came across the manuscript of Lucretius's long-lost Latin poem, *De Rerum Natura* (On the Nature of the Universe). Lucretius's Epicurean philosophy meant far more than the pursuit of pleasure; it entailed an atheistic materialism with far-reaching claims. These are a selection of some of those claims: the universe has no creator; everything is made of invisible particles called "atoms"; atoms are in motion in an infinite void; everything comes into being as a result of a swerve (*clinamen*) from a straight line, setting off a ceaseless chain of collisions; the swerve is the source of free will; there is no afterlife, yet death is nothing to us; all organized religions are superstitious delusions; and most famously, the highest goal of human life is the enhancement of pleasure and the reduction of pain.

The image of swerving particles colliding with each other captures an essential quality of emotion in Renaissance music. In addition, a compelling study by Calcagno (2012) places Petrarchism at the root of the development of sixteenth-century Italian madrigals in the first operas. Calcagno re-thinks the traditional narrative of the evolution of the operatic subject so that its driver is not progressive individuation towards the solo recitative or aria. On the contrary, the motivating force is the multi-perspectivism implicit within Petrarch's revolutionary invention of a fractured poetic subject. With this insight, the story of opera swerves in a new direction, paradoxically staying within counterpoint's ethos of collective, rather than individuated, expression. Calcagno's work brings Monteverdi into line with revisionist Shakespeare scholarship, with its emphasis on the plays' use of multiple perspective and distributed creativity, the idea of the Bard inhabiting plural subjectivities (Bate 2008). This new approach also converges with the Italian madrigal's Lucretian atomism.

In the hands of a dramatist, affective atomism becomes a battle of the passions. Monteverdi's *Cor mio, mentre vi miro*, from his fourth book of madrigals, is based on a concise eight-line poem by Guarini (translated by Tomlinson 1990, 84).

Cor mio, mentre vi miro	My love, while I look at you
Visibilmente mi trasform'in voi	I am visibly transformed into you
E trasformato poi,	and transformed, then
in un solo sospir l'anima spiro	in one single sigh I expire.
O bellezza mortale,	Oh deadly beauty!
o bellezza vitale,	Oh life-giving beauty!
poi che si tosto un core	since even as a heart
per te rinasce, e per te nato, more.	is reborn for you, for you born it dies.

Guarini refines Petrarchan antithesis into a style of witty concision. As Tomlinson (1990, 84–86) points out, the poem follows the two-part format of a classical epigram: a situation (*expositio*), lines 1–4, answered by a "point" (*acumen*), lines 5–8.

Monteverdi matches Guarini's epigrammatic flow line by line. A gentle homophonic opening is countered in line 2 by the rapid-fire quavers of "visibilmente." The bass comes in late for line 3, "e trasformato," after the upper voices have moved on to line 4, "in uno solo sospir," so that the two lines are thrown against each other, neatly capturing the text's sense of "transformation." The epigrammatic caesura, between *expositio* and *acumen*, falls at line 5. Monteverdi whittles the texture down to the upper duet via what Tomlinson calls an "evaporated cadence" (1990, 90), answered abruptly ("O bellezza") by massed homophonic texture, and a tonal shift to a B♭ triad, which initiates a IV–V–I cadence in C major. The cadence is repeated a step higher on D, and the tenor (acting as bass) reiterates the sequence on "O bellezza," while the upper voices rush onwards to the next line with an explosion of eighth notes. Setting the last one-and-a-half lines of the poem, describing the poet's re-birth ("poi che si tosto un core per te rinasce"), this disproportionately long 11-measure climax dominates the madrigal. But its rising arc hits a brick wall five measures before the end with a musical "death" representing the final half-line: "e per te nato, more," a shift from C major to A minor and D minor. Monteverdi's rhetoric is so precise that he even encapsulates a further antithesis within the half line itself, "cutting short the rising line in each voice on 'nato' with a dying collapse of a seventh to express 'more'" (Tomlinson 1990, 91). His setting is an almost "fractal" Chinese box of internal antitheses on at least three levels: line against line, the formal caesura, and within the individual lines.

Disciplining and compressing these warring passions, Monteverdi's viscerally muscular power of control evokes a proto-modern sense of musical form; i.e., an abstract musical structure paradoxically transcending the very text that inspires its rhetoric. This takes us to the heart of the fascinating ambiguity of Monteverdi's historical position, although it is an ambiguity no different from other tensions in humanist emotion. In the first respect, *Cor mio* straddles the two worlds of hexachordal-modal and tonal harmony. Eric Chafe (1992, 66) thinks that its migrant modal areas—as in the opening cycle of fifths, D–G–C–F–B♭—unfold the F "soft" hexachord. But how is that reading compatible with the intuitive hearing of the madrigal as being centered tonally around D? Newcomb puts the problem in a nutshell: "Tonality is based on overall shapes created by large-scale areas of harmonic prolongation. Modality is not" (2007, 215). And yet there are numerous ways that the passions of *Cor mio* unfold in tonally directed linear progressions motivated by harmonic issues in its opening line; some of these issues even directly engage the *clashes* between modal and tonal obligations. The tonal shape in measures 1–5 (line 1) is a half-cadence on D, the quasi-Phrygian B♭–A cadential approach in the bass artfully prolonging the canto's opening A–B♭–A expressive plaint (an echo of Josquin's *Miserere* refrain). At the same time, this straightforward tonal gambit encloses a modal progression from G (strengthened by the F# of measure 1) to C (m. 3). These tensions are brought out in the five-measure answering phrase (line 2, "visibilmente"). Notwithstanding the surface rhetorical contrast, the music elaborates the same tonal shape, the move from D to a half-cadence on A, but now with the modal G–C fifth very firmly prolonged across measures 6–8. After the close of the *expositio*, with the repeatedly deferred tonic D (albeit weakened by the absence of the bass and lower voices), the caesura at measure 25 turns on a shocking B♭—the "problem" note of measure 1—now stabilized into a full B♭ triad. What happens next encapsulates the modal/tonal double-perspective. Tonally, the B♭ initiates a pair of four-measure cadences on C and D (each is actually a double cadence: B♭–C–F, F–G–**C**; then C–D–G, G–A–**D**). Yet

this prolonged C–D progression also stakes out a modal approach back to D in the parallel fifths (C-G, D-A) typical of Monteverdi's hybrid voice leading (Chew 1989; Kang 2011). Finally, the frenzied outbreak of eighth notes from measure 33 ("poi che si tosto") now clicks into place as a continuation of the voice-leading ascent C to D. The sequential cycles of fifths (C–G–**D** and D–A–**E**) project the structural notes D and E. A third, unexpected, sequence (mm. 40–43) leaves the music suspended back on the structural pitch D, but set to a modally "hard" G triad (i.e., containing B♮). The madrigal's expressive high point is thus an emphatic apotheosis of the modal G disputed at its opening (m. 2), in which tensions are compounded by modal soft/hard alteration (B♭/B♮). To be sure, the madrigal is re-claimed for tonality by its "death" in an A–D perfect cadence at measures 48–49. The poet's heart, however, is expressly "re-born" on modal G, the rhetorical climax of the madrigal.

It does not take much hermeneutic ingenuity to read *Cor mio*'s message as a tale of two "hearts," or, indeed, of two passions: a modern, tonal passion struggling to accommodate an older yet irrepressible modal passion. It is certainly possible to broaden the interpretive horizon from the common Monteverdian trope of "music and sex" (see McClary 2004) to the birth pangs of musical modernism, and indeed, to engage with the Italian political climate of the times. One must tread lightly, given Monteverdi's avowed pragmatism as exemplified by his claim, in a letter from February 1634 to Giovanni Battista Doni (Ossi 2003, 190), that his music was a mere matter of "cose praticali" (practical things). On the one hand, contrary to the ideals of the Florentine Camerata that music should be a servant of the text, Monteverdi's "aesthetic ideal" (Newcomb 2007, 201) actually tended towards a species of musical formalism. On the other hand, despite what Monteverdi *said*, what he *did* perfected the sociable, conversational style advocated and performed by the humanist academies. *Cor mio*'s warring passions enact the thrusts and counter-thrusts of witty conversation, as celebrated in Castiglione's 1528 *The Book of the Courtier* (*Il Libro del Cortegiano*). This is also the burden of Machiavelli's Epicurean politics. Machiavelli's Prince rules through what later became theorized by Hobbes and Spinoza as a system of "countervailing passions" (Kahn 2004), in which no emotion can be controlled by reason, only by a stronger, countervailing emotion. For Machiavelli's amoral pragmatism, the highest good is a stable republic governed by a prudent Prince. Kahn makes the connection between *virtù* (prudential excellence) in Machiavelli with the new ideal of aesthetic sovereignty emanating from Guarini's *Il Pastor fido*, Monteverdi's favorite poetic text. What holds Monteverdi's passions in check is his extraordinary formal control. Yet it is a sense of form which exudes a palpably visceral, muscular quality. Monteverdian form is itself a species of passion.

It is one-sided, therefore, to view the story of emotion as driving ineluctably towards individualism with the birth of opera. Monteverdi's passions could equally well be seen as the triumph of an Augustinian, collective model of emotion.

If we are perhaps most familiar with musical emotion in the common-practice period, this essay has helped fill in its shady prehistory. Moreover, I have sought to show that, rather than being a monolithic block, early musical emotion came in four distinct paradigms, or "flavors." It would be interesting if the envelope were pushed back further to music before Gregorian Chant; i.e., to the Roman and Greek traditions, as far as we can surmise their existence.

24
MUSIC AS EXPERIENCE

Musical sense-making between step-by-step processing and synoptic overview

Mark Reybrouck

Introduction

Does music signify? Is there a meaning immanent in the music or is it attributed by the listener? Is there a difference between meaning and sense-making? And can we speak in objective terms about musical meaning with a causal relation between the musical structure and the sense-making by the listener, or is the process of signification something subjective and idiosyncratic? The answers to these questions are not obvious, as they cut across the borders of varied approaches, while they simultaneously engage current thinking about music signification. The latter, in particular, is an umbrella term that embraces distinct fields such as semiotics, hermeneutics, phenomenology, epistemology, and contributions from cognitive sciences and neurosciences. There is, in fact, a vast research community that conducts interdisciplinary work on music cognition and experience, as is evidenced by the exponential growth of writings on music signification and meaning by researchers from a host of countries. Signification and meaning, however, cannot be used interchangeably with sense-making, since "making sense" implies an active involvement of the sense-maker while the concepts of signification and meaning may point to something immanent in the music.

This essay addresses musical sense-making and the way music works. It aims to provide new perspectives on musical understanding. My vision is not restricted to an object-centered framework of sense-making, but it encompasses a process-like approach to music as an enriched environment. Music, on this view, is a succession of sounding events that have the potential to capture the listener's attention by relying on perceptual mechanisms that attribute salience and signification to these events. Music, in fact, is not merely a sounding structure, but rather it is something that impinges upon our body and our mind. As such, it has inductive power, which means that musical understanding cannot be approached in a detached, disembodied, and depersonalized way. Musical sense-making, therefore, is an ongoing process of dynamic interactivity between the listener and the music that includes interactions at several levels. These interactions can be physical, with sound-producing devices—as in instrumental performance—but they can also be carried out at an epistemic level of knowledge construction, which is to say how we deal with the sounds. In both cases, though, there is a shift from a disembodied way of knowing to an embodied and enactive approach to cognition and sense-making.

Music semiotics

The interactive approach to musical sense-making and knowledge construction is an emerging topic in music semiotics, and it reflects the shift from a representation-centered framework toward a paradigm that stresses the role of action and experience. This experiential approach is captured in the gradual transition from the study of musical syntax (the musical structure) to musical semantics (self-reflective or extra-musical) to musical pragmatics (the effects on the listener). Musical sense-making, on this view, must be situated in the broader context of musicology, which embraces recent developments in the field. Music semiotics, however, as an autonomous field of inquiry, is rather young and is still positioning itself in the broader context of musicology and semiotics (Nattiez 1990b; Agawu 1991; Tarasti 1994, 2002; Hatten 2005; Sheinberg 2012; Tagg 2013; Maeder and Reybrouck 2015, 2016, 2017).

The relation of music semiotics to musicology is not clear. As an academic discipline, musicology was established around the second half of the nineteenth century as a universal model or system that should encompass both existing and established fields of research, as well as envisioned ones. Guido Adler, who coined the term and conceived of its scope, method, and aims, proposed three sub-disciplines, namely historical, systematic, and comparative musicology (Adler 1885). For a number of reasons, the historic branch has received the bulk of attention. The systematic approach, on the other hand, was conceived as a joint discipline that should comprise both systematic and comparative aspects to study the organization of musical structures in a transdisciplinary and cross-cultural approach (see Schneider 2008). Both major approaches, though subsumed under the same universal framework, evolved in different directions, due partly to their difference in contents and methodology, with orientations which can be termed either as *historical-philological-hermeneutic* or *scientific-experimental-comparative*. The former relies mainly on philological skills, descriptions, musical analysis, hermeneutic understanding, and interpretation; the latter stands for a sophisticated, thought-out and well-organized procedures of thinking, relying on measurements, experimental or empirical investigations, data analysis, statistics, and scientific modeling.

It is not easy to position music semiotics in this broad framework. In the early days of systematic musicology, music semiotics found its home in systematic musicology. Some of these tactics are still present in structurally oriented approaches to musical analysis, but other and more recent trends lean toward the historical-philological-hermeneutic approach as well. Other developments reflect trends in the history of general semiotics, namely the expansion from a dyadic approach of sense-making (signifier and signified) to a triadic approach by including the role of the interpreting mind. This transition—already lurking in fields such as analytical philosophy, action theory, general systems theory, and the semiotic tradition of Peirce and Morris—stresses the dynamic relationship between three levels of semiotic reference, namely the material sign vehicle, the object it refers to, and the final interpretation by the sign user. An interesting attempt to broaden the field was initiated also by Morris's division of semiotics into three dimensions, namely syntactics, semantics, and pragmatics (Morris [1938] 1975).

Music semiotics adapted many contributions in the field of musical *syntactics*, evidenced in the work of Ruwet (1972), Molino (1975), and Nattiez (1975, 1990b), and their focus on taxonomic-empirical research that selects and identifies classes of sounds in terms of similarity and difference. There have also been contributions in the field of musical *semantics* (Laske 1973; Kühl 2008; Reybrouck 2013) that distinguish between musical meaning as referring to something outside the music (external or referential semantics) or referring only to itself

(internal or self-referential semantics—see Meyer 1956). The most challenging developments, however, can be situated at the level of *pragmatics*, which investigates the relations between sign vehicles, their users, and the processes involved in the interpretation of the signs. Pragmatics defines meaning in terms of dispositions to react to stimuli rather than in terms of objective categories; it reflects recent developments in semiotics in general—known as the "pragmatic turn" (see Rorty 1982; Parret 1983; Bernstein 2010). This approach shows a growing rapprochement between the continental tradition of semiotics (the schools of de Saussure and Hjelmslev) and the Anglo-Saxon tradition (primarily the theoretical framework of Peirce). There are, moreover, multiple new developments that are related to the phenomenon of *musical experience* (Maeder and Reybrouck 2015) and the role of *embodiment* and *emotions* as related to music (Lidov 1987; Cumming 2000; Cox 2001; Schiavio et al. 2017; Reybrouck and Eerola 2017). As such, music semiotics is embracing insights from the cognitive sciences, neurosciences, psychology, and other related fields to seek the glue that binds diverging fields of investigation.

Music as experience

One of the pending topics in contemporary music semiotics is the distinction between an object-centered approach to music and a subjective or experiential approach to musical sense-making. In object-oriented, structuralist frameworks, the process of sense-making is often sidestepped, neglected, or ignored. Semiotics, in fact, sometimes pursues a symbolic approach to cognition, relying on signs rather than on sensory *realia*. As such, there is a tension between the tendencies to generalize and to particularize. Both approaches, however, are not opposed to each other, but rather are complementary to some extent, a point elaborated in the theoretical writings of Dewey and James (see Reybrouck 2014 for an overview). Central to their claims is having an experience (Dewey 1925, [1934] 1958; James [1912] 1976) arising from the tension between *percept* and *concept*. These terms exemplify the richness of experience, when contrasted to the economy of processing, stressing either the particularities of the sensory experience (percept) or the conceptual labels that are applied to them (concept). Dewey, in particular, argues for a conception of experience as heightened vitality, signifying the active and alert commerce with the world through complete interpenetration of the self and the world ([1934] 1958, 19). A perceptual experience, in his view, is not about something in general, but instead a full realization of an individual "this" or "that."

James argues along similar lines in his little-known, but important, epistemology, which he termed *radical empiricism*. Distinguishing between percept and concept, he stresses the role of knowledge-by-acquaintance—that is, the kind of knowledge we have of a thing by its presentation to the senses—and he argues that the significance of concepts consists always in their relation to perceptual particulars. What matters here is the fullness of reality that we become aware of only in the perceptual flux. Conceptual knowledge is a condition to manage information in a more economical way. It is, however, inadequate to capture the fullness of reality via the discreteness and abstractness of its elements. This vision acknowledges the core assumption of cognitive economy, and it suggests the transition from perceptual immediacy to conceptual abstraction, or put in other terms, from sensory *realia* to their symbolic counterparts (Reybrouck 2005). Full reality consists of existential particulars of which we become aware only in the state of perceptual flux (James [1912] 1976, 245).

The experiential approach to music perception, moreover, is related to earlier claims in cognitive musicology, which conceived of music as human experience rather than as a set of artefacts or structures (Laske 1977). By arguing for a processual approach to music cognition, it states that music, as a temporal art, is characterized by the consumption of time. In contradistinction to a geometric figure, which is presented at a glance, music relies on the successive presentation of its component parts, and it is up to the listener to synthesize the particularities and idiosyncrasies of the sonorous unfolding and the more overarching principles of relational continuity. As such, there is a basic tension between the discreteness of successive temporal windows and the more global synoptic overview. The latter allows the listener to grasp the music in a simultaneous act of consciousness or comprehension, but at the cost of the full perceptual experience; the former keeps track of the richness of the sonorous unfolding but lacks the perception of the more comprehensive overall structure.

Both approaches refer to different dynamics of representation by relying either on perceptual immediacy or representation in memory or imagination (Reybrouck 2004). Rather than conceiving of them as being opposed, they can go hand-in-hand, combining perceptual immediacy and mental representation at a virtual level of negotiating the sounds. James's concept of knowledge-by-acquaintance highlights the possibility of knowledge construction as the music unfolds over time, with a fluent transition between exploring and conceptualizing. Each perceptual event that can be distinguished and identified receives a kind of semantic weight that makes it recognizable as such, requiring denotation. What is eligible for denotation—the musical *denotata*—is reducible mainly to the sonorous articulation and its identifying qualities (Reybrouck 1999). Music, then, is a carrier of immanent meaning with sounding elements that mainly refer to themselves. It collapses, so to speak, by blending with the actual sound that acquires some conceptual quality. Music semantics, on this view, is essentially a type of *self-referential* or *self-reflective semantics* that goes beyond acoustic descriptions of the sound. What matters are not only the concrete-sounding events—the acoustic qualities—but also the abstract terms that can be disengaged from their existential dependency from the particular things they refer to. The delimitation of musical *denotata* thus implies a generalized reflection of sonic reality, with a corresponding transition from "percept" to "concept."

Music as cognition: epistemological claims

Fullness and richness of perception is not the only means of musical sense-making. Equally vital is the role of knowledge construction, where signification is characterized by the actual experience of those human beings who are doing the cognizing. This is, in fact, a basic claim of *cognitive semantics* (Jackendoff 1987; Johnson 1987; Lakoff 1987, 1988), which addresses what "meaning" is for human beings rather than focusing on an objective reality external to human experience.

It is not difficult to apply this approach to music. As listeners, we construct our musical world and invest it with signification, mostly as the outcome of previous and current interactions with sounds. These interactions can be physical—as in the case of singing or playing an instrument—or epistemic (Reybrouck 2014). Epistemic interactions can be exploratory in the search for new percepts and distinctions, but they can also trigger processes of recognition that activate patterns of schematic knowledge that are part of the listener's cognitive structure. As such, musical sense-making is an act of mental pointing that keeps in step with the sonorous unfolding in a continuous process

of epistemic interactions with the sounds. There is a dynamic tension between "experience" and "recognition," with the former capturing the temporal unfolding of the sound's articulation and the latter relying on processes of abstraction and generalization. The bind between them, though, is the mechanism of knowledge formation that serves the construction of musical meaning.

The theoretical framework relevant in this context is centered around Ernst von Glasersfeld's doctrine of radical constructivism (1987, 1995). Starting from Kant, who stated that knowledge is determined to a large extent by the individual's way of perceiving, and restating the epistemological claims of Piaget (1967) on cognitive development, Glasersfeld introduced a theory of active knowing that is the outcome of our own construction. The function of cognition is not the discovery of an external and ontological reality, but rather the organization of the experiential world: it is a world built by the cognizant person to organize experience rather than to depict an experiencer-independent reality.

The constructivist approach to musical meaning is challenging. It means that knowledge exists in the minds of individuals who have no alternative but to construct it on the basis of their own experience. It also means that what we make of our experience constitutes the only world in which we can consciously live, by definition a subjective one (Glasersfeld 1995, 1). The generation of musical knowledge, on this view, can be considered a tool for adaptation to the sonic world, allowing listeners to make sense of their interactions with sounds. Musical sense-making, in other words, is a semiosis of the sonic world.

These claims are general and many questions remain. Which kind of knowledge could be constructed? Does knowledge construction happen during the real-time unfolding of the sounds or *post hoc*, after the sounds have disappeared and are accessible only at a virtual level, either in memory or imagination? And can listeners rely on pre-organized schemata that are available in their long-term memory to use top-down strategies for sense-making, or is musical knowledge to be construed in a bottom-up way, recalling the knowledge-by-acquaintance of James? The answers to these questions lurk, though there are important attempts to provide theoretical and empirical grounding in diverse fields such as linguistics, biosemiotics, ecological psychology, the embodied and enactive approach to cognition, and dynamic systems theory (for an overview, see Reybrouck 2001a, 2017b).

The role of learning and the first-person perspective in the acquisition of knowledge are decidedly relevant (see Varela and Shear 2002; Zahavi 2005). These issues have been explored in the field of second-order cybernetics that instituted a paradigm-shift in scientific discourse by conceiving of the observer as a participant in the observed system (Von Foerster 1974, 1984; Pask 1992). These studies, by focusing on the resulting interaction, emphasized the role of the knowing individual and underlined the role of subjectivity and its influence on our reactions to the external environment. The principle is obvious in the case of real-time listening, with the listener making sense of the sonorous flux through acts of focal and extended attention that, to a great extent, are subjective.

Setting the stage: pending dichotomies

The process of musical sense-making, though subjective, is not without constraints. There are still some limitations that can be described through three broad dichotomies: (1) the distinction between structure and process; (2) the in-time and outside-of-time division; and (3) the analogous vs. digital, or continuous vs. discrete, dichotomy. All three dichotomies are related to the special status of music as a temporal and sounding art, and to the perceptual distance the listener assumes with respect to the sound.

The first dichotomy relates the processual approach to an experiential one. Music relies on the successive presentation of its component parts, each of which is perceived as a complex of sensory particulars. To grasp its structure, however, it is necessary to embed the perceptual "now-moments" in a more encompassing relational framework.

The second dichotomy, or the in-time and outside-of-time division, can be reduced to the opposition between the "computational" and the "dynamic" approaches to cognition (Beer 2000). Time is the critical factor here (Van Gelder and Port 1995). The computational approach specifies a discrete sequence of static internal states that carry symbolic representations of stored knowledge. There is, in other words, a complete separation from the physical embodiment of the symbols, so that formal computation is not constrained by the dynamics of the actual unfolding (Pattee 1995). The dynamic approach, on the other hand, describes processes that unfold in real time, with the nervous system, the body, and the environment continuously evolving and simultaneously affecting one another.

The third dichotomy, digital vs. analog, exemplifies the tension between the role of symbolic thinking and sensory experience in two representational formats. The continuous or analog representation is rate-dependent and time-consuming, providing a phenomenological description of the sounds in terms of their continuous acoustic qualities. This approach relies on a moment-to-moment scanning of the sonorous articulation over time within which the listener tracks the music in a continuous process of manifest or epistemic interactions with the sounds (see Reybrouck 2004, 2016). The discrete-symbolic representation, on the other hand, is more economical in that it reduces the temporal unfolding to single units with an all-or-none character that lend themselves to symbolic computations. By assigning one discrete meaning to an event that is evolving over time, it involves a "quantal" aspect of perception that makes it possible to conceive of music as a distributed substrate with discontinuities and focal allocations of semantic weight (Godøy 1997). The discrete approach, further, reduces the continuous temporal flux to a succession of separate entities with unit character—hence the term digital—that transcend the inexorability of time. They can be represented at an abstract level in imagery, allowing listeners to manipulate virtual replicas of the sound outside of the time of unfolding. This is the symbolic level of processing, which relies on symbols rather than on sensory *realia*.

It thus seems that the above dichotomies stem from a more general dichotomy, the one between percept and concept as used by James, and the way in which human listeners structure the acoustic flow. Listening, in fact, entails both perceptual immediacy and conceptual abstraction, stressing both the particularities of the sonorous unfolding, which is continuous—and the process of sense-making, which can be intermittent—by applying discrete labels to slices of the sounding fabric. Applying the two approaches while listening to music generates a dynamic tension, where the former provides the raw material (the percepts), and the latter, in a type of contrary motion, reduces the sounding flux to discrete categories (the concepts). Yet, whether these categories should be labeled exclusively as conceptual is open to question. Instead, *a sounding event* may be more appropriate as a term, as it combines the discrete and the continuous processing of sound, allowing the extraction of invariants that can be either structural or transformational.[1] The latter specify the change that is occurring in an object or event, while the former describes the object or event by itself. For example, the timbre of a violin is a structural invariant, the way of bowing or plucking the strings is a transformational invariant. These two terms have considerable descriptive power, and they allow us to describe an event both at a glance and in its temporal unfolding: they provide descriptions of invariant patterns over time. An event, then, is a two-variable function that can be evaluated with respect to its continuous and its

discrete qualities. By applying labels to focal points or temporal extensions of the continuous sonorous unfolding, such an event enables a semiotic process in which the abstract becomes material, which is to say that it realizes a process of singular potential, grounded in the real and natural experience of actual sounding music.

Dynamics of representation

Experiencing music demands a dynamics of representation that spans a continuum between step-by-step processing and synoptic overview. There is, therefore, a multiplicity of temporal representations, ranging from "broad-brush" landscapes—which represent longer stretches of temporal unfolding at a glance—to "frame-by-frame" sequential scanning. This multiplicity is useful, since it provides different kinds of knowledge of the musical substance, and it can be described in terms of *perspective* and *resolution* (Godøy 1997, 66). Perspective defines the distance we take with respect to the actual unfolding; resolution relates to the fine-grained nature of the temporal window through which we experience the music. Both concepts are closely related with the in-time vs. outside-of-time distinction.

Actual sensation proceeds in time and is limited by perceptual constraints: it consists of actual now-moments that are perceived during a short time, constituting the temporal windows through which the listener negotiates the unfolding over time. This temporal window, termed the *psychical present* by Stern and *specious present* by James (Stern 1897; James [1890] 1950), can be defined as a now-moment with a horizon of retention of what just passed and a protention of what is coming next (see Husserl 1928; 1964 for an explanation of the terms). It can be small or encompassing, with a possible transition from high-resolution processing in the range of about ten milliseconds to lower-resolution perceptual units in the range of two to three seconds (Wittmann and Pöppel 1999–2000). It can move along with the unfolding of the music, or its duration can be extended, dependent upon the level of attention and cognitive organization of the listener. Extending its length, however, changes the status of processing, and it includes a gradual shift from perception to memory to provide the transition from time-bound presentational immediacy to the simultaneous apprehension in consciousness of the music as a global structure. Extending the temporal window to the length of the whole work is a further transition that stresses the synthesizing function of imagery. As a result, the temporal shift substitutes a relational network for the linearity of unfolding. It highlights the plasticity of mental operations, allowing listeners to navigate the music at a virtual level of representation that is not constrained by the inexorable character of the articulation through time (Reybrouck 2001b, 2004).

Given the above arguments, there are three aspects to be considered in the process of musical sense-making: (1) the delimitation of elements perceived as now-moments, (2) the mutual relations of these elements, and (3) the mental operations of the listener. All of them provide operational means to study the perceptual organization of the musical flow in an attempt to unite the discrete and the continuous. The starting point, however, is the actual now-moment and the real-time listening situation. Listeners can be considered as the reference point of an interaction with the sounding music, suggesting Bühler's concept of *deixis* ([1934] 1965). In drawing an explicit analogy between gestural and linguistic means for showing direction and place, he conceived of a "deictic field" of language with the zero point (the *Origo*) being fixed by three coordinates: (1) the person who is speaking; (2) the place of utterance; and (3) the time of utterance. It locates individual elements in a context—rather

than simply tagging them—and systematizes an utterance in terms of personal, spatial, and temporal coordinates ("I, here, now").

To apply this conception to music (Reybrouck 2015), one only needs to conceive of the listener both as a "moving Origo" that tracks the unfolding of the sounding and the listener recollecting the successive now-moments in memory and imagination. What matters here is the *mental pointing* to the music, relying on one of the three possibilities distinguished by Bühler: (1) pointing as selection; (2) pointing as gesture; and (3) pointing as predication. The first can be considered as an act of focal attention, with the width of the temporal window being dependent on the listener's attentional strategies. Extending the now-moment aligns smoothly with the second, or pointing as gesture, both as a physical gesture or a mental one. The third, pointing as predication, recalls the percept/concept dichotomy, making real the transition from sensory perception to propositional thinking by assigning conceptual labels to the now-moments.

The deictic approach is a useful tool for analyzing musical sense-making, and it is suggestive for further research. In particular, insights lurk from studies of computation, cybernetics, and the dynamic systems approach to cognition (Reybrouck 2016). Listeners are autonomous systems who construct their musical knowledge as the outcome of continuous epistemic interactions with the sonic world. The vision outlined here is a conception that challenges the classical symbolic-conceptual approach to musical information in terms of static, discrete, and objective categories in favor of a trans-classical model that relies on subjective, process-like, and continuous categories of meaning. My approach goes beyond traditional dichotomies. It proposes a hybrid perceptual-conceptual approach that does justice both to the wealth and fullness of perceptual experience and to the plasticity of mental operations, focusing on the musical experience and the way musical information is processed in a real-time listening situation.

Note

1 Structural invariants refer to features that are not, or only slowly, changing; transformational invariants refer to styles of change; see Shaw, Flasher, and Mace 1996.

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MELODY AS REPRESENTATION

David Lidov

This essay reflects on two of Beethoven's last Bagatelles in op. 126, after some prefatory remarks on melody in general. I attend to melody as a perceptual construct mediating our absorption in passages of music and our general experience of feelings. Although much of my semiotics writing insists on a dialectic of reference and abstraction, that concern is quite neglected here. I have not censored any of my own imagery as too determined or too picturesque. Recent decades of musical research have offered us extensive, brilliant, and boldly original projects demonstrating cultural, historical, and biographical validations of our attributions of feeling to music. I think my different direction here can be characterized as "phenomenological" without abuse of a term which, like "semiotic," lacks a clear, consensual definition. My hope is to demonstrate a type of interpretive logic, not to construe an aesthetically balanced and persuasive interpretation.

My preference to speak of "representation" where other authors might prefer "signification" is not a highly consequential difference within this volume, though these two terms, both very broad, have different histories and different family relationships in the history of semiotics. My usage maintains consistency with my writings in general semiotics taking a framework in the Peircean heritage that names the Object, Interpretant, and Representamen as three factors of the sign relation. "Signification," as a technical term, connects more prominently with the Saussurean heritage, to which I am no less indebted.

Preliminaries: what is melody?

Unless you do it by pointing at one, it is easier to say what *pitch*, *meter*, *phrase*, *harmony*, *counterpoint*, and various musical *forms* are than to define melody.

Alexander Ringer's opening gambit in his *Grove Dictionary* article looks very sensible at first glance, but stared at hard, evades essential issues: "Melody, defined as pitched sounds arranged in musical time in accordance with given cultural conventions and constraints represents a universal human phenomenon" (2001). Does "arranged in musical time" mean arranged successively and without overlapping? Let that pass as fussy hair-splitting. A more difficult issue glossed over has to do with identifying melody in a harmonic, contrapuntal texture—the context but not the subject of most of my discussion in this essay. The notion

of a "voice" as a musical structure (as in voice leading), does not correspond to melody. One melody may capture elements of various harmonic ("structural") voices, and movement between them is often the most expressive component of melody. Such movement immediately shows that melody contributes structures to music that cannot be accounted for in any other domain.

According to Ringer's definition, all chant is melody, but I have heard chant that struck me as unmelodic. If one voice or one instrument is playing music alone, we do not always feel that the music is a melody, though depending on their habits of word use, many might insist, as Ringer does, *ipso facto*, that an unaccompanied series of notes is a melody. Sequences of differentiated drum sounds, even though lacking pitch, can sound melodic. Is it not arbitrary to insist, in such a case, as his definition does, that there is not really a melody? Is rap "flow" melodic?

Not to short change Ringer's excellent survey, I should note that his definition above, with which I have made sport, is essentially a fanfare to an article that confronts a range of conceptual issues, and I commend the reader's attention, especially to the third section of that article that spells these out. This essay does not propose a definition of melody. My remarks consider somewhat arbitrarily selected semiotic issues bearing on the entailments of hearing melody and understanding melody. The task would not be simplified by focusing on unaccompanied melody. With vocal music, we would usually want to consider words and contexts. With music for single stringed instruments, be it the European strings or the families of plucked string instruments further east, one instrument can suggest drones or even harmonies accompanying its melody. North American fiddle tunes often impose a continuous pulsation by the re-articulation or figuration of tones that can be heard as animating a slower or rhythmically more varied underlying melody. Much of what calls for examination as unaccompanied melody, for example, the great solo repertoire of the shakuhachi, exceeds my competence to analyze; yet, it is clear from the complexity of its ornamentation, that repertoire would not rescue us from difficulty. Melody might even be considered a consequence of oppositions: melody and accompaniment; melody and recitation; melody and its ornament; melody and fragmentation; the melody and the words.

Hearing melody is a case of heightened perception, in contrast to ordinary and automatic perception that we usually accept as immediate and non-problematic. I argue in my general semiotic theory that we have no good reason to regard ordinary percepts as "signs" because we are not conscious of any prior substrate. For example, I am not conscious of the light reflected from an apple into my eye; I just see the apple. Melody is not like that, nor are comparable artistic perceptions. I can be aware of the flute *and* the sad tune, or the marble stone *and* the head of Caesar. In those cases, it really does make sense to think of the percept as a sign (1999/2017, Chapter 12).

We do not need a definition of melody. Anything that sounds like a melody is a melody. If one accepts that principle, then we agree with Ringer that melody is a human "phenomenon," but insist on a sense of that word he does not spell out: that hearing melody is a perceptual construction. As a conscious phenomenon, melody is very difficult to fully identify with its "mind-independent" physical and structural features and also difficult to identify with any particular non-verbal, shared response. Meter is problematic in many of the ways melody is, but might be identified with cyclic muscular responses (Ito, in press). The closest I can come to that with melody is to suggest that when we hear sounds as melodic, we tend to identify them with the voice, not the abstract voices of harmonic voice-leading but with our flesh and blood bodily organ and the sounds it makes and the efforts that activate it—with our own voices and singing.

This is not to say that melody needs to be singable or that what is more singable (easier to sing) is more melodic, but rather that when we are involved with melody, we identify with it in a way that is like imagining singing along. The association of melody and voice may have more to do with the expressive capacity of the voice than with its physiology and acoustics. Melody often sounds "as if" it had words. The association is semiotic: it concerns the capacity of voices for representation. Melodic representation, always on my view a very complex phenomenon, points in two directions. The first: melody often represents, as voices can, feelings and movement apart from sound. It is often easy to hear melody as the voice of a virtual persona.[1] The second: melody readily represents the music of which it is a part.

Melody as a representation of the music of which it is a part

Melody is readily a synecdoche, a part that represents the whole. Melodies are like faces. An image of the face can stand for the whole person. A mobile face "speaks" for the whole person. When the person is known to us, an image of the face can bring to mind our memory of their physique and style of movement. When the person is unknown to us, the face's image as a representative sample still conveys a sense of unique identity. Think of "wanted" posters. The police will still want fingerprints and DNA, but the image conjures up a person. Where melody is accompanied, it is often the face of a composition and often takes the foreground of attention. It is easy to find exceptions, both among compositions and among re-hearings of one composition, but the generalization is widely evidenced.

Some music, contrapuntal music, combines simultaneous "lines" or "voices" that can be heard as simultaneous melodies. In this case, where each melody has all the others as its accompaniment, the analogy with foreground and background, or with face and body/person is lost or weakened, though a performer can impose it. To the degree counterpoint retains its integrity, each line can be face-like in seeming to represent a separate virtual persona or agent, but it is less evident that the one line stands for the music as a whole. In the mixed or in-between case, an accompaniment may appear as the virtual environment or situation of a virtual persona.

When we hear melody as a musical "face" or foreground, our mental image of the melody can subsume and thereby represent as its *own inherent qualities*, qualities of the whole that it could not acquire in isolation. A slow melody with a quick accompaniment sounds energized. The effect is very striking with a non-sustaining instrument. For example, in Schubert's Impromptu in G♭ major, D 899, no. 3, the melody, mostly in half- and quarter-notes but accompanied by figures in continuous sextuplet eighth-notes, sounds gorgeously vivacious in situ but moribund if extracted. The same can be said—and the same example will do—of harmony. The melody, extracted, is harmonically static but in context is heard to absorb and express the richer harmonic colors of its accompaniment. This phenomenon of absorption is fundamental in opera as, for example, a character, singing, may seem to express feelings that are embodied in her accompaniment rather than in her melody in abstracto.

Because melody can absorb and seem to possess the qualities of its musical surroundings, we can isolate melody within a musical texture but often cannot isolate what it represents from what the texture as a whole represents, nor even isolate what melody contributes to the representation by the whole. Nevertheless, I am not throwing my title under the bus. A first stage in understanding music is often to build an image of its melody, a percept. Natural as it may seem, the mental construction of an image of melody is a dominating task.

Melody affords complex representations because it is itself complex. In part this is a matter of its duration.

Compared to hearing a chord or hearing a meter or recognizing a motive, hearing sound as melody entails building a mental image of a relatively long fragment of music and one which approaches eidetic qualities of vividness and detail. I deliberately state this vaguely. How long the fragment imaged is, is a matter of individual ability. I suggest that for most of us images of melody would be, generally, the most complex, concrete images of music we hold. Mozart (and Hindemith) speak of having an entire movement or composition in mind as if extracted from time, but as both composers' remarks suggest, these are instances exhibiting exceptional talent and/or discipline.

Melody as a representation of motion

I take the feeling of embodied movement (including embodied stillness) to be the primary semantic field of music (with mood indicated by mode and tempo as a close second).

We readily hear music as moving; indeed, merely to focus on one sustained, unchanging tone is likely to evoke a consciousness of time and a sense of that sound moving through time. Music appears to move and to move with continuity even where music's sound changes in discrete steps (see Cox 2016). We may not need to consider these qualities as signs or representations, for they are inseparable in perception from the sound itself. But when we identify heard motion with the motion of our own bodies or imaginary bodies, we may well speak of representation. At that moment, there are separate sign factors available to conscious awareness: the sound itself as a sign, the kinesthetic form as an object, and our sense of a quality, emerging in the connection between them and attached to both, as their interpretant.

Though ubiquitously prevalent, the association of music and movement acquires a certain vagueness from the overlapping possibilities of associating body and sound in two spheres. The association may be primarily with full body movement, movement capable of displacing our full weight as in dancing or marching. I call such movement *balletic*, without meaning to bring it close to ballet. The association may also focus on the upper body as the locus of breath, gesture (hands, arms, neck, shoulders), facial expressions, eye movements, and the motions of speaking. It is handy to refer to all of that as *gestural*. Do not expect these categories to be precise: the eyes can dance. The whole body can participate in a gesture. Apart from this tentative division, music is not likely to specify body parts. Many musical gestures can be "translated" just as well by fingers or toes. Melody, even in a bass range, by its association with voice has an affinity with the upper body. Accompaniments, especially when they establish and maintain palpable meter, have a special affinity with the lower limbs and the balletic movements of displacement.

There is no science in my musical interpretations, but some quite considerable science in the writings that provoked me to formulate them, particularly those of Manfred Clynes (1977) and Alexandra Pierce (2007).

Except where regimens of repression prevent it, bodily movement and posture are naturally expressive of mood, personality, power relationships, health, and emotion. Posture and movement may draw on many channels of communication with the visual predominating. Music shares the body's capacity for expression by capturing the body's temporal energy shapes or "envelopes." An energy envelope is the growth and decay of energy across time. Clynes studies finger pressure envelopes as indices of particular emotions and speculates that performed music incorporates identical patterns. In the

context of artistic representation, his theory is only a hint (see Lidov 2018). I have sometimes tried to develop this hint and followed Clynes where I want a precise and logical account of the relations between musical images, small bodily motions, and the feelings they express. Where it is a question of understanding the temporal energy forms of longer temporal units, units as long as tunes and melodies of some fullness, I find supportive wisdom in the works of Alexandra Pierce alone (2007) or with Roger Pierce (1989). They have a lot to say about longer durations of movement or sound than Clynes considers. For music that is extended beyond a few seconds, however, it may be a mug's game to talk about a "primary semantic field," for the social values of styles, the psychological weight of timbres and the figural values of musical *topoi* (of "topics," as some erroneously call them) play important and independent semantic roles.[2]

Clynes's theory of essentic forms provides a way of understanding gesture in musical representation. His mode of analysis, though it has had some influence, has not been generally adopted and is not consensual. Far more people have expressed admiration for it, publicly or privately to me, than have adopted it. While I regret that, it is easy to understand. Clynes's theory is primarily neuro-psychological, not musical, and where he himself takes musical instances to illustrate the theory, he does not consider the theoretical complications that dealing with artistic rather than spontaneous, quotidian expressions entail. The vocabulary of emotional expressions that he studied is small. The psychological theory depends on about seven distinct but mutually interdependent hypotheses. It is not clear to what extent these might be studied, experimentally, separately. Sustained work of that sort has not been forthcoming. What essentic theory yields to musicology in the end may be simply a framework for articulating intuitions. Yet, Clynes's ideas are strict in their logic and precision, and in that regard offer us a model. In this essay, my borrowings from him are fleeting. I have written more extensively and critically about Clynes's ideas elsewhere (Lidov 1999, Chapter 20; 2005, Part III; and 2018).

In recent decades, Roger Pierce (whose art specialties are in drama and literature) and Alexandra Pierce, composer and pianist, developed a type of movement education extending that now substantial tradition in a new direction (2007). Pierce and Pierce worked out their theory primarily as a practical pedagogy for artists; their conceptual analysis is not an end in itself. I do not spell out my references to their work here and simply wish to acknowledge that it informs me.

To explore the capacity of melody to represent feelings and character, I attribute bits of interpretation to two of Beethoven's Bagatelles as examples. I beg the reader to bear in mind that I do not want to advocate particular interpretations so much as to explore the kinds of logic that musical interpretations entail.

Though they are not especially short, the six numbers of op. 126 are exceptionally compact, often pivoting from one notion to another, perhaps opposite, with the speed of a kitchen conversation. Opus 126 is a composition of radical sophistication. The Bagatelles are fragmentary and unpredictable, more like poems than stories. They make convenient examples because they are short and pleasant, but they are dangerous examples at the same time because their style leaves so much to the imagination of the listener. I make the situation worse by limiting most of my observations to just two of the six in this group despite plentiful reasons to think that Beethoven regarded the six as one connected entity. The key centers are all connected to G by major thirds. Were we considering the whole group, we could observe a wonderful range of melodic types. The two Bagatelles in minor (nos. 2 and 4) sometimes stretch the melody to a strained minimum. The two in E♭ major

(nos. 3 and 6) are uncannily adroit, shaping lavish ariosos in a few brush strokes, the second of these deploying melody for a brilliant invention of three-measure phrasing.

Bagatelle, op. 126, no. 1

The first of these "little" things—that is what Beethoven called them (*Kleinigkeiten*)—is in two sections. Its first section is constructed by the internal repetition of an eight-measure phrase, the main tune. The much longer second section presents a new 13-measure phrase, a two-measure cadenza, a variant of the first section's eight-measure phrase that can be regarded as a double statement of a four-measure version and then another 16 measures of repetitious cadencing, a drawn-out good-bye. That whole second section, 31 measures, is repeated.

The main tune is nearly conventional in its eight-bar form, but the endings (in both mm. 8 and 16) have a certain vagueness due to octave placement. Most of the melody sits comfortably in the range of a relaxed, non-professional high voice, and in its simplicity, suggests a folk song. Were it really a folk song, it would surely end on the same note, G4, on which it begins. Instead, the phrase ends softly an octave higher. That higher G5 is no great stretch for a good soprano, but to sing it softly and perhaps casually, to let the voice "die out" up there would demand a considerable art. The final presentation of this cadence at the end of the Bagatelle is yet an octave higher. We exit the music from the realm of a flute, or, more to the point, of angels. Meanwhile, the quiet bass, with narrow and therefore muffled voicings, has drifted low enough to suggest sleep.[3] Moving his melodies beyond the range of the human voice is frequently significant for Beethoven (though sometimes merely brilliant or comic) and I think the evidence of cultural and musical histories supports hearing an intention of spirituality in this instance.

Although the melody is simple and, in its beginning, folk-song like, there are early invitations to listen for tones of feeling that lie beyond its surface. The surface conforms to Beethoven's three instructions, "Andante con moto," "*piano*, dolce" and "Cantabile e compiacevole." It is also easy to hear (and hence, to perform) *fragility*, *hesitancy*, and *disappointment* which are discussed below. These further attributions are not difficult to account for so long as we adduce two principles: the first, already mentioned, is that a melody tends to acquire or represent characteristics of its accompaniment; the second, which I state *ex cathedra* for present purposes (though I think one can readily find grounds for it, most easily in nineteenth-century music) is that where an accompaniment includes a secondary melody, even in fragments, it is easy to associate inner voices with inner feelings, feelings that may be indirectly revealed by behavior though not explicitly confessed.

Fragility: until the cadence in the eighth measure, the principle melody is the upper voice of three joined by an active tenor and a bass line that holds to a pedal point for four measures. The absence of an alto voice before measure 8 results in a frail texture with several wide intervals between the soprano and the next lower voice. You were probably taught not to do that in your earliest instruction in harmonic voice leading, and in this phrase you can hear why. The resulting chords do not sound solid. Also, the sonority fluctuates rapidly because the tenor is so mobile. Compare the downbeat sonority of the third measure, a low second inside a fourteenth (D3, E3, C5), with the two downbeats preceding. And yet, that $^{14}_{2}$ chord must be *dolce* and, therefore, fragile. The melody alone, as notated, may not suggest fragility, but it absorbs that quality and, in performance, can express it.

Hesitancy: Beethoven's indication, *con moto*, opposes hesitation, and I would not recommend more than a pinch of a hesitant manner in performance, if any. The spectacular display of hesitation is in the second part, from measure 20 on, but cued by foreknowledge, the pianist can hear and hint that movement character early. A resistance to fluid motion arises at the outset from where the changes of sonority are (literally) arresting and because suspensions delay the repetitions of the downbeat pitch-classes from measures 1, 2, and 3 to the second beats of measures 5, 6, and 7. The low parallel thirds where the tenor and bass move together make them more frictious, less clear, and again resistant to flow. As these qualities are absorbed in the melody, the melody expresses hesitancy. Emotionally, hesitancy is linked to timidity and fear. Only a delicate timidity is suggested, just enough to sense that the acts of our virtual subject are not so bold as its desires.

Disappointment: the whole Bagatelle is full of much ado that does not achieve strong results. The tune is harmonized by a firm, prolonged dominant that fades to a soft, dissipated tonic. The tune ascends in the first section from G4 to G5, but that motion is not securely accomplished. The melodic trajectory skips over the fifth tone (that is why the E of measure 7 carries a hint of pentatonicism). Apart from a little staccato flick in measures 3 and 11, the dominant note, D5, is not addressed until the second section in measure 18, where it suddenly appears as a tonic, completing the tune but segregated from it.

It is a cliché and generally correct to propose that rising pitch correlates with increasing tension, though just what "tension" means here may be vague, but let us look at the correlation critically for a moment. We go from lower to higher sounds by shortening a vibrating string or column of air. Where that column of air is in the mouth and trachea, shortening it requires muscular contraction, and the effort of contraction in the voice may be the ground of our general sense that rising pitch correlates with rising tension. But there is another way to raise pitch, by changing the mode of vibration of a string or air column, eliciting harmonics, as in overblowing or yodeling. The correlations of effort and pitch are more complicated and may even be reversed. These relations are pretty familiar to us, even if we do not maintain a regular yodeling practice. If we played with our voices as children, we can identify with these maneuvers as adults: a sudden melodic ascent by a leap can be yielding or relaxing. The high G of the tune, unearned by scalar ascent, intervenes like a cover tone or coupling. It is a high point for lyricism but not for energy. This note must be quiet because Beethoven indicates the beginning of a crescendo right after. Our tune is an underachiever. The crescendo builds to nothing.

Below are some general sorts of gestures I associate with the tune, evoking their energy shapes, not the otherwise arbitrary anatomical particulars. But what I filled in is meant to hint at character, for I am using words for a task that does not fit words well:

> Measure 1–2: a gentle gesture of offering; palms up, hands near diaphragm height, a few inches apart. Move them with intention slightly upwards and forward, just a few inches, and let them relax back or a dynamically, energetically "synonymous" gesture performed with eyebrows and head.
> Measure 3: the dotted rhythm. A self-effacing shrug that declines the urging of the rising chromatic passing tone in the tenor (beat 2); or a miniaturized version, mute echo of the preceding gesture.
> Measure 4: the rising sixth. A half step backwards, or a completely accommodating nod, abandoning expressive gesture for thought (if we move to a *Deckstimme*, we can attribute to it the *Innigkeit* of an inner voice).

Measures 5–8: more insistent, but on what? Only insistent on restraint (a polite nod of negation).
Measures 9–16: no significant difference from measures 1–8.

Continuing in this licentious manner in the second part, we can examine measures 17–20 to acknowledge the question Arnie Cox raised (2006, 46) and no doubt on many lips, whether, in the end any difference can be sustained between motifs and musical gestures (or musical images of gestures). I have tried a few times, perhaps not as persuasively or dramatically as I hoped, to defend the affirmative. The challenge is much like—not identical to—establishing a difference between morphological and phonological units in language. Cross-examining the relationship of measures 1–2 and measures 17–18, we have a choice. There is no doubt that the later motif (B–A–B–C♯–D–D) can be regarded as a variation of the first (G–F♯–G–B), which is recalled in the alto of the other. The latter moves up a fourth (A–D) instead of a third (F♯–A) and is enlivened by eighth-notes, the first a passing tone that restores step-wise progression. The two figures are tonally aligned, and the variant brings us to the pitch we missed out on before. But does this close variant of the first motif indicate a variant or opposing gesture? Our interpretation depends, in part, on where we feel the stronger accent in each case, either on the first downbeat or the second. Influenced by the rising tenor, I took it to be the first downbeat in measure 1–2, yielding what I described as a gesture like offering, but a timid gesture merely suggesting. The second, measures 17–18, is decisive and moves to a stress on the second downbeat, a gesture of confident determination. Looking back, we can see that the first measures of the Bagatelle could be played in a similar manner as well, more decisively, if the tenor is backgrounded there just a bit or if its own second downbeat is stronger than the first.

In a Clynesian perspective, a clearly contrasted performance of these two fragments would illustrate a single motif expressing two specific and even opposed essentic forms. But it is the privilege of art to give the gestures a similar external choreography even if their dynamic energy envelopes are opposite. Perhaps an ideal performance is one that avoids settling the issue.

The next six measures (mm. 21–26), which I referred to earlier as the most explicit display of hesitation, are a triumph of musical notation, truly evoking through meter change and accelerating rhythm an air of spontaneous improvisation, and, with the next two measures (mm. 27–28), build a wonderful climax. But there is nothing going on that motivates or sustains a climax. It is a gorgeous much ado about nothing more than—melodically—an oscillating descent from mediant to supertonic and—gesturally—vacuous excitement. The briefly tonicized dominant, which had been only a tiny *deus ex machina* anyway, dissolves in a wondrous haze as the tenor takes over the leading melody. Yet, there is one serious gesture. In the first section, measure 3, the rising tenor (E–F–F♯–G) seems to secretly urge from within and the soprano melody to openly demur in its casual and inconsequential skip up and back from A4 to D5 to B4. Now in measures 26 and 27 we have a role reversal, the tenor skipping those same intervals an octave lower (A3 to D4 and D4 to B3) with a new emphasis and, where the third descends (now from the downbeat), suggesting a gesture of warning (like a raised, stiff finger edging forward or wagging).

The dissolution, rather than resolution, of a V^9 before the recapitulation (m. 31) is a well-known idiom in Classical music. Yet, this afterthought is repeated as a new counterpoint above the half tune in the bass and blossoms into the most extravagant melody of the Bagatelle. The motion type is *throwing*, like arms tossed in the air with exasperation, soaked in regret and desire and "if only." The vigorous ascending line rings out D5. Isn't

this what we always wanted? Does it fill the chest and lift us firmly to the E? Or is it too little too late, a fulfillment glimpsed, only imagined? Below, the returning tune itself, first in the bass then in the treble, gives up on its octave ascent, simply excised both times. Its formal motion, tonic to mediant and back, is inexpressive.

Bagatelle, op. 126, no. 5

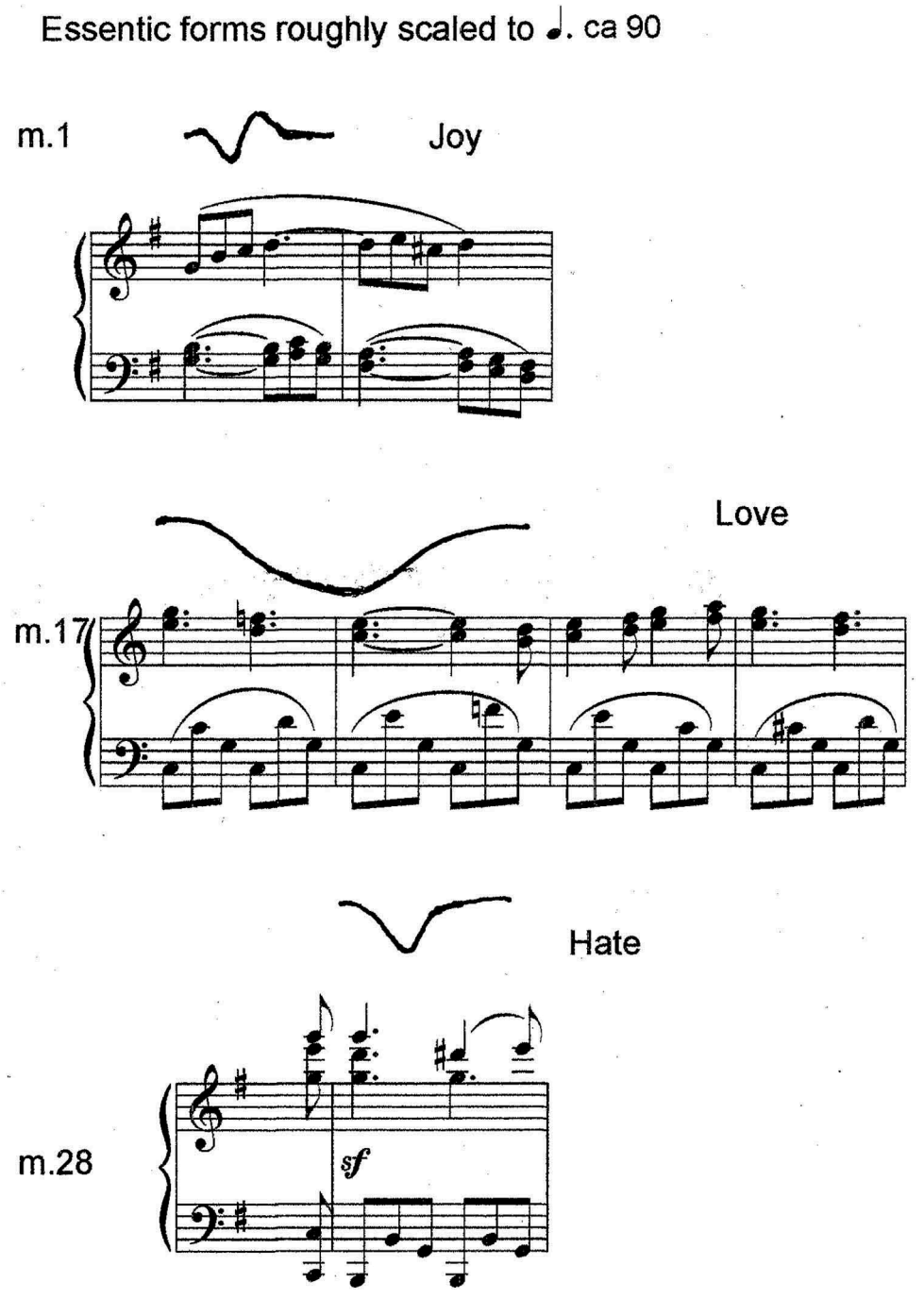
Bagatelles, no. 1 and no. 5, offer instructive parallels and differences. The melodic movement of no. 1 is somewhat more gestural, and that of no. 5 somewhat more balletic. Hearing melody as balletic brings out the double role of the virtual subject, both active as agent and passive as patient, with effort playing against momentum, an effect less salient in gesture, for torsos have more momentum and inertia than wrists and eyebrows.

In some respects, no. 5 is no. 1 inside out. Same key. The meter is 2x3 instead of 3x2. The forms are different but comparable. In no. 5, both main sections, the second more trio-like, are marked for a repeat and are equal in length, 16 measures; but a shorter third section, not repeated, brings the first tune back an octave higher. The tempi are a bit more than Andante for no. 1 and a bit less than Allegretto for no. 5, close enough, whatever those indications might mean. The surprise dominant opening the second part of no. 1 is mirrored by the surprise subdominant opening of the second section in no. 5. The opening eight-measure phrase of no. 5 ends in a half cadence (m. 8) that compresses the harmony and voice leading of the first two measures of no. 1. The second group of eight measures, though parallel and also ending in a half cadence, have no precedent in no. 1 as the key changes, decisively, to the relative minor.

A signal contrast for our purposes is that the melody of no. 5 scampers at once to the dominant degree and reconfirms it. This D5, as a fifth degree, not a new tonic, that was so coyly hiding in no. 1, at least until the ending, progresses stepwise thence to the upper tonic (where no. 1 relaxed in a cadence). It tenses into a miniature, yet emphatic, melodic climax released by way of a downward leap (m. 6) of that exact same sixth, which is now reversed (G6 to B4) about which I have already written. Getting up to the high G takes (or represents) effort—the agent—coming down we coast (enjoying momentum—the patient).

The virtual persona of no. 5 is bolder and risks more. I might associate the opening with Clynes's computer-averaged envelope for joy and the opening tune of the second part with his envelope for love (both are sketched in Example 25.1). In avoiding D5, the virtual subject of no. 1 deflected attention to E5 without making much of a harmonic commitment to it. With its dominant properly exposed, the harmony of no. 5 twists acidly towards E minor, like (albeit in miniature) a subject encountering a distressing situation. The melody's gestural forms in measures 12 and 13, though mild, are like little gasps or soft "uh-ohs;" E minor is at first a transitory chord and then a second tonality. Despite their brevity, some moments, reminiscent of the Scherzo of op. 109 in E minor, are pungent with emotional peril.

The second section begins with the subdominant drone snatching us from danger. The melody could not seem plainer or more comfortable; yet, the melody accomplishes magic. Counting from the double bar, note the melodic identities of measures 1 and 4, 5 and 8. These identities accord weight to the framing measures, *one*–two–three–*four*, braking against the momentum of hypermeter, *one*–two–*three*–four. In his manuscript, Beethoven's ingenious notation brings this out by ending the legato slur after three measures. This breaking or turning is where we feel most strongly the doubleness of the subject (as with reflexive verbs in language) resisting, as agent, its own momentum as patient. In a mere eight measures we



Example 25.1 Clyne's essentic envelopes as applied to motifs from Beethoven's Bagatelle, op. 126, no. 1

engage a true dance beat, with the lift from four to five and from eight to one, characteristic of dance cycles where phrase rhythm supervenes on and represses hypermeter, though stealing its energy. Note that here it is melody that accomplishes this. The accompaniment is indifferent. Alerted to this body image, we can also read it in other places, a shift in weight from downbeat to a concluding upbeat is invited at two metrical levels. In the first section, the dotted quarter-note upbeats in measures 2 and 4 can be leaned on. And also (it needs some delicacy) we can bring some weight to the sixth eighth-note pulse of the last measure in section two, and elsewhere when the same pattern occurs. In measures 17–20, this dance beat is superimposed on the smoothest texture of the Bagatelle, and it seems therefore a weightless dance from heaven or from a dream, a figure *(*or *topos)* we met in no. 1 that runs right through opus 126.

The drone ends, ending our refuge with a shattering irruption. I suggest the reader compare the four eight measures of melody leading to the *sforzando* note-by-note with the melody of no. 1, measures 1–4. In its highest reach the melody of no. 5 is amplified, not etherized. Also, it retains its logic if we take it down an octave. My fawned-over minor sixth returns, rising, not as a relaxing yodel, but bounding to the climax and continued almost instantly by a lunging diminished fourth. The gesture suggested here (to me) merits this description in Clynes:

> The essentic form of hate is markedly different from anger, but also shows similarities. At first, some subjects find it difficult to distinguish between expressions of these two. There is a passionate character in [the essentic form of hatred] which finds its expression in late developing muscular activity … in specific muscle groups … within each action … [Hate] starts more slowly than anger and is also strongly away from the body. The peak of intensity … occurs considerably later than in anger … abruptly terminated with a rapid diminution of pressure. This deceleration is far more rapid than the initial acceleration. The form ends abruptly with an exceedingly high rate of change of motion.
>
> *([1977] 1989, 36)*

For the late intensity of the D♯ that prolongs the *sforzando*, you might want to adopt "passionate" without adopting "hate"; yet, the dark irruption holds a hint of violence like a well-meant hug that is too sudden, too rough, too long. Might the plunging diminished fourth be what the "tenor's wagging finger" tried to warn us about in measure 27 of Bagatelle no. 1?

This essay has reflected on melody as a perceptual construct, a construct we assemble by intuition without reflection. The construction absorbs energies and feelings as attributes of melody even when we can easily discern, if we lend our attention to the matter, that they depend for their evocation on musical factors that we do not normally think of as part of the melody itself, e.g., the factors in the accompaniment. The result, fortified by its absorption of contextual elements, can be a complex and subtle sign, and is rich in allusions. With these examples from op. 126, I did not want to constrain the demonstration by considerations of authorial intention; indeed, I wanted no more than the skimpiest justifications for any particular attributions that the act of hearing might construct, hoping not that they would seem necessary, but merely plausible. The analysis of readings of these brief lyrics inspires us to keep in mind the dictum, sometimes attributed to Ralph Waldo Emerson, that poets are entitled credit for anything that anyone can find in their poetry.

Notes

1 The notion of a "virtual" persona or agent or force came to me originally from Langer's *Feeling and Form* (1953) and was subsequently influenced by Cone's *The Composer's Voice* (1974); it was much focused and revitalized both by Cumming's *The Sonic Self* (2000) and by Hatten's *A Theory of Virtual Agency for Western Art Music* (2018).

2 What musicologists (Ratner, Monelle, Hatten and others) call topics is reasonably close to what literary theorists call *topoi*. The words have a common root. Because "topics" in musicology conflicts with normal usage, where the "topic" is what we are talking *about,* the adoption of this term in musicology was an unfortunate and confusing error. In musicology, topics are modes of discourse or allusions.

3 Harmonic intervals in the bass register, like those near the end of this composition, which are narrower than the "critical band," create the acoustic interference that I describe here as muffling.

PART VII

Music signification and education

26

MUSICAL SEMIOSIS AS A PROCESS OF LEARNING AND GROWTH

Juha Ojala

Introduction

Music signification can encompass two things: signification *in* music and signification *of* music. Neither is given in our biological inheritance nor cast in stone in the cultural forms of notations, performances, or aesthetic ideals. Instead, the shades of meanings suggested by *in* and *of* music are dynamically learned and grown into. The goal of this essay is to present a synoptic outline of these interrelated aspects of music signification. More emphasis is given to signification *in* music, since that aspect provides the basis for the meanings that musics—as multifaceted phenomena—have in the lives of individual people, their societies, and cultures.

My approach is systematic rather than developmental. Instead of summarizing musical development semiotically, the phylogenic, ontogenic, and sociogenic processes are conflated into one synchronic view of the system of musical semiosis. My approach is decidedly Peircean: the terms and tools employed owe allegiance to Charles S. Peirce's theories of semiotics and pragmaticism. As I address music, my starting point is a pragmatist conception, outlined below; as I address learning and the arts, I draw from John Dewey's philosophy and more recent semiotics of education.

Before focusing specifically on music, the first part of this article discusses semiosis as a whole by examining the practical process of inquiry, habits, beliefs, and meanings. The second part turns to the relation of learning and semiosis. The third part then turns to musical semiosis. The goal is to outline a pragmatist hypothesis of how meaning is formed in music through signs in situations created by subjects in order that they be communicated, perceived, and experienced. In the process, I will develop a view of how musical semiosis—signification—is permeated with learning and growth.

The pragmatic triangle as a model of being-in-the-world and pragmatic inquiry

To begin, there is a distinction between *theoretical semiotics* and *applied semiotics*. Applied semiotics deals with semiotic issues in particular contexts, with objects and subjects participating in semiosis, but usually without an immediate concern for developing a theory

of signification (see, for example, Eco 1976, 3; Nöth 1995, 5; Danesi and Perron 1999, 40; Ojala 2013). I, however, am interested in the study of sign systems and the theory of sign functioning in general, "the general conditions of signs being signs" and "the necessary conditions of the transmission of meaning by signs from mind to mind" (*CP* 1.444).

The study of sign systems entails the study of mind and thinking, since, as Peirce put it, "every thought is a sign" (*CP* 1.538) and "*thought* is the chief, if not the only, mode of representation" (*CP* 2.274). It also entails studying how mind is related to the actual world, including its organisms and other objects. In Peirce's words: "We are accustomed to speak of an external universe and an inner world of thought. But they are merely vicinities with no real boundary between them" (*CP* 7.438). This view accords well with current approaches to cognition (see, for example, Shapiro 2014; Newen, De Bruin and Gallagher 2018).

The big picture of the dynamic system of signification is best described by *the semiotic triangle* (Figure 26.1). Peirce defined a sign as:

> anything which on the one hand is so determined by an Object and on the other hand so determines an idea in a person's mind, that this latter determination, which I term the *Interpretant* of the sign, is thereby mediately determined by that Object. A sign, therefore, has a triadic relation to its Object and to its Interpretant.
> *(*CP *8.343)*

The semiotic triangle depicts a pragmatist model of being in the world, a model where a living organism, capable of perceiving, interpreting the perceived, and acting thereupon—i.e., capable of representation—is in a continuous, dynamic interaction with the *hard facts* of actual objects in actual situations of the world (*CP* 1.324; Määttänen 1993, 40–53; Määttänen 2015, 21–23; Ojala 2009, 290–97). The immediate object of the sign (iO in Figure 26.1) consists of the accessible, perceivable features or qualities of the dynamic object (dO). These are interpreted, resulting in interpretants of the particular sign.

The many accounts of interpretants in Peircean semiotics speak of the complexity and ambiguity of both the phenomenon and the notion (see, for example, Bergman 2003; Short 2007, 178–206). Here, it suffices to differentiate among the immediate (iI), dynamic (dI), and final interpretant (fI). The immediate interpretant requires acquaintance with the system of signs, which determines the sign's interpretability: as such it is tantamount to "the

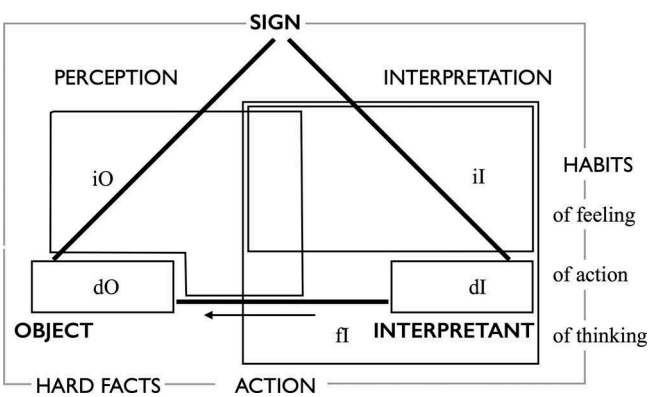


Figure 26.1 The semiotic triangle

interpretant as it is revealed in the right understanding of the Sign itself, and is ordinarily called the *meaning* of the sign" (*CP* 4.536).

At the core of pragmatist thought, however, is the maxim that the meaning of an object is equated with its practical consequences:

> Consider what effects that might conceivably have practical bearings we conceive the object of our conception to have: then, our conception of those effects is the whole of our conception of the object.
>
> *(*CP *5.2; 5.402; 8.119)*

As John Dewey illustrates, the word "hat" gains meaning in the same way as an actual hat "by being used in a given way" ([1916] 1980, 19). In contrast to the immediate interpretant, which only "consists in the *Quality* of the Impression that a sign is fit to produce, not to any actual reaction" (*CP* 8.315), the dynamic interpretant (dI) is "whatever interpretation any mind actually makes of a sign," a semiotic effect, more or less connected to (possible) action, but nevertheless always involving actual reaction. In other words, meaning is tied to practical activity in the world and its ramifications based on a subject's habits of feeling, action, and thinking.

Lastly, the final interpretant (fI) is the result of interpreting the sign that "does not consist in the way in which any mind does act but in the way in which every mind would act" (*CP* 8.315). It is an ideal and indefinitely extended interpretation of the sign. The notion of the final interpretant resonates in the pragmatist conception of "truth" as "that at which inquiry aims" (*CP* 5.557). Beliefs gradually adjust during the process of inquiry as the sign conforms to its object (*CP* 5.554), that is, represents it more logically, or truthfully, at least from the viewpoint of the interpreter of the sign. Meanwhile, we act according to our current habits or existing beliefs.

Semiosis is an adaptive process of inquiry. When the interpretation of the sign conflicts with an established belief, it becomes what Peirce called an "irritation of doubt" that "causes a struggle to attain a [new] state of belief" (*CP* 5.374). The conflict initiates "the action of thought" that only "ceases when belief is attained" (*CP* 5.394): for Peirce, the "whole end of inquiry is the settlement of belief" (*CP* 8.41).

A few remarks may help clarify. First, how a sign is interpreted is determined not only by the object, but also by what Peirce called "collateral experience" (*CP* 8.314). Also called "collateral observation," Peirce describes it as "previous acquaintance with what the sign denotes" (*CP* 8.179). Later, he points out that "no sign can be understood—unless the interpreter has 'collateral acquaintance' with *every Object* of it" (*CP* 8.183, emphasis mine; see also Short 2007, 192–94). Each sign is interpreted in its relation to a set of references, to the pertinent *accumulated experience* (see, for example, Short 2007, 193n11; Ojala 2009, 300; Määttänen 2015, 62 and 73).

Second, it may not be easy—or even necessary—to distinguish among experience, belief, and habit. Peirce even uses the term "belief-habit" (*CP* 1.107; 2.148; 3.160), and he describes belief as a special case of habit, as "[a] cerebral habit of the highest kind, which will determine what we do in fancy as well as what we do in action" (*CP* 3.160; also 5.397). Here, Peircean pragmatism and semiotics meet. The interpretation of signs is based on habits. Reciprocally, interpretation either changes or fortifies established habits during the process of inquiry. Consequently, the collateral experience required for interpretation is the collection of established habits of feeling, action, and thinking (see Figure 26.1 above), functioning as a framework for interpreting the sign into immediate, dynamic, and final

interpretants, respectively. Hence, each "belief is partly determined by old beliefs and partly by new experience" (*CP* 3.161). In this respect, mind can be taken as the total sum of the habits guiding our action as it dynamically evolves through inquiry.

Finally, the process of inquiry reveals that the accumulated experience and habits are not volatile or particular, but law-like, general, and beyond the temporal scope of immediacy or actuality. According to Peirce,

> every habit has, or is, a general law. Whatever is truly general refers to the indefinite future; for the past contains only a certain collection of such cases that have occurred. The past is actual fact. But a general (fact) cannot be fully realized. It is a potentiality; and its mode of being is *esse in futuro*. The future is potential, not actual. What particularly distinguishes a general belief, or opinion, such as is an inferential conclusion, from other habits, is that it is active in the imagination.
>
> *(*CP *2.148)*

The possibility of relying on habits allows us to make predictions of the future based on past experience, and then to act accordingly. Consequently, overcoming temporal volatility opens up avenues for *imagination*, the competence of anticipating and estimating hypothetical, virtual situations. Peirce describes imagination as:

> an affection of consciousness which can be directly compared with a percept in some special feature, and be pronounced to accord or disaccord with it. Suppose for example that I slip a cent into a slot, and expect on pulling a knob to see a little cake of chocolate appear. My expectation consists in, or at least involves, such a habit that when I think of pulling the knob, I imagine I see a chocolate coming into view. When the perceptual chocolate comes into view, my imagination of it is a feeling of such a nature that the percept can be compared with it as to size, shape, the nature of the wrapper, the color, taste, flavor, hardness and grain of what is within.
>
> *(*CP *2.148; see also Ojala 2009, 25–34)*

Anticipating actual situations and imagining virtual situations have, according to the pragmatic maxim, practical bearings (see *CP* 2.148). Without a direct constraining of semiosis by the hard facts, imagination may be erroneous, and in some cases, potentially harmful, since we "risk a great deal" on our living beliefs (*CP* 5.589). Conflicts between habits and encountered or imagined situations are resolved through further inquiry, resulting in adjustment of habits. Furthermore, imagination may expand habits of feeling, action, and thinking, and engage us in an interaction with the world in new ways. These possibilities may create unprecedented situations in the actual world to be experienced by the self and by others. In short, the fallibility of inquiry and imagination enables *creative* action (Ojala 2009, 31).

Semiotic understanding of learning and growth

Peirce's writings do not deal extensively with learning or teaching—nor does his philosophy much engage music or the arts. While writers like Peirce's student John Dewey have had a notable impact on theories of art and education, a more specifically semiotic approach to learning has only recently emerged in the form of *edusemiotics*. Here, the notion of learning is examined in ways that serve the current task, the analysis of musical signification.

At the core of semiotics of learning is the process of inquiry, the interpretation of signs, and the subsequent adaptation to the hard facts through adjustment of habits of feeling, action, and thinking. According to Peirce, "the interpretation is the learning" (*CP* 7.536), which leads to the notion of learning as change of habits. Nöth explicitly connects the principle of adaptation with learning and growth in inquiry:

> Self-correction from errors or for the purpose of adapting to the semiotic environment is a form of autonomous learning. By acquiring new and changing old meanings, signs and sign systems become better adapted to their purpose of creating interpretants. Through learning, signs and semiotic systems grow.
>
> *(2014, 12; see also Gough and Stables 2012; Olteanu 2017, 194)*

Learning is the goal-oriented and active construction of knowledge. Through action, the environment is modified, as action affects the dynamic objects. Through the immediate object, partly determined by the dynamic object, changes in the environment may again be perceived and interpreted. The active subject in the changing world propels a continuous learning cycle, the spiral of semiosis. While current beliefs are what we are willing "to risk a great deal upon," Peirce's account of self-correction in inquiry emphasizes the "conditional ideal" of truth:

> Thus it is that inquiry of every type, fully carried out, has the vital power of self-correction and of growth. This is a property so deeply saturating its inmost nature that it may truly be said that there is but one thing needful for learning the truth, and that is a hearty and active desire to learn what is true. If you really want to learn the truth, you will, by however devious a path, be surely led into the way of truth, at last. No matter how erroneous your ideas of the method may be at first, you will be forced at length to correct them so long as your activity is moved by that sincere desire.
>
> *(*CP *5.582)*

What is being learned when habits change clearly depends on what kind of interaction takes place with the evolving nature of objects, what features of the objects are accessible to the subject, and how the features of the object are represented in previous habits of feeling, action, and thinking. Hence, learning is constructivist, contextual, and situated; signs are embodied in the environment and in our experience (see Semetsky 2017, 6; 144–49).

Habits overcoming temporal volatility means that a situation can be perceived not only as an immediate object of the "object" of learning, but of the *process* of learning as well. That is, signs can be signs of semiosis itself, of how habits change in connection with a subject's action, and what is the relationship between habits of action (i.e., the meaning of the sign) and the subject's environment (i.e., the context of the sign). This prompts the subject's growth toward self-regulation. Interaction between the self and others—enabled by the interpretation of dynamic objects—entails the development of a theory of mind: the ability to distinguish among oneself and others and to understand all as individual, semiotically empowered subjects.

Learning is a "self-organizing activity of the ecosocial system" in which individual subjects participate as members of learning communities (Lemke 1997, 48). Learning practices, therefore, are thoroughly social and cultural, and not just a matter of an individual subject's cognitive re-organization. Learning basic skills for action and interpretation is a prerequisite for learning to act in social contexts. While the starting point here has emphasized the individual, the social and cultural aspect of semiosis and learning should be

given their due attention. According to Olteanu, "learning is both a cultural and a biological phenomenon; and is continuous with the rest of the world. Living and learning are coextensive and cannot be separated" (2017, 202).

These views of learning and growing point to the complex habits of action needed for social interaction and cultural agency. Yet the body, with its sensorimotor and nervous apparatuses, is not only the underlying vessel for semiosis, but, as Olteanu writes, "the body is the learning self" (2017, 200). In semiosis, we realize meanings as habits by physically acting on dynamic objects, the features of which are manifested in semiosis as an immediate object. Semiosis is an actual process of the subject-organism. Semiosis, mind, and learning are both socially and individually embodied.

A pragmatist conception of music

The ubiquity of music across time and place, its varying social conventions, and the cultural diversity of different musics, understandably lead to multiple constructions of the concept of "music." Yet, in order to consider the semiotics of music and learning, the concept needs to be delineated within a Peircean framework. The following is a heuristic outline of *a pragmatist conception of music*, expressed in six premises, used here as an abductive model and tool for examining the system of music signification (see Ojala 2008, 2009, 94–142, 2010).

1. *Music is real*. Music is a semiotic process that involves subjects as bodily, perceiving, thinking, and acting organisms. A subject's existence, formed through practical inquiry and the experience that accumulates therein, interprets organized sounds (broadly understood) as real objects of the actual world.
2. *Music is communicative*. Through music, some purport is shared through the production of dynamic objects across individual, social, and cultural channels. Communicative praxis is the action used to affect the experience of subjects—others or oneself—participating in the process. This action is guided by the practical wisdom of "what is good" (Aristotle, *NE* 1140b), in momentary and long-term scales of time. The interpretation of a sign may be different from the intended meaning, and depends on the interpreter. Regardless, the habits of producing and experiencing a sound can be shaped and reshaped.
3. *Music is representational*. Sound, as a dynamic object, is detached from its origin: in a sense, it is *acousmatically liberated* from its source or cause (for example, an instrument; see Schaeffer 1966, 91–92; Chion 1983, 18). Hence, in music, sound becomes a sign, regardless of where a subject's process of interpretation may lead, and may be perceived and interpreted as standing for something beyond itself.
4. *Music is useful*. The sound can be perceived and interpreted in ways serving the needs of the listener. The acousmatic liberation enables music to function as a "laboratory" for experiencing, a (relatively) safe testing-ground for actual or possible, virtual situations.
5. *Music is embodied*. Semiosis in music, and in general, is embodied through (a) participants and sound being dynamic objects; (b) participants being capable of interaction with the environment (that is, engaged in inquiry); (c) representation taking place in the nervous system; and (d) representation being based on spatial characteristics of perceived features of objects (see, for example Zbikowski 2002; Ojala 2009, 328–29; Larson 2012; Cox 2016).
6. *Music is non-arbitrary*. The interpretation of the sign (the features of the sound) is based on isomorphisms and metaphors, so that the features, objects, and situations of sounds stand for other, analogous features not based on random choice or arbitrary agreement.

The constitution of the sign in music

Peirce's sign theory is based on three phenomenological categories (firstness, secondness, and thirdness), and three relations: the sign in itself, the relation of the sign to its object, and the relation of the sign to its interpretant (*CP* 2.227–64). Instead of traditional presentations in triangular but two-dimensional illustrations, tables, or written-out trichotomies (for example, *CP* 8.376; 2.264; Cumming 2000, 80–104; Short 2007, 207–34; see also Monelle 1991), Figure 26.2 brings out the three-dimensionality of the model. The three trichotomies yield, not 27, but ten classes of the sign, due to the inclusion of firstness in secondness, and secondness in thirdness. What follows describes the transitions between the phenomenological categories in each trichotomy. Based on the premises above, and the transitions between the phenomenological categories of Peirce's ten-fold classification, the constitution of the sign in music can be summarized as follows, coincidentally in six parts (*CP* 2.227–264; Ojala 2006, 2009, 265–83, 306–28, 431–37). The transitions are:

1. *manifestation* of qualisign in sinsigns,
2. *selection* or *filtering* of icons into indices,
3. *binding* of rhemes to dicents,
4. *definition* or *categorization* of sinsigns in mutual relation with legisigns,
5. *correlation* of indices to symbols, and
6. *understanding*: dicents leading to arguments.

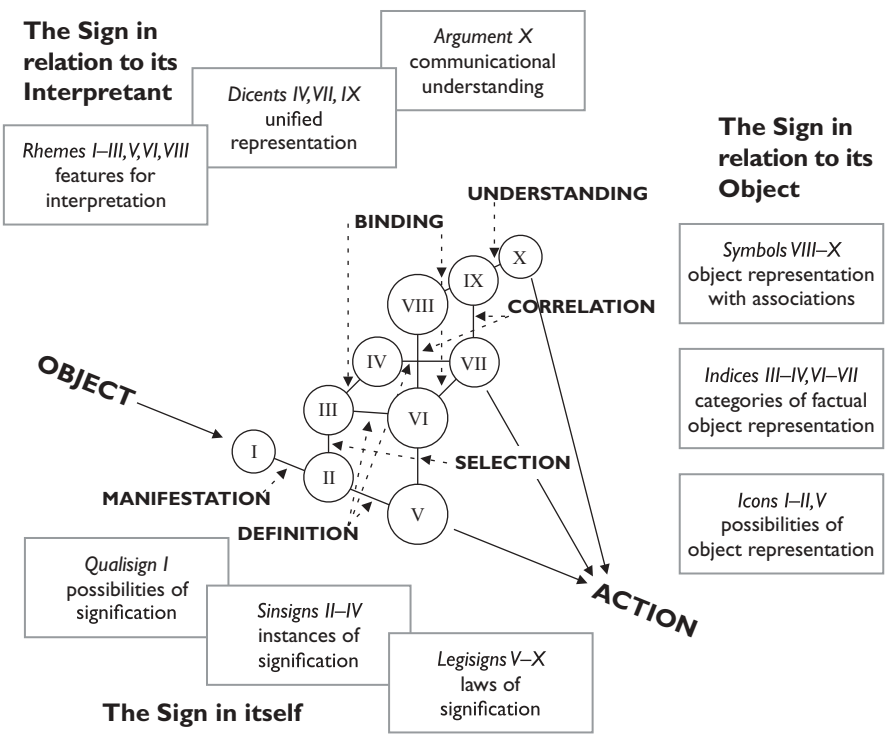


Figure 26.2 The constitution of the sign in Peirce's tenfold classification

What follows outlines the semiotic model in Figure 26.2, accompanied by a rudimentary sketch of what each transition may entail. While this sketch uses the opening of the first movement of Beethoven's Piano Sonata op. 81a ("Les Adieux"), please note the model is not limited to Western classical music.

First, the accessible, changing features of sound, shaped and reshaped in order to affect experience, are *manifested* in perception for interpretation. That is, the possibilities of the qualisigns as signs are embodied in actually felt sinsigns (*CP* 1.306; 1.422–26; 2.244; 2.254). The sign is thereby causally and logically connected with the actual world through perception. The word "music" may refer to notation, but clearly, if *music* is understood *as semiosis*, it is necessary that actual vibrations of atmospheric pressure affect us as subject-organisms and produce a perception of sound in our perceptual system. That said, we may develop habits that enable us also to *imagine* the actual sound in more or less accurate ways. This is mental imagery of sound. Those familiar with "Les Adieux," or capable enough of solmization, can evoke the perception of the opening. The qualities of the sound of the opening have the possibility of signifying, but become meaningful only after they are really heard, as a particular performance, as actual or imagined sound.

Second, the continuous, chaotic flow of perceivable features is filtered, and relevant features of the sound are *extracted or selected*; relevance is determined in relation to accumulated experience. This is a pivotal transition in terms of growth from a mere reaction to an actual representation of objects. Growth is necessary for cognitive processes, where "concepts have function in reasoning and in acting that is independent of perception" (Gärdenfors 2000, 122). In music, this implies the emerging of meaningful perceptual elements, such as pitch, volume, or timbre. Different traditions (cultures, styles, genres, works) of music vary in terms of their "form-bearing elements" (McAdams 1989). In Beethoven's sonata, regardless of the actual performance, it may be relatively safe to assume that the selection of an average listener's perception is mostly geared to a relatively quiet *volume*, an evenly and slowly paced *rhythm* and *tempo*, a consistent piano *timbre*, and, in varying ways, to the *pitch* organization, both "horizontally" and "vertically." Clearly, there are individual and cultural differences in what is and what is not perceived as meaningful, and the selection is affected by not only the habits of the listener, but also by possible disturbances and incidental noise. Note that the listener's habits of selecting may be developed not only by exposure and participation, but, even at this fundamental level of semiosis, also through goal-oriented study, which is largely the objective of music analysis.

Third, actual object representation requires a *binding* of the selected features, each carrying potential clues for representation, into a unified experience, resulting in a more or less coherent factual representation of the object. The unified features tend to correspond, since the actual world has a relatively consistent "logic" of causal relations of dynamic objects (although this is not always the case—a sign can present its object falsely, after all). The consistency is important, as it enables the development of habits and imagination, and is thereby the basis for the subject's logical operation in general. While "a *Rheme* is a Sign which, for its Interpretant, is a Sign of qualitative Possibility" (*CP* 2.250), a Dicent is, for its Interpretant, a "Sign of actual existence" (*CP* 2.251). For music, the features of sound are bound to sound objects, a notion understood broadly as the auditory structuring of tones with pitch and duration, melodic and rhythmic motifs, harmonies, but also as other objects, since sound is but a part of the sign. Here, the opening three events form an organic entity, aided by the longer duration of the chord in measure 2 and subsequent change of texture (albeit the three events can also be taken as separate sound objects). The three may amount to a unified musical *gesture* (see Hatten 2004, 109, 177). At the indexical level (Figure. 26.2), the pitch,

temporal, and timbral features are organized into a sound object, a unified Gestalt that is freed from its origin and will not be interpreted like a ringtone signaling an incoming call, but in ways we find meaningful and useful. The sound object is a sign of actual existence, but what and how it signifies requires further development of the sign. Part of this process is binding, which takes place at the symbolic level (VIII–IX in Figure 26.2).

Fourth, the particular perceptual features and perceived objects of sound are compared with and thereby defined by the relevant accumulated aggregate of similar features and objects, initiating a reciprocal process of mutual updating; the relation between particular sinsigns and law-like legisigns is a relation of mutual definition (*CP* 2.246; 8.334). In this manner, the temporal volatility of the particular is overcome, and law-like habits are formed. So far, the description of how the opening of "Les Adieux" is constituted as a sign, has mainly dealt with a particular: an instance of its (actual or imagined) performance. It has become clear, however, that there are differences in how meaningful features are selected and subsequently combined into a sound object. These result from how the habits are established across listeners, and how they change over time. The interpretation of each particular sinsign here, that is, each feature and object in "Les Adieux," is determined by how it relates to the corresponding habit-like legisign of the listener. For instance, the first sets of pitches are perceived and interpreted in relation to how our conceptual *pitch space* is structured: for example, in terms of pitch height or consonance vs. dissonance of intervals and chords, which in turn, depends on the physiology of hearing, the complexity and context of the sound, and the socially and culturally learned habits, the latter increasing in importance the further the interpretation proceeds. Reciprocally, each listening of the opening reinforces the habit—the schematic surprise (Huron 2006, 270–71)—of a deceptive chord progression for those who have developed such a habit: the two first events set up expectation of a E♭-major chord, but the emerging bass line turns the consequent chord into a C-minor chord. For those, to whom the deceptive cadence might not (yet) be a habitual phenomenon, it may expand their *tonal space*, by establishing a habit of perceiving a first alternative to the standard resolution of the second chord, of a larger repertoire of schema of deception or surprise in harmony (see Huron 2006, 270–81).

Fifth, *correlation* connects the representation of the particular sound and its features to the representations and constituting features of other signs, past and present. Thereby, the transition takes us to a *subjective* experience: to correlations including representations of the subject's body, self, and situation in the world, whether actual or anticipated, and to the experience accumulated throughout the subject's practical inquiry *in toto*. The individual differences in perceiving the sound on iconic and indexical levels (Figure 26.2) are not subjective in the sense that they would be in relation to the subject's interpretation of themselves. Here, the transition throws together the legisigns defining the features and the sound object of the opening and the legisigns of the collateral experience in its subjective totality. For instance, the soft dynamic, peaceful tempo, slow-paced events, descending contour, and deceptive turn from the implied major chords to a minor chord may all contribute to the opening functioning as a *metaphor* for letting go, losing something, distance, and emptiness (for cognitive metaphor and conceptual blending theory in music, see, for example, Zbikowski 2002, Ojala 2009; Larson 2012; Cox 2016). In addition to the obvious—knowing the work's title, and "Lebewohl" in the notation, and the subject matter of the sonata—experiencing the opening as a representation of farewell may further be supported by familiarity with the horn call motif (the lines of the two top voices, which Rosen calls "symbols of memory—or, more exactly, of distance, absence and regret." (1995, 117; see also Monelle 1991, 102–03; Hatten 2004, 56).

Finally, once representation of the sound and its features is associated with collateral experience, the last transition proceeds to a metalevel in that, beyond the particular sign, the interpretation of the semiotic process itself allows reflection and understanding of the object's significance as a sign by acknowledging its pertinence to the subject. This leads us to the signification *of* music. Interpreting "Les Adieux," this entails understanding what kind of experience listening produces, and how we might find this kind of features, objects, and experiences thereof useful elsewhere. Here, we return to the pragmatist notion of meaning-as-use.

Music, virtual objects, and communicative interaction

Using Peircean principles as a basis for my perspective, I have described the necessary conditions for a musical experience that embeds learning and growth. Semiosis, however, does not always fully function, in real life, according to the model. Deficiencies in any transition may account for impediments in the understanding of music: the subject needs to be able to sense sound somehow, to select and categorize meaningful features, to bind them together to relevant units, and to correlate these with collateral experience.

If, however, subjects have become semiotically empowered agents by developing mechanisms of semiosis at large, they are also, presumably, capable of developing mechanisms of signification in music, since musical semiosis is a subset of general semiosis. This is the basis for music education: music can be learned by everyone, and participation in music at whatever level and to whatever extent should be considered a civic right.

The continuity and spiral nature of semiosis impacts both perception and action—the aesthetic and practical sides of music that have been stressed in the philosophy of music education (for example, Määttänen 2003; Bowman and Frega 2012; Regelski 2017). Insofar as meanings are habits, immersion in musical semiosis results in learning habits that propel the semiotic process further by guiding the subject's future actions and inquiries, in musical praxis, but also at large. The significance of these actions is again determined by their use: subjects may engage in musical praxis, producing organized sounds for themselves or for others to experience. As a result, the individual subject learns to *autocommunicate* and to *communicate* by using subjective and intersubjective semiotic processes of music (Figure 26.3). Such actions serve individual needs, such as needs for self-regulation, identity negotiation, and regulation of emotions. These are important for the subject's well-being and may lead to overall benefits in cognitive performance and creativity (see Hallam 2015). Such action and participation also serve joint social and cultural needs, such as those of group identity, conflict resolution, and cultural transmission.

In shaping and reshaping sounds and situations of music, the subject deploys imaginative ability: "possible worlds" can be engaged and explored; hypothetical situations can be estimated and assessed; and the hard facts of dynamic objects can be ignored or transcended as the subjects act under imaginary circumstances that may (or may not) be realized. The presented sound constitutes a situation, shaped so, that—together with the collateral experience—the interpretation will produce an experience that reinforces, readjusts, or creates habits of action (see left or right half of Figure 26.3, musics of two subjects). When realized, the subject's habits of "real action" would have been prepared by imagination (see *CP* 2.148, cited earlier); hence, the individually and socially rewarding virtuality of music semiosis.

Distinguishing between autocommunicative and communicative practices in music is not easy. Interpretation of shared sounds differs among individuals, social groups, and cultures, but the dynamic object—the sound—is the same. Through interpretation, the sound may convey complex meanings between subjects, even though it does not contain them (see

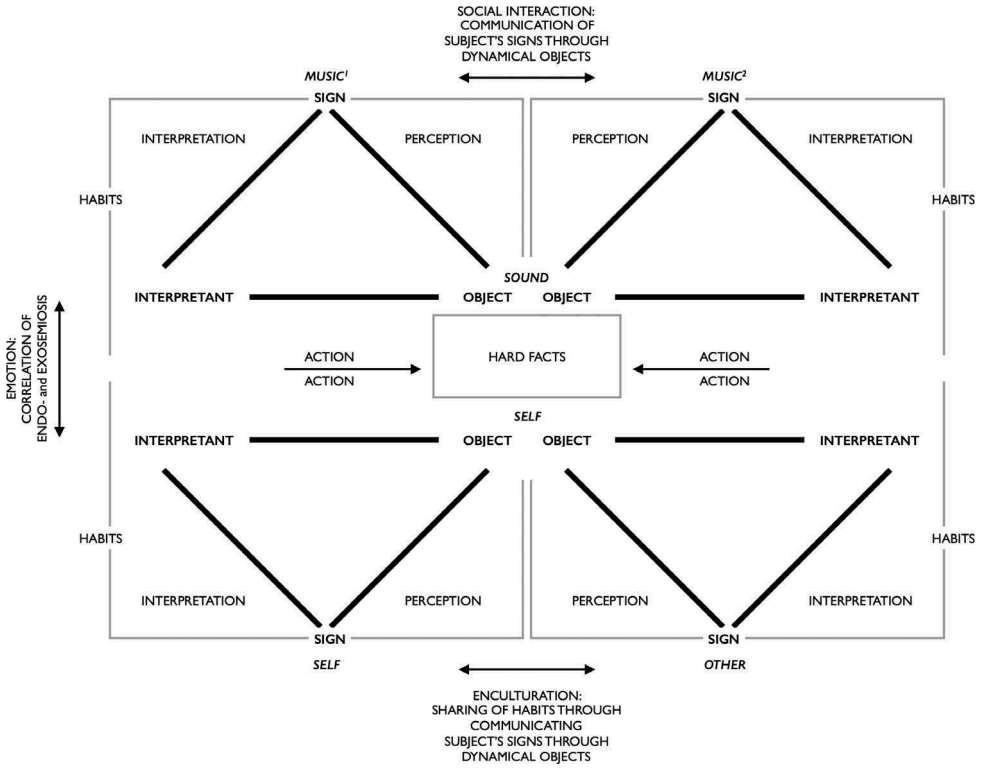


Figure 26.3 Parallel processes of semiosis

Figure 26.3, both sides). This is because we, as subject-organisms, are also dynamic objects for our own semiosis. There are similarities in habits arising from similar experiences of, say, early physical and social development, or the generally similar stages of cognition at various ages. We more or less intersubjectively share habits of feeling, action, thinking, and the collateral experience relevant to the interpretation of sound. By way of contrast, though, there are variations in habits that are due to individual, social, and cultural differences.

The ubiquity of musics hosts a rich variety of intersubjective practices where individuals participate in the semiotic process of interpreting sound to explore and experience actual or virtual situations. Through exposure and active participation, semiotic practices are learned. The outcome contributes to our semiotic empowerment and agency: we grow *into* and *as* individuals. Through sharing the dynamic object of sound in these processes and by interacting with others, we learn. Since actions are realizations of habits of *meaning*, through communication (and autocommunication) we learn of ourselves and of others, and grow into a better understanding of how and who we are, and what the world is to us.

27

A PRAGMATIC MAP OF MUSIC SIGNIFICATION FOR MUSIC ANALYSIS COURSES

Joan Grimalt

> Drawing together the many aspects of musical semiotics is like rounding up a flock of particularly wayward sheep; alas, some have got away from the present shepherd.
>
> *Raymond Monelle (1992, Preface)*

While theories of music signification are fascinating, their practical application requires careful choices in both analysis and interpretation. As a musician and educator, I have collected those aspects of musical meaning that seem useful for teaching in the classroom, and ordered them in a structural map that can be helpful in locating instances of music signification. Its main purpose is to lead toward a pragmatic understanding, in classroom situations, of the ways in which music signifies.

Some basic issues of musical meaning

One of the first questions that arises when the subject of music signification is addressed in educational settings is its scholarly validity. Can such a subject be relevant to musicology? Alongside intuition, subjectivity is inevitable, constituting an indispensable first impulse. This essay, however, addresses the ways in which this impulse can be objectified, so that it becomes intersubjective and academically sound.

Arguably, a solid starting point for the study of music signification is the traditional canon found in most music history curricula. These compositions present a conventional inventory of musical meanings that is rooted in rhetoric and speech, movement and dance, and in the human need for ritual. This tradition provides a repository that can be approached from a hermeneutic perspective, grounding imaginative and persuasive interpretations to elucidate signification in musical texts (see Gadamer 1960).

One way in which music signifies is by triggering associations to particular elements of the listener's soundscape. A Mozart symphony, for example, can include allusions to the comic, the tragic, popular dance forms, the military, and so on. These references imbue eighteenth-century instrumental music with signification, in spite of the abstract, non-referential status frequently claimed for music without text. Indeed, the present-day

reconstruction of the nature of the signification attributed to instrumental music recognizes, in large part, its increasing autonomy in the eighteenth century (see, for example, Allanbrook 1983, 1–9, 2014). In the nineteenth century, however, the ambivalence of instrumental music toward a specific musical meaning—its tacit expressiveness, if you will—was increasingly felt as its main strength. If musical meaning was not based on a fixed, finalized lexicon, then the complex of biological, psychological, and cultural references and interactions create a cloud of meanings that nevertheless has a steadfast core. This core is what we should aim to teach. Without our mediation, classical music might become irrelevant to today's listeners (Kramer 1995).

Mapping musical meaning

Topics, tropes, musical signs

Classification is a traditional pedagogic tool, facilitating the understanding of a diverse set of objects. A detailed map of the field allows one to relate new listening experiences to a pre-existing grid that makes the teaching experience effective. Even complex cases that do not allow an easy categorization become clearer when compared to an existing scheme.

A clear definition and exemplification of basic concepts must include the theory of topics. Musical *topoi* can be defined as recurring references to cultural units imported and stylized from one medium to another (see slightly different—but compatible—definitions in Ratner 1980, 9; Allanbrook 1983, 2–3; Grabócz 2009, 22–23; Mirka 2014, 2). Topics can be classified in many ways, but one that has proved effective is to distinguish meanings within and without music, i.e., between those topics referring to genres and styles or those topics suggesting objects and concepts outside of music. A topic tends initially to function as a musical icon—that is, it shares a quality, likeness, or character with its object that allows it to be interpreted as a sign. But the recurrent use of a topic over time detaches the reference from its original source, and thus the relation between the topic-as-sign and the object becomes increasingly abstract. Thus, when Haydn used horns in his Symphony no. 6 in D Major (Hob. 1:6), "Le matin" (the morning), to signify hunting, the act of hunting and actual hunting calls were still concretely and tangibly grounded in his (aristocratic) listeners' minds and experience. But when in 1865, Brahms cued this tradition in his Horn Trio in E♭ Major, op. 40, actual experiential contact with hounds pursuing prey to the sound of hunting horns was distant enough to allow for a new association. The use of the horn in Brahms is related to the freedom of the forest and to an idealized, pastoral *Vaterland* (see Monelle 2006).

Virtually any musical gesture can be a topic. Musical topics often have an iconic character predominantly associated with real-world phenomena: for instance, the sigh, musical laughter, the imitation of the buzz of a spinning wheel, or the musical depiction of the murmur of water in a brook (Monelle 2000, 66–69 and 73–75, 2006, 4–5; Grimalt 2014a, 34 and 276–77, 2014b).[1] Other topics have more or less conventional associations that have their origin in musical sound; for instance, fanfare or horn calls (Monelle 2000, 33–38; Agawu 2009, 43–44). Topics may also suggest—and therefore include—various social groups; for instance, the ombra topic (McClelland 2012; Frymoyer 2016), Turkish music, and the *All'ongherese* or "Gipsy Style" (Agawu 2009, 48–49). Some topics have a strong historical character. Madrigalisms, the sixteenth-century attempts to connect verbal poetic elements with musical sound, were gathered and classified as rhetoric figures in later baroque treatises. Monelle described two pathetic madrigalisms that, starting in the nineteenth century, were often interchanged: the "sigh" (*sospiro*) and the "weeping" (*pianto*), a confusion often attributed to Adolf Bernhard Marx

(Monelle 2000, 66–69 and 73–75, 2006 4–5). The pair "Anabasis/Katabasis" is a popular rhetoric figure, indexing the way "up to heaven" and "down to hell," respectively, expressed by suitable ascending and descending melodic motions (Civra 1991, 173; Unger [1941] 2004, 94; Grimalt 2014a, 107–11). Topics are not only historically changing, they appear normally in combination with other musical meanings. Hatten termed these combinations *tropes* (Hatten 1994, 161–96, 2004, 15–16). In practice, however, I use "trope" to describe specific surprising combinations, since most topical appearances are in fact compound. When we say "topic," we imagine an idealized form, well aware that they appear in the actual musical work only as mixed and pliable entities. In the beginning of the Rondo of Beethoven's Third Piano Concerto in C Minor, op. 37, the contredanse and the pathetic topics form a trope that defines the theme's expressive power.

A topical analysis of music requires identification of its stylistic references, which carry a whole world of cultural—sometimes subliminal—associations. Clearly, the sheer diversity and historical malleability prevent a creation of a fixed dictionary or a strict classification of musical topics. Nevertheless, the transformation process of certain topics can be traced (Monelle 2006): two such cases are discussed below.

Not every musical meaning, however, is a topic. Instrumental music has always imitated many expressive patterns of human discourse, such as "exclamation," "interrogation," "interruption," and so forth. These patterns are discussed below, as the "Rhetoric of Instrumental Music."

Topics can be classified in many ways. One way that proved to be operative is to distinguish between meanings referring to musical genres or styles, and meanings that relate to non-musical objects and concepts.

Music alone: genres and styles

Genres and styles are a very good start in an analysis that includes signification. They are identified by specific musical elements that function as markers (Tagg 2012–2013).

The main markers of most dances, whether a classical sarabande or a modern reggae, are rhythmically embedded in the accompaniment (Allanbrook 1983; Little and Jenne [1991] 2001). Dance genres can reference a scenario with either its aristocratic or folk origins and its social class context. A gigue is associated with its end position in Baroque suites—and in theater performances earlier—and with lively, popular joy; the French minuet and sarabande recall Versaille's *ancien régime*, setting them in opposition to the waltz and to the contredanse that were the first to be enjoyed in newly built public dance salons at the turn of the nineteenth century. All these styles celebrated the intermingling of classes, as they were easy to learn (Zbikowski 2012).

Timbre, or the choice of instruments, is another indicator of musical topics. For example, wind instruments are usually associated with the pastoral; harp, celesta, or glockenspiel frequently indicate celestial music, particularly in late Romantic repertoire. At the turn of the twentieth century, the striking of the tam-tam has often been used to reference supernatural horror and death (Floros [1977] 1987, 209–324; Monelle 2006, 229–36).

Music and semantic fields: a semiotic square

Classical and Romantic musics make a double distinction: between the sacred and the secular and between vocal and instrumental expression. In these two oppositions, the more common ("unmarked") poles are the profane and the vocal.[2] Classical vocal-profane genres can be further subdivided into a new opposition: the comic (*buffa*) and the tragic (*seria*), the latter being the marked one. In his early discussion of the Classical style, Rosen established that the basic tone of

the eighteenth-century Viennese composers language is comedy ([1971]1997, 313; see also Allanbrook 1983, 2014; Sisman 2014). Traditions from the tragic, aristocratic opera, however, appear quite regularly in Haydn's, Mozart's, and Beethoven's musical discourse. The two most recurrent topics adopted from opera seria are, arguably, "ombra," meaning both "shadow" and "ghost," and "Tempesta," or "stormy" (McClelland 2012, 2017).

Tragedy and comedy, and in a broader sense, *ancien régime* and modernity, appear in a highly expressive, antithetic relationship. Oftentimes, their immediate contiguity results in an ironic incongruence. In fact, most of the seria references in the Viennese classics are issued from an ironic point of view. Interestingly, irony can be found already at the very center of the opera seria production, at mid-eighteenth century, in the subgenre of the so-called *metamelodrammi*: satirical representations of an opera seria. This culminates in *L'opera seria* (Vienna 1769) by Ranieri de' Calzabigi and Florian Leopold Gassmann. Mozart's *Der Schauspieldirektor* K 486 (1786) can be seen as a late replica of this trend and as a rich source for an ironic use of seria topics (see Allanbrook 1983, 140–45; Hirschmann 2017).

Another way to classify topics relates to semantic fields. In my analyses of common-practice repertoire, referenced objects or concepts could be classified in four groups, resulting in four different semantic fields, all related to each other:

1. Sacred: Gregorian chant; polyphony; chorale; bells.
2. Military: marches; bugle calls; the Classical "toy army"; also, a variant of the hunt.
3. Secular texts: lyricism; the pastoral; serenades.
4. Dances.

These four semantic fields relate to each other in a way that recalls Greimas's semiotic square (Figure. 27.1).[3] The Sacred and the Military oppose each other conceptually, but share an institutional quality, both abiding the rule of "the Law." Conversely, Secular texts—such as poetry and the theater—and Dance, share the idea of "Freedom," conceptually opposed to the rule of "Law." Such positioning creates a new opposition, traditional in Western culture: "Spirit" versus "Body." The mutually exclusive relationship (in Christianity) between the Religious and the Dance, and, to a certain degree, between the violence of the Military and the naked power of the Word, complete the square.

This square offers a visual map—one of many possible ones—of a virtual world of Western art music. Such mapping may prove useful for the positioning of musical meanings into a complex of relationships: some of affinity, others of conflict.

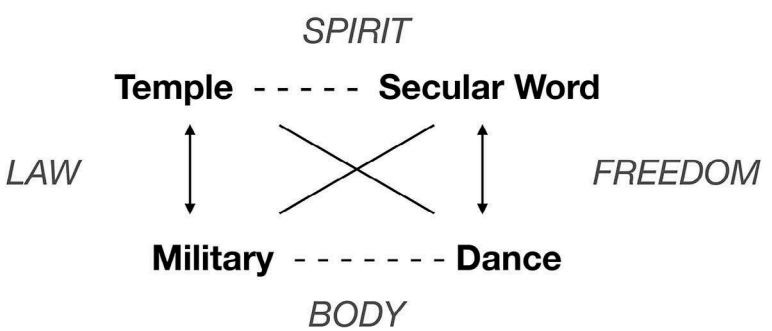


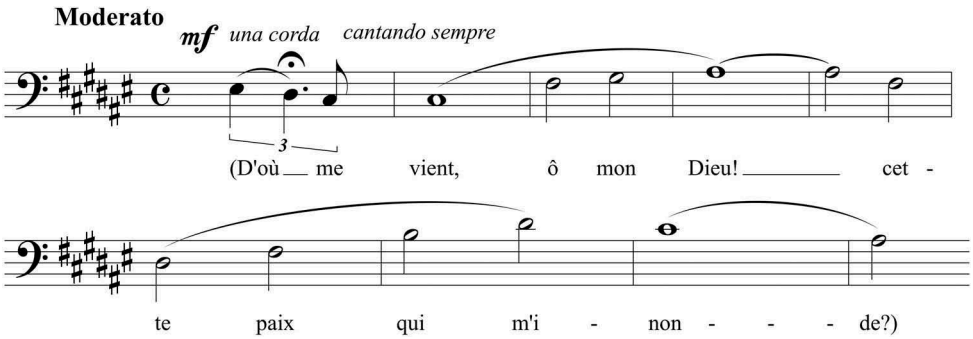
Figure 27.1 A semiotic square of semantic fields in common-practice music

Analyzing musical meaning

Rhetoric of instrumental music

The discursive character of instrumental music was mentioned earlier. When analyzing rhetorical figures in music in a teaching situation, however, it is often advisable to start by establishing the composition's discursive tone. Is the music representing a predetermined or a spontaneous discourse? As it happens in Shakespeare's plays, changes of meter and character in classical music suggest improvising or, alternatively, a rendering of a ready-composed fragment. A good example of that difference is the second movement of Beethoven's Piano Sonata op. 13 ("Pathétique"). It starts with a clear period: four measures antecedent and four consequent. This theme sounds like a "song" based on a poem written in heptameters. Immediately following the repetition of that period—from measure 16 onwards—someone seems to abandon the representation of the predetermined material and, instead, speaks in first person: a musical persona seemingly asking questions in a dysphoric mode.[4] Two rhetorical tones can be discerned here: predetermined and spontaneous. Marked by metric regularity, the predetermined tone relates historically to its functional origin, whether serving a poem or as a dance pattern. The spontaneous tone, instead, is an heir of improvisation practices that were cardinal to the development of notated instrumental music (Cone 1974, 128–131). The sparse motives following measure 16 of Beethoven's second movement seem self-generated and are structurally loose, suggesting improvisation. The opening measures, however, carry a predetermined tone, signaled by a solid formal pattern: the period (antecedent and consequent) and its variants; the spontaneous tone beginning in measure 16 is expressed by the interruptions, repetitions, swellings, and excurses, all imitating an improvised performance.

Musical rhetoric is also discernible in the traces of poetic meters in instrumental music, to which vocal genres seem to have lent a certain prosody. Two kinds of metric regularities are apparent in instrumental music: dance accompanimental patterns and melodic metric patterns. Remnants of syllables, poetic meters, lines or stanzas can confirm or refine analytic conclusions. Just as every topical reference to a dance genre carries an affective meaning, poetic meters can be roughly divided into "high" and "low." Such division may suggest the aesthetic ambition of the music we are inspecting. Short meters of up to eight syllables per line, which are typical to traditional lyrics in most European languages, can be classified as alluding to "folk" singing or "minor art." Both in neo-Latin and Germanic languages, lines with more than eight syllables are considered as "major art," reserved to lofty subjects (Baldick 1990, 25). Mahler's Adagietto from his Fifth Symphony, for instance, seems to be based on some simple song in trochaic dimeters with an anacrusis. The similarity to poetic structure is so ingrained in it, that a poem was written on it (Floros [1985] 1993, 154–55; Grimalt 2012, 208). Another example is the case of virtual alexandrines, the favorite meter of French classical literature, comparable in prestige to polyphony in music, can provide another example, as it is found in Liszt's *Bénédiction de Dieu dans la solitude* (1834). Liszt's piano composition is based on a poem by Alphonse de Lamartine and the words of Lamartine's poetry are easily mapped in the piano melody (Example. 27.1; see also Grimalt 2013).



Example 27.1 Liszt, *Bénédiction de Dieu dans la solitude*, beginning (text added)

Two historical topics: musical "laughter" and natural "flicker"

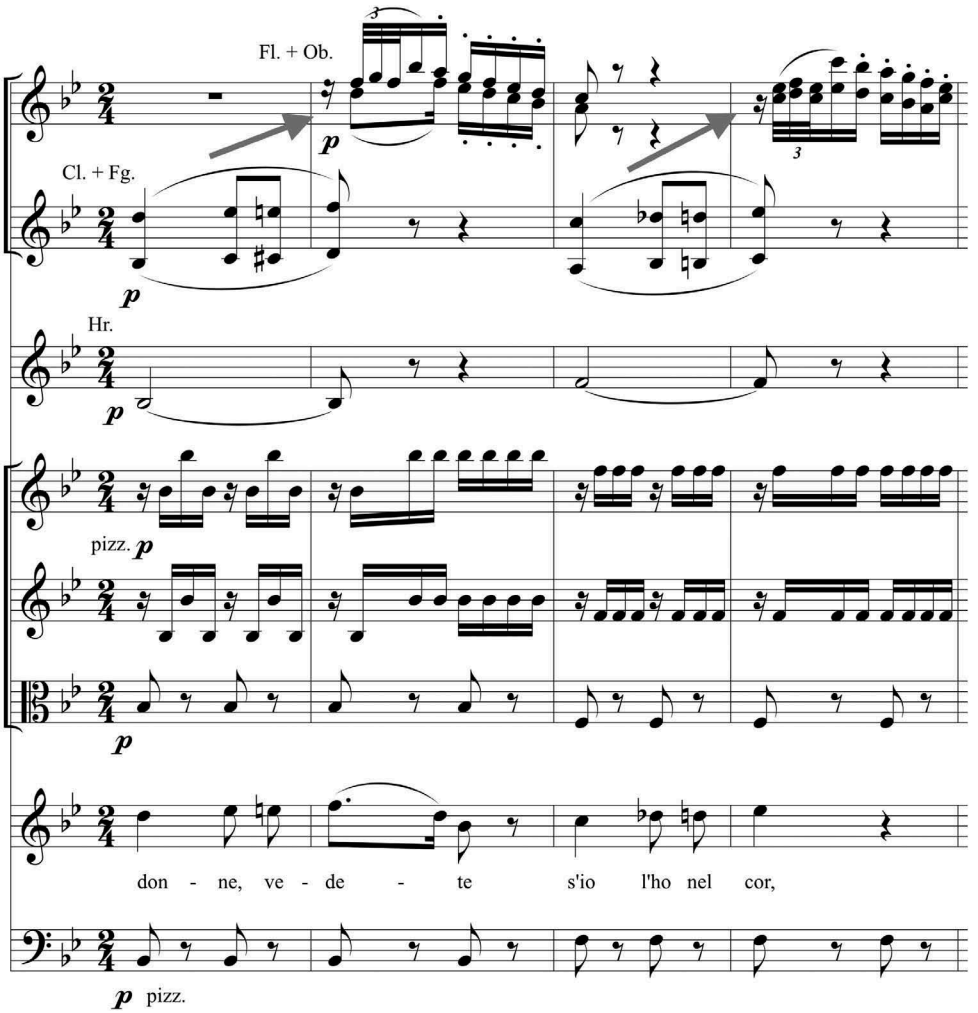
Musical Laughter and the natural Flicker exemplify the ways in which some topics can keep an identity through their historical trajectory, if their appearance and correlates are modified and even transformed.

Both vocal and instrumental imitations of laughter became increasingly ubiquitous in opera throughout the eighteenth century, indicating humorous situations. Sometimes, in situations in which the present dramatic characters would not dare to, the orchestra laughs instead. For example, in the aria "Voi che sapete" from Mozart's *Le nozze di Figaro* (1786), when the adolescent Cherubino expresses his puppy love to Susanna and the Countess, Mozart reveals the two women's suppressed giggles in the flutes and the oboes (Example. 27.2). There is no other motivic reason for this melodic figure except for the dramaturgic one. In other places, the orchestra laughs at the Count's ridiculous arrogance (see also Grimalt 2014a, 277, 2014b).

While there are other musical icons of human laughter, a short staccato descending scale has crystalized as the most common one, becoming a recognizable topic by the second half of the eighteenth century, continually appearing in music up to the time of the two world wars. Nevertheless, in more modern times, the opening of Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* is a telling example. In comparison with the original recording, with Gershwin himself at the piano, more recent performances, unaware of the laughter topic, sound dry and sterile.

Another topic that appears throughout the history of music is the flicker. It associates an irregular musical motion with some element of natural violence. It has adopted different forms in history, but there is a deep thread connecting them both semantically and musically. It used to be the preferred means to translate musically the idea of "fire" in the sixteenth-century madrigal. Among many, one example is Thomas Weelkes's *Thule, the Period of Cosmography* (1600), where the fire of a volcano is described by a sudden, fast movement of short notes in irregular, up-and-down scales.[5]

As if premonitorily, this description of fire appears in association with fanfares and other martial elements. In Monteverdi's foreword to *Madrigali guerrieri et amorosi* (1638) he describes the *stile concitato*—literally excited or agitated—presenting the military as a main signified of the flicker topic (in Strunk [1950] 1981, 53–55). These hopping, agitated notes—"*saltationi belliche, concitate*"—are related to "the tone and words of a brave man in warfare." Monteverdi adds that the *stile concitato* is "a good imitation of anger." As an example, the composer



Example 27.2 Mozart, *Le nozze di Figaro* II, no. 12, mm. 13–16

adduces the passage of his own *Combattimento di Tancredi e Florinda* (1624), where both lovers tragically face one another in a mortal duel. Fire is a determining factor in Tasso's narration of the scene. It is an act of arson by Clorinda that sets Tancredi's soul in "burning anger." So, albeit indirectly, the same signifier that used to translate "fire" into sound is transformed, metaphorically, into human violence, that of furious warfare. From Monteverdi onwards the flicker topic is associated with fighting rather than with fire. In Bach's *St. John Passion* BWV 245 (1724), for example, Jesus explains to Pilate that "if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight." On the word *kämpfen*, (fight), both the singer and the continuo perform the flicker figure (no. 26, m. 76).

In the aforementioned foreword, Monteverdi adds a second signifier to the topic: the "fast pyrrhic measure was used for lively and warlike dances," whereas "the slow spondaic measure [was used] for their opposites" (Strunk [1950] 1981, 53). A pyrrhic consists of two

unaccented short syllables; a spondee, of two long or stressed ones. Monteverdi is echoing here Quintilian's *Institutio Oratoria* that was used for centuries as a rhetoric handbook. Quintilian distinguishes between ascendant and descendent rhythms, not only in poetry, but also in eloquent discourse. He recommends to use ascendant meters to inflame or excite listeners and descendent meters to obtain the opposite effect.[6]

There seems to be a whole tradition in poetic, rhetoric, and musical praxis behind Monteverdi's distinction between ascendant and descendent rhythms. Calvisius, in his *Melopea* (1592), links short meters such as iambic and anapest with speed, violence, and their corresponding affects (see Unger [1941] 2004, 110, who relates it to Monteverdi's *stile concitato*). Similarly, Marin Marsenne, in his *Harmonie Universelle* (1626–1636), relates fire, anger, and battle to ascendant metrical feet (Mersenne, *Harmonie Universelle, Embellissement des chants*. Quoted by Le Coat [1975] 2009, 170). In addition, Johann Mattheson's *Der vollkommene Capellmeister* (Mattheson [1739] 1999) connects the ideas of battle and fire with fast rhythms (Mattheson [1739] 1999, paragraph 258 [164–65]).

A musical example of the expressive value of ascending rhythms is found in Bach's fugue in C minor from *Das wohltemperierte Clavier*, book one. Besides the obvious *stile antico* polyphony, the theme presents the teasing rhythm of the gavotte, troped with the martial undertones of anapest and a cornet-like melody, with fourths and fifths. A similar trope occurs in Bach's opening theme to the finale of his Fourth Brandenburg Concerto.

The *stile concitato* of the seventeenth century finds a continuation in the subgenre of the *aria di vendetta* (vengeance aria) in eighteenth-century tragic opera. In Mozart's *Lucio Silla*, K 135 (1772), for instance, Silla sings about his "desire of vengeance and of death inflaming and agitating" in his chest (aria no. 5). His fury is to be felt in the anapest meter of his text and in the strings' stormy, concitato accompaniment.

In eighteenth-century opera, the stile concitato finds another continuation in what McClelland has described as the tempesta topic (McClelland 2014, 2017). In the new context of enlightened Europe, announcing the forthcoming Romantic aesthetics in movements like *Sturm und Drang*, there is a growing taste for awe-inspiring art experiences through onstage representations of the supernatural and the sublime. If ombra alludes to the world of ghosts and cemeteries, tempesta is used not only for the description of atmospheric phenomena, including storms, fires, and cataclysms, but also for both natural and human violent conflicts, especially battle. This signified made obvious the choice of the well-established stile concitato as a signifier of "storm," enhanced by vertiginous scales, blows, and cry-like exclamations.

Vivaldi uses the tempesta topic in the finale of his *L'estate* (Summer) of 1723, to a sonnet that makes explicit the presence of a summer storm. But, it is in theater and in opera that storms—whether atmospheric, psychological, or both—become a frequent topic in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, such as Rinaldo's vengeance aria *Venti, turbini* in Handel's *Rinaldo* HVW 7 (1711). Both Mozart's *Idomeneo* K 366 (1781) and Gluck's *Iphigénie in Tauride* (1779) present instances where two storms play a paramount dramatic role, with stormy gestures in the orchestra that correlate with inner storms.[7]

These examples suggest a historical trend. Passing from the theater to nineteenth-century instrumental music, the tempesta topic often functions as a symbol of an inner conflict. Typically, a topical reference becomes increasingly abstract in this stylization process. The meaning of flicker, tempesta, or concitato is distanced from its original descriptive elements —storm, battle, fire—and recedes to the ultimate ground of the topos, that of a natural, dangerous inquietude. There are uncountable examples of instrumental, psychological flickerings in sonatas and symphonies, especially in the development section.

A last example shows the persistence of the flicker in the twentieth century: Arthur Honegger's *La tempête* H 48 (1923), incidental music to Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, still shows the historical connection between storm (external or internal) and martial rhythms and calls.

Finally, the flicker is close to other frequently used musical icons, such as the "brook" that appears in so many Schubert songs. For example, this type of irregularly flowing sound, which marks the beginning of Smetana's *Vltava* (1874), helps to describe the origin of Prague's river from two sources. Wagner's "Waldbeben" scene (Trembling of the Woods) in *Siegfried* (1876), manifests similar musical cues (Monelle 2000, 77).[8] Mahler borrows it for the Scherzo of his Third Symphony (1896), which includes a musical depiction of a storm. Echoes of such natural, vaguely or implicitly violent movement are also to be found in Debussy's crushing autumn leaves in *Cloches à travers les feuilles* (*Images* II no. 1, 1907).

Rather than debating whether the flicker is a single topic with many historical aspects, or an array of topics reflecting different periods and contexts, I emphasize here how a topical combination of signifier and signified can metamorphosize over centuries, without losing its recognizable identity. The tendency of acquiring different signifieds (in this case fire, battle, internal and external storm) and signifiers (fast, irregular rhythms, and ascending scalar patterns) is a typical feature of music signification that should encourage students to discover new insights based on a broader context.

Narrative

After determining the tone of the musical discourse and the topics or rhetoric figures it uses, the most challenging part of the analysis begins. How these meaningful units make sense in their temporal succession is the main question of a narrative analysis. This does not imply a literary external script, as in Romantic symphonic poems. Even in abstract terms, in an instrumental composition, a sequence of events can be the object of a narrative treatment.

To address narrative issues, a good starting point is the aforementioned rhetorical distinction between a predefined and a spontaneous mode. The switching between both modes is accomplished by the *musical persona*, a virtual agent that unites the tangible figure of the performer with the intangible composer, as imagined by the listener. A persona can be inferred from instrumental music that imitates a lyrical character or a singing voice (Almén 2008, 30).

There is a clear difference between the Classical and the Romantic musical persona: the former is describing the external, the latter the persona's internal world. Moreover, a Romantic composition tends to present a transformation of an original state into a new one, whereas in classical sonata, at least in its first movement, a sense of closure predominates. In his switching between pre-established and spontaneous sections, Haydn's musical persona resembles those of Flaubert's or Jane Austen's "free indirect style." That is, thoughts or utterances of a fictional character are presented as if from that character's point of view, combining grammatical and other features of that individual's direct speech with features of the narrator's indirect report (Baldick 1990).

Some examples of this device would include the extended coda in Haydn's *Andante and Variations* in F Minor, Hob. XVII:6 (1793), where all previous molds are tossed away, as if the musical persona felt the need for self-expression without formal restrictions. Additionally, in Mozart's *Le nozze di Figaro*, both Cherubino's arias and Rosina's presentation aria enact this very sequence: the pre-established pattern is broken in favor of spontaneous, genuine expression (see Allanbrook 1983, 85–88, 100–103, 105–111).

In Beethoven's discourse the proportion of seemingly improvised utterances of the musical persona grows at the expense of predefined, "firm" thematic passages. The spontaneous captures contemporary ears: in Romantic aesthetics, truth and beauty are seen as equivalent. In late Classical sonatas, often the main theme presents a structure that is looser than that of the secondary theme. It is as if the beginning was improvised, while the second subject was remembered and varied extempore. This process continues in Chopin's, Brahms's, and Mahler's musical discourse, where the musical persona takes command. An extreme manifestation of Romantic subjectivism is in Scriabin's music, which comes close to what literary scholars call "stream of consciousness" or "interior monologue," as in some passages of Joyce's *Ulysses* (Abbott 2008, 78).

There is a dual temporality in Classical and Romantic instrumental music, albeit in two different ways. In a Classical sonata, a progressive time is opposed to a lyrical one. Transitions, developments, and all other non-thematic passages contrast with those static moments where thematic material is presented, in a similar way that operatic arias interrupt the recitative's narrative flow.[9] In Romantic music, instead, there seems to be represented a "remembering present" and a "remembered past." Often, a piano piece by Schubert or Brahms will start as a dysphoric present that seems to be explained by a central, idyllic section, as if that idyll would be remembered from an initial present time. The return of the main section as a closure confirms its status as the present from which the musical persona is speaking (Grimalt, Forthcoming). Moreover, the sequence of dysphoric present—idyllic past—dysphoric present suggests a causality between the two contrasting times. The causal effect that seems to be part of a sensitive listening is one more aspect that reinforces the temporal sense of musical narration.

On the other hand, there are also non-narrative aspects in Romantic piano compositions, above all in dance. Dance, whether in its functional origin or as a topic, is designed to arrest linear time in a collective bliss. One of the signs of a musical persona, voicing folkloric dance into a larger narrative structure is when subjective time becomes an irruptive breaking of the dance's metrical regularity.[10] This is why Romantic composers tend to avoid literal repetition; the more the century progresses, the more it tends to favor expressive repetitions of small units or, at least, meaningful ornamentation. Sometimes, the music represents the forging of the theme, as if remembering it from the most insignificant motif, for example, in the first notes of Chopin's *Mazurka* op. 24, no. 4, or in Mahler's Rückert song *Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen*.

Another moment that usually shows the agency of a musical persona are the junctures before and after the central section of Romantic piano compositions. Whether the new theme is reached as an interruption or through a transition, the listener feels that both A and B sections were located in the persona's internal world, not in an external representation. Both cases can be illustrated by Schubert's *Four Impromptus* op. 142 (1827). In the first one, in F minor, the reprise is reached by a smooth transition, as if the musical persona had found its way back to its initial thoughts spontaneously, connecting the central section in the relative major to both outer sections in the minor mode. A similar process happens in the second *Impromptu*. In the fourth one, though, it is a single chord with a fermata on the dominant of the relative major that serves to suggest a sudden idea.

Hatten proposes the term "expressive genre" to designate narrative archetypes displayed by composers. They are defined this as a "category of musical works based on the implementation of a change-of-state schema (tragic-to-triumphant, tragic-to-transcendent) or their organization of expressive states in terms of an overarching topical field (pastoral, tragic)" (1994, 290). Indeed, most Romantic musical works reveal narrative archetypes, with

a predominance of the *per aspera ad astra* master-plot and its variants. In Classical instrumental compositions, this design is less obvious. The alternation of *ancien régime* and modern topics in Haydn's and Mozart's music suggests a humorous narration. Musical symbols of the old world—opera seria, Versaillesque dances, military marches, and calls—appear as if ironically deconstructed. These references to laughter and contredanse, taken within a global narrative strategy, could be termed "humorous master-plots" [for example, the first movement of Haydn's piano sonata in E♭ no. 59, Hob. xvi/49 (1789/90)].

Conclusion

Research on music signification has given a theoretical foundation to my intuitions as a performer. At the same time, teaching music analysis and music signification to young musicians has presented a research challenge, demanding to distinguish what is useful to them. In my forthcoming book, *Mapping Musical Signification*, the five sections of this chapter are dealt with at length, supplemented by many examples of compositions that provide, in my opinion, a starting point for every musicological reflection presented here. The sense of a musicology of meaning, as it seems to me, is to provide a vehicle connecting between our musical legacy and the new generations of listeners.

Notes

1 See also the essays by Everett, Frymoyer and Wu in this volume.
2 The concept of Markedness in music was developed by Hatten (1994, 34–44, 2004, 11–16).
3 See discussions of the semiotic square in this volume, by Baker and Tarasti.
4 For the rhetorical figure of *interrogatio* see Unger [1941] 2004, 22 and 81; Civra 1991, 149.
5 The passage is commented upon in Johann David Heinichen's *Der Generalbaß in der Komposition* (1728, quoted in Monelle 2000, 21). See also Grimalt 2014a, 245.
6 Ascendant means here not only the aforementioned pyrrhic, but also the iambus—one short, one long syllable—and the anapest—two short, one long. Descendent rhythms, correspondingly, are the trochee and the dactyl, alongside with the spondee (Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria*, IX, IV, 83).
7 For more operatic storms (for example Gluck, Rossini, Weber, Verdi, Wagner, Britten), see Grimalt 2014a, 260–66.
8 Monelle links Wagner's *Waldbeben* with "water" in Bach, and with "fire."
9 I follow here Hatten 1994; Monelle 2000, Chapter 6; Grabócz 2009; Tarasti 2012b, 179–97.
10 This corresponds to Paul Ricœur's distinction between *structural* and *narrative* time. Ricœur 1983, *Temps et récit* vol. I, 3. Quoted by Abbott 2008: 4.

PART VIII

Music signification and intermediality

28

THE OPERATIC PRINCIPLE

Negotiating contradictory demands of signification

Bálint Veres

An anthropological perspective of media

When interpreting the meaning or the sense of a given composition, musical analysis often takes its mediality—its communicative nature—for granted. This approach to music signification, whether meaning is believed to reside in the written score or in the interpretation, would emerge within the framework of a given medium (for example, a string quartet, a chamber symphony or a mixed choir), which will usually remain unreflected. The present chapter refers to the constitutive role that medial configurations or medial clusters play in artistic representations, among them in many twentieth- and twenty-first-century music and in newer aesthetic theories as well.

As an example, John Cage's *Musicircus* (1967), is intended for any number and kind of soloists or groups, simultaneously performing anything they wish, in any way they desire. The coincidental combination of ensembles, soloists, dancers, actors, and poets, either amateur or professional, positioned in an unpredicted spatial distribution, not only defines the components of the work's "instrumentation," but literally constitutes its medial forces, embodied markers or signifiers. They trigger a heterogeneous variety of associations, memories, emotional reactions, and somatic responses in the audience, whose experiences are far from merely witnessing a manifestation of "music alone" (Kivy 1990). They are rather coexistent agents in a multifarious and multisensory context that emerges from the interplay of medial forces encoded in sociocultural practices. Another memorable instance of Cage's output is his notorious *4′33″* (1952) that explores and engenders the medial conditions (including the spatial ones) of any possible concert piece, and demonstrates the audience's paramount role in generating musical meaning. While these are radical examples of testing a nonchalant modern audience, they demonstrate the impact that medial configurations can exert on perception, understanding, and appreciation of music.

The conditions of media—from tower music to stage recitals, from church music to film soundtracks—have long influenced not only music signification, but musical experience as a whole. A common case of medial change is that of musical transcriptions, usually written in response to sociocultural needs. The intended venue, the size and social configuration of the audience, and the performance's position in the wider social context are some variables that contribute to the meaning of a composition in a constitutive manner. Whenever

a musical transcription indicates medial change—such as opera to piano transcription or symphony to chamber piece—it goes hand in hand with change in signification. The mediality of a composition is encoded by its performance practice and, even to a larger extent, by the cultural dynamics that channel aesthetic life in the broadest sense.

When aesthetic experience—and signification as its component—originates in an artefact, be it spatial or temporal, the term "aesthetic life" serves just as a mere animistic metaphor. When the term relates to a work's creation and reception, however, "aesthetic life" relates to the living subjects who use their sensory, cognitive, interpretive, and discerning skills in a synthetized way, both individually and socially. In this respect, an aesthetic experience does not depend on the aesthetic object alone, but rather on the subjects' effort to meet the object or the situation, thus creating the aesthetic experience.

As demonstrated by Cage's *Musicircus* and *4'33"*, synthesized perception, cognition, and evaluation in a lived experience come into play even when the events lack a fixed script or coordinating score, as long as a totally contingent experience rouses the subjects' sense and sensitivity. According to this view, aesthetic life is not only for the few who can afford to regularly go to a concert, or to museums and theaters, but for the many, who as living creatures can afford to be open and receptive to the world (Mandoki 2007, 43–71).

It is true that synthetized perception, cognition, and evaluation prevail regardless of the object's classification as aesthetic or quotidian (Cage consciously blurs the boundaries between these two). Yet, it must be acknowledged that "artistic" or "aesthetic" objects prompt reflection on the experience they arouse more often than "everyday" ones. Such experiential differences do exist and they do occur in various intensities and sensibilities that subjects perceive in given situations. Contemporary aesthetic discourse (Shusterman 1999; Mandoki 2007; Saito 2007; Irvin 2008, 2009) challenges the distinction between aesthetic and ordinary experiences. This distinction does permeate everyday communication, in which multifarious valuations, beliefs, habits, conventions, and discriminations are at work, aiming to structure the intricate fabric of our experiential spectrum, including the layers of our aesthetic life. So, the hierarchy of our experiential spectrum, where the "artistic" is valued above the opposed "everyday" mode of experience, is a social fact, which calls for a perspective that can provide a plausible explanation for the multitude of available competing cultural experiences, and also for their ongoing dynamics.

This explanatory perspective is offered, among others, by cultural and media anthropology. Its basic thesis is that experience is, first and foremost, a cultural fact (Turner and Bruner 1986). Gaining experience is not a natural capacity of human beings, but a medial performance, by which the subject seeks vitality, intensity, harmony, security, and fulfilment. An experience changes the direction of the ordinary process of life, allowing elements of some kind of "staging" to come into play in a way that it reaches some kind of formal or material-technical stability. As Pfeiffer, a leading scholar in media anthropology, comments: "All of this can happen very easily within everyday life; all of this can also be extended and rarefied into the most remote realms of art" (2002, xvii).

This "natural artificiality" of the experience (Plessner 1928; Turner and Bruner 1986, 3–30; de Mul 2014)—which is intensified and reflected, first of all, in events of artistic manifestations, but mostly remains unconscious—means that aesthetically relevant experience is shaped in and by situations that feature more or less institutionalized forms and frameworks of interpretation. Differences among such situations can be found to the extent that experiences are crystallized and reflected in disparate social forms. They are also present in the way in which related medial configurations of these experiences offer themselves as agents of aesthetic events to cultures that "need [them] in order to provide engrossing,

fascinating experiences, without which social and private life would become drab and its burdens overwhelmingly oppressive" (Pfeiffer 2002, xvi). Seen from a media anthropological perspective, the question concerning aesthetic experience and its meaning is not focused on the arts, but on the medial scene a culture can offer for one's physiological, psychosocial, and spiritual well-being. As Pfeiffer formulates it, "the question … is one of culturally and therefore also personally significant and attractive media configurations" (2002, xviii). Being meaningful and attractive has much to do with the central theme of this volume. The aspects of music signification, however, are discussed later.

Media anthropology renews the inquiry, originated in antiquity, about the relative capacities of various medial configurations (formerly named with the narrower terminology of "the arts"). This discourse—known as "paragone"—reaches back to sixteenth-century Italy, and focuses on comparisons between culturally accredited branches of arts, techniques, and even art-schools. Which branch fulfils and completes the potentiality of artistic action best? Which one exerts the highest cultural and social influence? Which one is the most significant? Which one best serves the ultimate goals of humanity?

Questions formulated in this way have naturally led discourse to a reductive kind of thinking. As art branches have been compared in an endless rivalry, theory developed views that showed various individual art forms as pure, unequaled media. Consequently, theory inevitably moved away from real artistic practices, which never ceased to exist in mixtures and combinations (Shaw-Miller 2002). In fact, monomedial reduction is an innovation of modernity. Absolute music, pure poetry, and abstract painting never enjoyed an overwhelming role in cultural practice (Levinson 2011, 26–36). When media anthropology picks up the thread of "paragone," it does so without pursuing the practice of modern monomedial narrowing; instead, it is interested in disclosing the conditions of a lasting cultural success that a media cluster can reach. The preliminary answer that is offered by media anthropology to the question about media dynamics and cultural rivalry is that "human beings come most fully alive when there is a coalescence between a biologically grounded but heightened vitality and a spiritualized 'detachment' or 'disinterestedness'" (Pfeiffer 2002, xviii). Here, I inspect the media cluster of opera from this perspective.

Contradictory demands of meaningfulness in culture

We can thus state that a media configuration, as a platform for "staging" (Pfeiffer 2002) or "dramatization" (Shusterman 2001), reaches its climax when it contributes to the emergence of a situation in which subjects experience "aesthetic swinging" (Mandoki 2007, 22). These subjects oscillate between identification and distancing, immersion and reflection, activity and passivity, enthusiasm and habituation, exaltation and security, interest and disinterestedness, attention to details and overall contemplation. Cultural theorist Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht described this aesthetic oscillation as providing a temporary equilibrium between "presence effects" and "meaning effects" (2004, 2), bringing the body to the fore as the dominant self-reference in the first case, mind and intellect in the latter.

Western culture, however, has long failed to maintain medial formations that are able to keep the above-mentioned oscillations and psychodynamics at an intense level. According to Gumbrecht, Western intellectual history, not only in itself but as a guiding force for human activities, developed a growing one-sidedness favoring attitudes that are driven by metaphysics, the Cartesian subject-object relation, and the endless game of interpretations and hermeneutics.[1] The price Western culture paid for a deficit on the physical, corporeal side proved to be far too high, regardless of any exegetical wealth that has been produced

by hermeneutic schools. In the overwhelming hermeneutic activity that Gumbrecht calls "meaning culture," "the 'purely material' signifier ceases to be an object of attention as soon as its 'underlying' meaning has been identified" (2004, 81). It is to the extent that cultural facts, events and situations become readable texts—lending themselves to semiotic analyses and competing interpretations—that they lose their material presence and also the ability to communicate with the subject's body.

In contrast, various forms of spectacles, attractions, sports, mass events, and even uncouth performative "genres" like football hooliganism, compensate for the lack of a satisfying intensity of presence effect in the more cultivated and sophisticated cultural media.[2] Yet, these popularized events, while mostly communicating through well-defined medial channels, are also deficient on the experiential plane: more often than not, they lack free response, playfulness in interpretation, and complexity of signification.

The historical development in the positioning and evaluation of music is particularly interesting in this context. Music has always been closely connected to the body, and an acknowledged and open reference between the artistically organized sounds and physical, emotional states of human beings has been documented in humanity's earliest writings (see Storr 1992). On the other hand, due to the close relationship between poetry and music, or liturgy and music, musical compositions and performances never lacked signification and discursive context. Considerable change took place in the eighteenth century, however, when pure instrumental music became a cultural commodity with no consensual interpretation and evaluation concerning its significance. Leading intellects held instrumental music in low esteem on the grounds that it can only appeal to sensual interest, but not spiritual. Johann Georg Sulzer (1720–1779), for example, characterized instrumental music, in his *Allgemeine Theorie der schönen Künste* (1774), as "a not disagreeable sound, even a pleasant and entertaining chatter, but nothing that would engage the heart" (quoted in Bonds 2006, 8). Not long after that, though, the Romantic generation's prevalent opinion claimed the opposite, that only instrumental music is the utmost spiritual expression, loftier than any verbal art could ever be. Music was thus placed in double refraction, albeit in both cases as lacking signification that could be verbally expressed: when deemed as mere sensation, meaningfulness was above it; when regarded as a superior spiritual manifestation, any verbal explanation was deemed as a lower, inadequate means to reveal its purport (Veres 2012).

In the nineteenth century and later intellectual history, this dual perception of music remained in place; it was either constantly regarded with contempt because of its sensuality, or enjoyed mystification because of its immateriality and spiritual abundance. It is not difficult to recognize that these two standpoints correspond, respectively, to what Gumbrecht calls "presence effect" and "meaning effect." Indeed, these two forces establish a fruitful relationship, providing the necessary platform for that "oscillation" required for an intense aesthetic experience. The modern attribution of both substantial "meaning effect" and powerful "presence effect" to music grants any media cluster which possesses a musical component a tremendous potential within a setting. Musical media can "balance the easily conflicting demands of challenging complexity and simplistic appeal in which, behind the facile excitement, boredom looms large" (Pfeiffer 2002, xix).

When physiological-sensual and cognitive-meaningful aspects of music re-establish a fertile relationship, the aesthetic experience can reach its fullest. According to Gumbrecht, after centuries of hermeneutic development, today it is the "presence" side that needs to be enhanced (2004, 107). Contemporary culture, therefore, is challenged to find ways in which all its musical and non-musical formations can produce media that incorporate signification and sheer embodiment engaged in an intense dynamic dialogue.

Musikē and the operatic

Answering the above cultural call, modern theorists and practitioners—many of them emerging from under Nietzsche's overcoat—have long preferred to look back to ancient models for an optimal, or even ideal, medial configuration, known today as opera, albeit originating from the Greek notion of *musikē*, the realm of the Muses. This concept, central to ancient Greek culture, refers to an interrelation of music, dance, word, architecture, visual and decorative arts, and even gastronomy, as they unite in religious, social, athletic, and educational activities (*paideia*), and in politics. The notion of *musikē* is the closest in Greek thinking to our present concept of "culture" (or even "media culture"), including its stratifications and branches in various scales of performance (Murray and Wilson 2004, 1).

The peak of this primeval media culture was the Dionysian drama, which became the reference point for the sixteenth-century Florentine Camerata. With the newly born idea of opera they sought to resuscitate prosaic theater and religious liturgy, as both felt empty and lacking in vitality (Veres 2014, 164). The findings and evidence required to enforce incontestable reconstruction of ancient drama were lacking, of course, but the speculations conducted freely by neo-platonic and gnostic humanists concluded in fruitful misconceptions (Pfeiffer 2002, 183).

Regardless of their historical misinterpretations of the Dionysian model, the late Renaissance theoreticians understood that Greek drama had been more than mere entertainment or an art event in the modern sense. Furthermore, it was also more than an ideological arena of symbolic representations and theological discourse. It answered an important anthropological intuition, bringing to the stage representations of real personalities, owning their emotions, intentions, and actions. Thus, it created a stage-reality, or an "artificial reality," (see Plessner 1982) with which persons in the audience felt real kinship. Hutcheon and Hutcheon show how Western opera, as *contemplation mortis*, proved to be a powerful mediator that communicated the meaning of death, afterlife, and grief:

> When people go to the theater … they find themselves participating in a ritual of grieving or experiencing their own mortality by proxy through an operatic narrative. … [T]hey can feel both identification and distance as they—safely—rehearse their own (or a loved one's) demise through the highly artificial, conventionalized form of opera.
>
> *([1996] 2004, 11)*

That all-encompassing media configuration, opera, is considered to be "the medium of parareligious, parasocial experience" (Pfeiffer 2002, 92). Deemed either as "naturally artificial" or "artificially natural" (see Pfeiffer 2002, 184), opera is considered parareligious in the sense that it has always offered spiritual, otherworldly mediation without doctrinal and institutional rigors. Hence opera, heir not only to ancient drama but also, in a sense, to medieval liturgy, became a medium of Western re-enchantment, counterbalancing scientific reason, and the logic of non-contradiction.[3]

In addition to its parareligious characteristics, opera is also a parasocial enterprise. The figure of the *castrato*, for example, a real superhero in the early opera industry, is perhaps the most illustrative instance. A *castrato*, flesh and blood but also ethereal, both eliminates and recreates categorical differences (like gender, sex, social position), similar to the dynamics of structure and anti-structure described in post-structuralist anthropological studies (see, for example, Turner 1977). Csobó writes that "as a castrato, a human being became an

experimental subject, a being of a different nature, who gained his existence not only or not primarily from nature, rather from his own activity, and against nature" (2008, 36). The *castrato*—as an early predecessor of future *virtuosi* and today's media stars—by his intermediate existence and the artificiality of his character, and above all by his virtuosic and deeply expressive voice, occupies a special position in opera, creating a rupture and temporarily suspending social hierarchy in the opera house (as it is masterfully depicted in Gérard Corbiau's 1994 film *Farinelli*, for instance, or earlier, in Balzac's *Sarrasine*). The temporary suspension and reconfiguration of the social body expand beyond opera *castrati* repertories to other operatic forms, maintaining similar psychosocial dynamics through additional transformations of the intertwined concepts of the natural and the artificial.

Herbert Lindenberger's concept of the "operatic principle" is here relevant (1984). Looked at from a media anthropological point of view, opera's aesthetic effects and psychosocial dynamics can be observed not only in opera houses, but in other scenes of Western culture. Opera is not a closed cultural terrain, but a part of a medial paradigm. In fact, opera houses are no longer the primary venues of the operatic principle. Opera's cultural presence—even when discussed under the name of "postopera" (Novak 2015)—needs to be understood through the anthropological power that historical opera once exerted on its audiences. Spectacular sporting events, military parades, fashion shows, stadium evangelism, flash mobs, movies, and rock concerts follow the paradigmatic model historically offered by opera (and prior to that, by *musikē*) in generating fascinating (mostly parasocial and parareligious) experiences and heightened vitality while retaining a certain degree of cognitive complexity and meaningfulness. The operatic principle is so prevalent that it actually permeates most of today's media configurations, in which aesthetic pleasure, affective obsession, gestural expression, ceremoniality, radical multisensoriality, and extravagant performativity dominate, while the need for representation, (mundane) referentiality, narrative coherence, credibility, informativeness, and discursive correctness is not entirely erased (Norman 2001, 357–58).

Opera—standing in the crossfire of debates over the centuries—never had a simple, unified, self-evident meaning. Regardless of these debates about opera, the operatic principle retains the three distinct meanings of "opera": (1) it refers to a highly composite, mostly multimedial musical work and its performance; (2) it connotes a complex social experience related to opera houses and opera goers, but also to operatic events in a broader sense (thus presenting a two-fold mixture of the social and the parasocial); and (3) it is a cultural institution, an arena of civic performance that includes either ideological or nonconformist expressions and effects (Bereson 2002, 14).

Since opera, in its traditional role, is not a univocal concept, it is not surprising that the idea of the operatic principle leads to even further complex and complicated consequences. As Pfeiffer points out, media configurations that are permeated by the operatic principle,

> show up in many different historical forms. If opera is, or seems to be, more or less absent from a culture, there will be equivalents—in baroque Spain, for instance, the mythological *fiestas*. Hybrid media, or media clusters condensed in phenomena like opera, can always be differentiated in sociological or ethnic terms, such as the Balinese theater, or the "Beijing" or other types of Chinese opera, or the totally different "bourgeois opera." That does not determine or delimit their cultural and potential anthropological import. Conversely, the continuing existence of opera in most Western societies hides the fact that its earlier cultural efficiency is nowadays overshadowed by rock music, or the overall effects of film, and probably sports events.
>
> *(2002, 186)*

Indeed, no matter how exasperated the debates have been around opera for centuries, some fundamental aspects of its experience are consistent: "opera is remarkably ageless. … The way people have customarily described the opera throughout several centuries and through many political changes shows an astonishing coherence of view" (Bereson 2002, 8).

To further refine Bereson's comment, it could be said that it is not opera but the operatic experience that seems ageless. Observing this experience, the effects of meaning and presence, in the sense Gumbrecht clarifies, can easily be recognized: opera can successfully combine narrative and *tableau vivant* (or even supernatural vision), the agents of temporality and timelessness. Its literary material and prevailing narrative linearity allow it to follow discursive expectations, while parallelism, which is so typical in climactic scenes, and goes beyond conventions of theatrical representation, acts as a powerful counterweight in its dramaturgical structure. Recitatives and arias serve to separate and interconnect different types of temporalities: the processual time of actions and the endless moment of reflection or affective obsession. The aria, as an "artificial" expression (which turns out to be "natural" on a more universal level), and the recitative, as its more quotidian counterpart, balance lyricism and prosaism, expression and representation. Moreover, the recitative and the aria are also responsible for the fluctuations between higher and lower intensities. The staging of this double musical structure is connected to multisensorial effects, affecting bodily involvement on the one hand, and undertaking a semiotic task on the other. All this duality exists in the performer's role, too: opera singers immerse into their roles while remaining independent and distinct singing-resonating bodies. The adequate response of the audience oscillates between following the narrative's represented role and an aesthetic appreciation of the singer's performance.

Another opposition that opera manages easily is the one between instrumental music and sung lyrics. Their combination allows for additional layers of expression in conveying various emotions and passions, some of which are not expressed—or even are inexpressible—in words. Music and text can, of course, enhance or contradict each other, thus creating tension between the musical and the literary elements in an operatic expression. The physical immediacy and sensual power of sound and voice oppose the conceptual complexity of musical structure, literary text, scenery, and direction. Musical humor and irony can usually be produced in a very complicated way (Sheinberg 2000), while libretto and *mise en scène* can easily cope with these. Individual characterization on the one hand, and collectivity, acting as a "mouthpiece of generalized emotion" (Weisstein 2006, 10), on the other hand, alternate in the operatic experience.

The way in which a series of oppositions—such as identity/role, natural/artificial, conceptual/sensual, temporal/timeless, action/stasis, heightened/everyday—are suspended in the operatic experience can be characterized by intermittency. This means that a kind of suddenness and inconsequence dominate the experiential spectrum. Thus, the arsenal of an increased indirectness and highly sophisticated expression, such as stylized representation, artfully advanced vocal utterance, ceremonial staging, and hypertrophic emotions, will turn suddenly into intimacy and immediacy.

Setting meaning aside

How can the mechanisms of signification in an operatic experience be captured? The operatic phenomenon can be accessed and examined from a semiotic perspective even though its various signifiers—whether in musical topics, intertextual references, its performance history, or ideological intentions—differ in both their modality and nature.

Semiotic analyses of signification in more recent, less institutionalized operatic phenomena that are, as yet, less equipped in analytical concepts, would immensely benefit our cultural understanding. My concern, however, is with something that precedes and places meaning into a prior relation between signification and the production of presence, in Michel Riffaterre's wording, the relation between narrative and description or *verisimilitude*. As Raymond Monelle demonstrates (2000, 115–46), following Riffaterre's semiotic insights, the nineteenth-century symphonic music reaches its most intense, emotional reality when its effect produces the evocative truth that "gives the narrative the authority of the real by eliminating or suspending the most basic feature of narrativity, its time dimension" (Riffaterre 1990, xiv).

Correspondingly, the intertwined relation of fabrication and suspension is the key element of signification in the operatic experience. Looking at the consciously arbitrary unfolding of an operatic plot, it seems as if all the efforts to produce meaning through narrative and discourse are intended to take experience beyond the boundaries of understanding. If the operatic strategy is to block any signification, by dropping it at certain points as dead weight, an artistically designed setting aside of meaning occurs. Similar to the anti-hermeneutic ambitions in a culture that suffer from an over-proliferation of semiotic activity, the operatic experience is not theoretical in nature. Nevertheless its aim is not anti-hermeneutical, since its most wonderful feature is that the process of signification reaches a point where the sign itself becomes a presence that is produced by a suspended signification.[4] The process of signification is required, thus, for reaching this point. Gumbrecht suggests that in order to have a fuller aesthetic experience, meaning would need to go "beyond." He proposes that theory should deduct the resulting consequences:

> I think that the "beyond" in metaphysics can only mean doing something in addition to interpretation—without, of course, abandoning interpretation as an elementary and probably inevitable intellectual practice. It would mean to try and develop concepts that could allow us, in the Humanities, to relate to the world in a way that is more complex than interpretation alone … The effort that it would take us to develop noninterpretative in addition to hermeneutic concepts would therefore be an effort directed against the consequences and taboos coming from the enthronement of interpretation as the *exclusive* core practice of the humanities.
>
> *(2004, 52)*

Pfeiffer confirms the possibility of culturally developed behaviors that go beyond interpretation and provoke attention to "concentrate on the episodic or overall effect of techniques themselves, not on their representational reverberations, complexity, or 'realism'" (2002, 189). In the operatic phenomenon, "the enchantment of performance and its very artifice is supposed to blur the boundaries between representation and enactment" (216). The neutralization of representation leads to a renewed sensibility in our bodily existence, and to the things of the world in their pre-conceptual thingness (Gumbrecht 2004, 118).

Sometimes, especially when it is approached from a Lacanian perspective, the operatic voice is compared to an infant's first cry, as a pure bodily utterance. This setting aside of signification within the operatic experience echoes with other aural phenomena, which are discussed in Iegor Reznikoff's intriguing archaeological research of Palaeolithic caves, revealing that the density of pictures in a given location of a prehistoric cave is proportional to the quality of resonance at the same location (2005). In these places, low-frequency sounds

that transform themselves into growls, mooing, lows or roars are interconnected with wall paintings of corresponding animals, thus possibly functioning as ritual locations. Reznikoff registered three levels of resonance that occurred during the supposed rituals: (1) the first one he calls the "mineral meaning" of sound, that is, the resonance of the solid rock, clay and earth of the cavity in the human body. The bodily perception of vibration provides the deepest level of sound meaning; it precedes signification and the order of symbols, as happens with prenatal listening that involves the whole body. It is remarkable that this feeling returns in the operatic experience through the sheer volume of the operatic voice and the immersive acoustics of the operatic space. (2) The second is the "animal level of meaning," that emerges from the identification between sound and painting in the prehistoric ritual; this level re-emerges through the audio-visual representation on the operatic stage and through the characters that enact generalized emotions and passions. (3) The third level of resonance points toward the Invisible, which is related, on the one hand, to prenatal listening, when the fetus communicates with an invisible world through sound. On the other hand, however, this level also functions as a transcendental plane on which symbolic order and signification can become "a beyond" in both prehistoric ritual and operatic experience.

The operatic experience can be manifested in a variety of forms, such as state ceremonial events (Bereson 2002, 179), motion pictures and multimedia phenomena, participation-based loud events such as marches, and maybe even in some spectacular and clamorous sporting events, such as WWF wrestling, Olympic games and ceremonials, super bowl finals and halftime shows. The exact *modus operandi* of these manifestations needs further in-depth studies.

Conclusion

The mediality of a given musical work should be considered when exploring its signification. The medium of a musical composition always fits into the wider media dynamics that need to be identified and clarified in order to acquire a broader and deeper perspective on a specific musical experience. At that level, the expanded methodology of interpretation, which covers medial contexts as well as textual sources and performance practices, will necessarily fail in respect of operatic forms: the quest for meaning, which is a fundamental human need, becomes relativized due to an opposing, equally active cultural and psychosocial drive. There are anthropological reasons why cultures seek to generate medial situations in which the possibility of meaning and interpretation yields a productive tension with an experiential domain that lies beneath or beyond interpretation, where enthusiasm, vital commitment, immersion, excitement, sensual alertness, and psychophysical activation thrive. Music occupies a marked position in this domain.

The notion of the "operatic" enables the construction of theories concerning hybrid media dynamics in which music plays an absolutely constitutive role, aspiring to meet a twofold cultural need that allows for the oscillatory nature of the aesthetic experience to be fully realized. Such operatic phenomena are desired because they connect and interrelate in lasting ways narrativity and spectacle, temporality and the moment (or timelessness), activity and contemplation, nature and convention, appearance and reality, the thought provoking and the sensually impressive. Including the media anthropological perspective in analytical studies of specific musical experiences (either operatic or purely musical ones) could significantly deepen our understanding of these phenomena. Research could expand and its scope could become more visible, while the primacy of experience—which is the *sine qua non* of all aesthetic research—may gain better hold in scientific discourse.

Notes

1 This claim stems largely from Nietzsche. It is echoed in the fields of architecture (Pallasmaa 2005), visual culture studies (Sontag 1966), film studies (Sobchack 2004), and literary theory (Gumbrecht and Pfeiffer 1994).
2 For a discussion of football hooliganism and its connection to music signification see Hernandez, in this volume.
3 For a detailed discussion see Feldman 2007; Buch 2008; Tomlinson 1993.
4 I find that Barthes referred to the same duality from another perspective by differentiating in western vocal performance practice between "pheno-song" and "geno-song" in his essay, 'The Grain of the Voice.' (1977, 179–89). See also Kauppala's article in this volume.

29

PIANTO AS A TOPICAL SIGNIFIER OF GRIEF IN CONTEMPORARY OPERAS BY JOHN ADAMS, THOMAS ADÈS, AND KAIJA SAARIAHO

Yayoi Uno Everett

Introduction

This essay explores the *pianto* figure as a topical signifier in contemporary operas composed by Thomas Adès (b. 1971), Kaija Saariaho (b. 1952), and John Adams (b. 1947). Building on writings by Raymond Monelle and Vladimír Karbusický, it begins with an overview of the historical contexts in which the *pianto* emerged as an expressive signifier of grief. I argue that the *pianto*'s topicality is established through its alliance with existing topics in late-Baroque and classical repertoire and through another schematic context that evolved in the nineteenth century. Distinguishing between three style types of *pianto* (some affiliated with existing topics and others that are not), I then analyze excerpts from contemporary operas by Adams, Adès, and Saariaho, and situate them within a corpus of dramatic works by late-modernist composers who adopt and expand the *pianto*'s topical and intertextual scope in line with operatic conventions from the past.

Criteria for musical topics

Building on the seminal writings on musical topics by Leonard Ratner (1980) and Wye Jamison Allanbrook (1983), scholars in recent years have ushered in a more rigorous set of criteria for identifying musical topics in the eighteenth century and beyond. These criteria may be summarized as follows: (1) importation, (2) intertextual scope, (3) familiarity, (4) expandability/expendability, and (5) schematic context. First, Danuta Mirka emphasizes that topics are imported entities, defining them as "musical styles and genres taken out of their proper context and used in another one" (2014b, 2). Second, Michael Klein emphasizes topics as constituting "a specific intertext—an *idealized* type instanced by tokens" (2005, 62;

emphasis mine); instances of a given topic are recognized in relationship to one another.[1] Third, for Robert Hatten, a topic constitutes "a familiar style type with easily recognizable musical features, ranging in complexity from a simple figure to a texture, a complete genre, a style or some overlap of these categories" (2014, 514). Fourth, the topics' expandability is an important consideration, as Kofi Agawu states: "theoretically, UT (the Universe of Topic) is open, since it continues to expand as more and more topics are uncovered" (1991, 128).[2] Agawu's later study also shows that topics are expendable; in his inventory of topoi, *Seufzer*, Mannheim rocket, and opera buffa are eliminated, while *Ländler*, siciliano, *Lebewohl* (horn figure), tragic style, among others, have been added (2009, 43–44).

Finally, *schematic context* is my term for specifying the musical environment inhabited by topics. Stephen Rumph theorizes that topics are often bound together by non-signifying features (which he calls *figurae*), as illustrated by his analysis of the Duettino from *The Marriage of Figaro*.[3] Building on Rumph's dichotomy between signifying and non-signifying features of a topic, Johanna Frymoyer distinguishes between essential and non-essential features in the minuet, waltz, and march topics and traces their evolution in twentieth-century modernist works (2017, 84–85). More often than not, however, a musical topic retains its identity when imported into a new context through interaction with other topics or style types. To this end, Hatten introduces an integrative approach to defining the topical environment as follows: topical *troping* occurs through a combination of four axes of relationships that bind a topic to its environment through compatibility, dominance, productivity, and/or creativity (2014, 515). He illustrates a case wherein the fanfare and waltz topics are brought together in the opening of Schubert's Waltz in E major (see Example 4.4a in Hatten 2004, 73). The compatibility is evidenced by the seamless merging of the triplet figuration of the fanfare into the melodic fabric of the host topic, the waltz, without disruption.[4] The merging of topics is ensured further by their productivity—the extent to which the troping of the two topics pervades the thematic design on the whole.

In the ensuing section, I adopt Hatten's integrative approach in defining the *pianto*'s topicality as a "fused" signifier by identifying three distinctive schematic contexts.

The *pianto* as a fused topical signifier

The *pianto* figure presents a slippery case in topic theory: because of its mimetic origin in imitating extra-musical sounds, Mirka considers it as falling outside the purview of topics proper from the perspective of eighteenth-century musical aesthetics.[5] Nonetheless, Mirka recognizes that iconic signs may evolve into a topic via indexicality over time and this is exactly how I consider the emergence of *pianto* figure as a "fused" topical signifier. In his magisterial survey, Monelle coins the term *pianto* to refer to the sequence of falling minor seconds that accompanies the word in Giaches de Wert's madrigal (see figure 3.17b in Monelle 2000, 68); the word "*pianto*" literally accompanies the falling minor seconds, B♭-A, C-B and A-G♯, in the staggered entries made by the soprano and tenor voices.[6] De Wert's madrigal offers an important prototype, but not the schematic context by which the *pianto* evolves into a recognizable topical entity.

Instead, late Baroque dramatic works offer the definitive schematic contexts by which modern listeners have acquired familiarity with the *pianto*. Henry Purcell's celebrated aria from *Dido and Aeneas* cements the *pianto*'s dramatic and expressive function in the context of a "lament" bass (see figure 3.18a in Monelle 2000, 68). This contrapuntal framework, designated Type A, merges the *pianto* with the lament topic, and evolves into an important dramatic convention. Furthermore, *passus duriusculus*, Christoph Bernhard's term for the

chromaticized descent spanning a fourth, becomes a common subtype associated with Type A *pianto*.[7] For its German counterpart, Monelle locates the "sigh" motif in Bach's soprano aria "Seufzer, Tränen, Kummer, Noth" from Cantata BWV 21. This constitutes another important schematic context for the *pianto*; here, the figuration appears in the guise of alternating upper and lower appoggiaturas over a walking or arpeggiating bass.[8] In this study, Type B *pianto* showcases a compound meter and Siciliano/pastoral topic in the minor mode.

In the classic period, these schematic contexts (Types A and B) for *pianto* continued to gain recognition while adapting to changing aesthetics of the time. Monelle identifies the *Empfindsamkeit*[9] as the host topic for the *pianto* figurations in C.P.E. Bach's fantasia (see figure 3.19b in Monelle 2000, 70). Compare this passage with the opening of "Lacrimosa" from Mozart's Requiem, which invokes the minor mode Siciliano topic. Other scholars have identified the *pianto*'s affiliation with other topics and/or schemata. For example, according to Elaine Sisman, the opening of Mozart's celebrated Symphony no. 40 embeds the *pianto* within an agitato/tempesta style. She comments on its pervasive presence as "the source of disconcerting and witty effects" in the movement (2014, 114). Mirka, in turn, interprets the same opening passage as a pastorella/gavotte schema-topic combination (Mirka 2014c, 370).[10]

In nineteenth-century operas, Type A persisted, as demonstrated by the overture from Act II of Beethoven's *Fidelio*: the bass descent at a Grave tempo embodies Florestan's anguish prior to his first appearance on stage. But another schematic context for the *pianto* begins to emerge. Monelle calls attention to the dysphoric and uncanny expressive power of the *pianto* in the leitmotivs from Wagner's *Ring* cycle. The "Wehe" leitmotif (B♭–A), first heard in Alberich's outcry over the Rhinemaidens in *Das Rheingold*, recurs in various guises throughout the *Ring* cycle tetralogy. The motif repeats as Fricka's expression of anguish over Freia (*Das Rheingold*, scene 2) or Brünnhilde's outcry when she is betrayed by Siegfried (*Götterdämmerung*, Act II, scene 5). I call attention not to the literal vocal outcry, but rather to the importation of the "Wehe" leitmotif into a repeating instrumental motif that prefigures Siegfried's death in *Götterdämmerung*. Like a fetishized object, the figuration hovers over Gutrune's lamenting utterance, "Treulos, Siegfried" (Act II, scene 4), as an expression of betrayal and to hint at the impending doom.[11] Then, in Act III, scene 2, immediately before Hagen kills Siegfried, the trombones and horns play the falling figure, D♭–C, over the "curse" motif independently of the vocal outcry (see Monelle 2000, figure 3.20b). What began as an iconic gesture that accompanies a vocal outcry of grief ("Wehe") turns into an expressive symbol, i.e., an omen of death, in the orchestral accompaniment.

This stripped-down, repeating *pianto* figuration elicits consideration of a third schematic context, which I designate as Type C. I take my cue from Karbusický who recognizes the repeating "sigh" motive as a dramatic convention that pervades operatic and instrumental genres from Mozart to Hindemith.[12] In *Grundriss der Musikalischen Semantik*, he lists musical excerpts that largely represent Type C *pianto*, where the figure is stripped down to a repetition of falling seconds over a pedal point or a bass line that moves in parallel sixths. In the examples involving Beethoven, Karbusický draws a connection between the *pianto* figure in the vocal line sung by Rocco ("O Herr!") from *Fidelio* (Act I, no. 8 Duet) and that from the opening gesture (B♭–A) from the Adagio movement of String Quartet op.18, no. 1, where the main melodic theme includes many *pianto* "sighs." Even in Hindemith's atonal "Grablegung" scene from *Mathis der Maler*, the *pianto* figure is mirrored by the bass line that moves in contrary motion. In line with Monelle, Karbusický argues that the *pianto*

(or *Seufzer*, as he calls it) moves beyond its iconic or pictorial function and is transformed into an expressive symbol (*Ausdrucksymbol*) of anguish (1986, 67).

Thus, the preliminary survey of repertory has led me to define the *pianto*'s topicality by means of its membership in one of the three style types distinguished by its schematic context. Type A is affiliated with the "lament" topic, and the signifiers include a sequential melodic descent, a descending bass that establishes a contrapuntal framework, a titular designation, or expressive indication of lament, and a slow tempo in the minor mode. Type B shares in common with Type A the slow tempo in the minor mode, but typically includes a text connoting grief or anguish. The main difference is that the *pianto* takes the guise of descending and/or ascending appoggiaturas with a walking or arpeggiated bass. This style type is affiliated with a Siciliano topic, agitato style, or other triple-division dances. Finally, Type C, as a stripped-down descending second, typically occurs over a static bass line or repeating harmonies. Per Karbusický, this style type is associated with instrumental and vocal writings in operas from Beethoven to Hindemith and is unaffiliated with existing topics from the Classical era.

Analytical contexts in postwar and contemporary operas

Fast forward now to the last quarter of the twentieth century. David Metzer claims that late-modernist composers have turned lament into an important vein of expression (2009, 162). This table shows my preliminary corpus study of works by 15 composers spanning five decades where the *pianto* figure assumes a prominent role as a variant token of the three style types discussed (Table 29.1). It is no coincidence that these works carry a titular designation of lament or elegy, often referring directly or indirectly to catastrophic events in history. In line with Hatten's axis of creativity (2014, 521–24), composers self-consciously adopt the *pianto* figure as a way to pay homage to earlier composers (e.g., J. S. Bach), and at the same time, repurpose it to meet their own aesthetic ends. In operatic works, the compositional surface often demands a complex strategy by which one unveils its meaning in a broader narrative context as a polysemic sign.

The works listed in Table 29.1 demonstrate two general aesthetic strategies: at times, the composer's deployment of the *pianto* is motivated by a reference or homage to a specific piece and at other times, to a topical convention which s/he repurposes. For example, satire underscores Ligeti's adoption of the lament bass for Mescalina's aria (juxtaposed with the leitmotif from *Tristan und Isolde*) in *Le Grand Macabre* (1974–1977, revised 1996; see Everett 2009, 41). But, as Amy Bauer points out, in his later works starting with the Horn Trio (1982), where lament emerges as an expressive designation for an internal movement, Ligeti's aesthetic motivation is driven by a more profound engagement with lament.[13] Toshio Hosokawa adopts Type A *pianto* in his choral writing in *Voiceless Voices in Hiroshima* (1989, revised 2000), a large-scale work that commemorates the atrocities of war with the lament topic in mind. According to Barry Wiener, Nørgård similarly couches the lamenting voice of the protagonist ("Enkido is dead, but I live! Why?") with Type A *pianto* in the opera *Gilgamesh* (1972). In Peter Eben's *Job* for solo organ (1987), the sequential melodic descent of Type A lament is troped with a sarabande dance topic as an embodied metaphor in a movement called "Longing for death." Toru Takemitsu, in contrast, adopts Type B *pianto* in his film score for *Ran* (1985) with a strong reference to the oboe melody from "Das Abschied" in Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde* (Everett 2012). I will further illustrate the formal and

Table 29.1 A preliminary corpus of *pianto* style Types A, B, C in late-modernist works

Composer	*Style Type A*	*Style Type B*	*Style Type C*
Hans Abrahamsen	*In Memoriam Luigi Nono* (1991)		
Thomas Adès	*Darkness Visible* (1997); *Asyla* (1997); *Fairfax Carol* (1997); *Tempest* (2005) *The Exterminating Angel* (2015)		
John Adams	*Doctor Atomic* (2003)	"Aria of Falling Body" in *The Death of Klinghoffer* (1991)	"Ocean chorus" in *The Death of Klinghoffer* (1991)
Louis Andriessen	*…miserere….* (2006)		
Peter Eben		*Job for organ* (1987)	
Osvaldo Golijov		*Ainadamar* (2003)	
Sofia Gubaidalina			*Lamento* (1977)
Toshio Hosokawa	*Voiceless Voices in Hiroshima* (1996)		
György Kurtág	Stele (1994)		
György Ligeti	*Le Grand Macabre* (1972) Horn Trio (1982) Piano Concerto (1985) Violin Concerto (1990) Viola Sonata (1994)		
Per Nørgård	*Gilgamesh (1972)*		
Arvo Pärt		*Adam's Lament* (2009)	
Kaija Saariaho		*Adriana Mater* (2005)	*L'amour de loin* (2000); *La Passion de Simone* (2006) *Only the Sound Remains* (2017)
Igor Santos	*Lamento* (2015-16)		
Tōru Takemitsu	*Litany* (1982)	Symphonic Adagio from *Ran* (1982)	*In Autumn Garden* for gagaku ensemble (1973)

expressive functions of these *pianto* style types by focusing more specifically on excerpts from operas by Adams, Adès, and Saariaho.

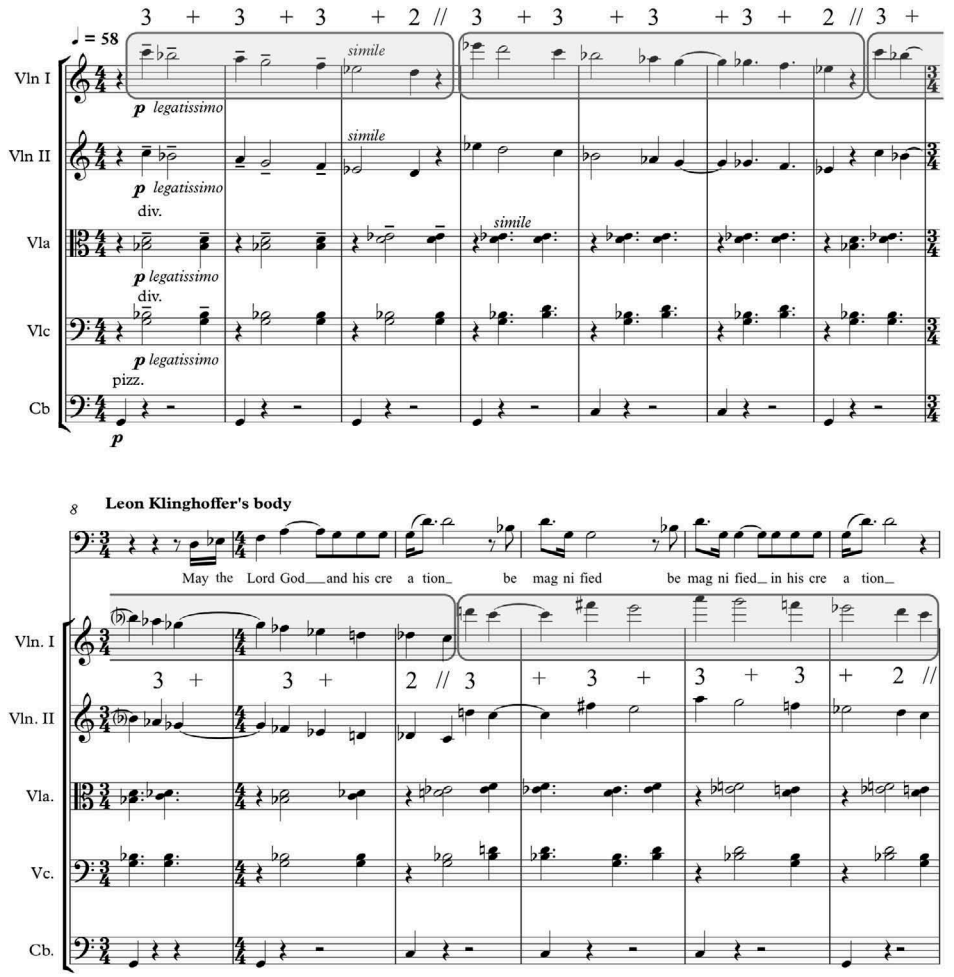
In John Adams's *Doctor Atomic* (2005), the protagonist, Robert Oppenheimer, morally divided over the potential consequences of using the atomic bomb to end World War II, sings a Type A lament on the words taken from John Donne's Holy Sonnet "Batter my heart, three-person'd God." The sequential melodic descent with dotted rhythm alludes to Purcell's Dido's lament. This lament aria has a striking effect on the listener and points to the transvaluative moment when Oppenheimer acknowledges his inner guilt for ushering in the atomic age (Everett 2015, 142).

In an earlier opera, *The Death of Klinghoffer* (1991), Adams makes a self-conscious homage to Bach by blending the features of Cantata no. 21 and a "*Gymnopédie*"—alluding

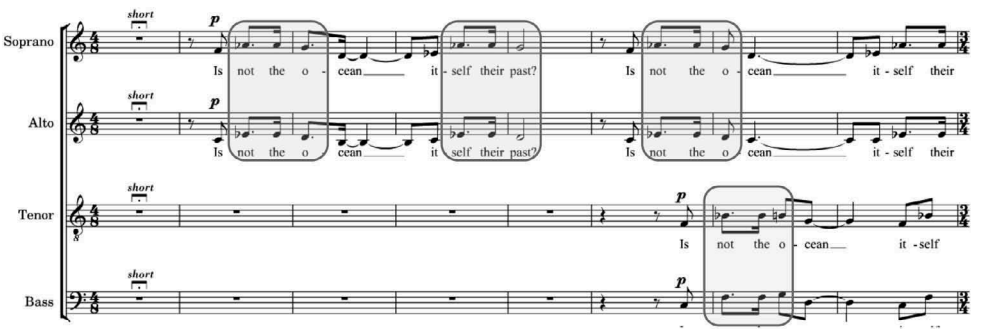
to the style of Erik Satie's homonymous piano works into an aria sung by Klinghoffer's body after he is shot by the Palestinian terrorists. Much has been written about this aria's connection to "Erbarme dich" from Bach's *St. Matthew's Passion* (see Longobardi 2009; Renihan 2014). In Example 29.1a, the reduced score shows the undulating rhythm featuring an irregular grouping of 3+3+3+2 (11 beats) followed by 3+3+3+3+2 (14 beats); it disrupts the $\frac{4}{4}$ meter articulated by the bass line that supports a harmony that oscillates between Gm and Cm^7. When the voice enters at m. 8, its phrases in G minor reinforce the downbeat of the written meter, while violins I and II continue to emphasize the irregular grouping of 11 and 14 beats. The resulting schematic context is, on the whole, identifiable as a variant of Type B *pianto* for preserving significant traits of the minor-mode Siciliano in J. S. Bach's cantatas and *St. Matthew's Passion*, while the triple rhythmic grouping alludes to Satie's melancholic piano work. Throughout the rest of the opera, Adams deploys Type C *pianto* to draw on a range of thematic references in Goodman's libretto. Notably, the "Ocean chorus" plays an important role in establishing an allegorical reference to the biblical notion of the knowledge of good and evil. In Example 29.1b, the *pianto* figure (A♭4–G4) repeats three times in the opening entries of soprano and alto voices before it is passed onto the tenor and bass voices. Typical to Type C, the *pianto* figure is repeated over and over to comment on the ocean as a metaphor for God's creation of mankind. In another article, I argue that Adams's deployment of the *pianto* figure moves beyond its normative function as a symbol of grief and emerges as competing signifiers of rage and resignation for the Palestinians and the Jews (Everett, forthcoming).

In Thomas Adès's instrumental and dramatic works, one similarly finds a creative extension of Type A *pianto* with an homage to J. S. Bach. The second movement of his symphonic work, *Asyla* (1997), is a case in point. The passacaglia theme, comprised of percussion, mistuned piano, strings, and trumpet conjure up a sinister image of "a sacred, if denominationally non-specific, location" as a space "that offers the promise of asylum" (Venn 2016, 71). The bass oboe's theme alludes to the opening two sections in Bach's cantata *Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen*, BWV 12, and undergoes a twisted contrapuntal imitation. Edward Venn's analysis shows the oboe's theme as a fractured, compound melody that interweaves *pianto* figurations at three registers (Venn, 73–76). Venn further argues the *pianto* undergoes a "dysphoric reworking" through its twisted imitations and multiple echoes scattered throughout the orchestra (76).[14]

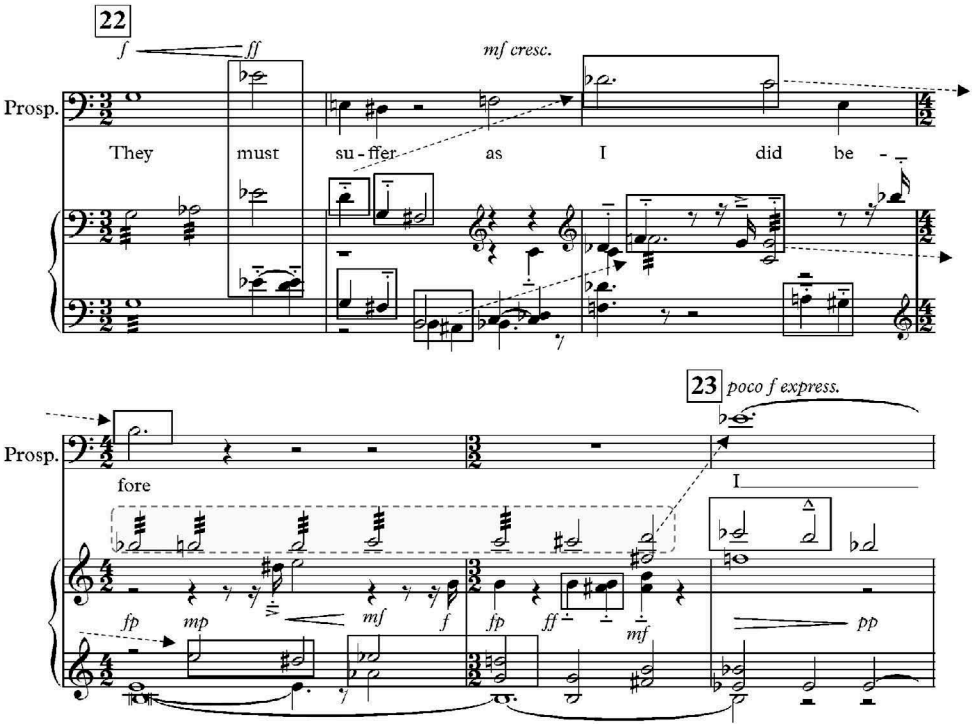
An even more radical fragmentation of Type A *pianto* is found in Adès's second opera *Tempest* in the passage where Prospero sings to his daughter Miranda about his unfortunate exile from Naples (Act I, scene 2, reh. 22). In Example 29.2a, Prospero expresses his state of anguish ("They must suffer as I did …") while the vocal line presents a sequential descent unfolding in two registers at once: the interweaving of E♭4-D♭4-C4-B3 and G3-F♯3-F3-E3, which if realigned would form parallel sixths moving downward. The *pianto* figure is further doubled by and refracted in the accompanying instruments, as shown by the arrows that connect the boxed passages. In the two bars leading up to rehearsal 23, the accompaniment figuration rises chromatically (see dotted box in the second system) to prepare for Prospero's next vocal entry on E♭4, while the refracted *pianto* figures (see boxed dyads in the second system) in the lower register reverberate underneath. As Prospero goes on to talk about his brother who overthrew him and sent him into exile, the *pianto* figure returns in an ascending sequence of appoggiaturas to express his rage (see Example 29.2b). At other times, Adès skillfully nods to past dramatic convention without making its reference explicit: Venn locates a late-Edwardian British nostalgia in Adès's co-opting of the *pianto* figure into an inverted seventh after Edward Elgar (2012, 311).



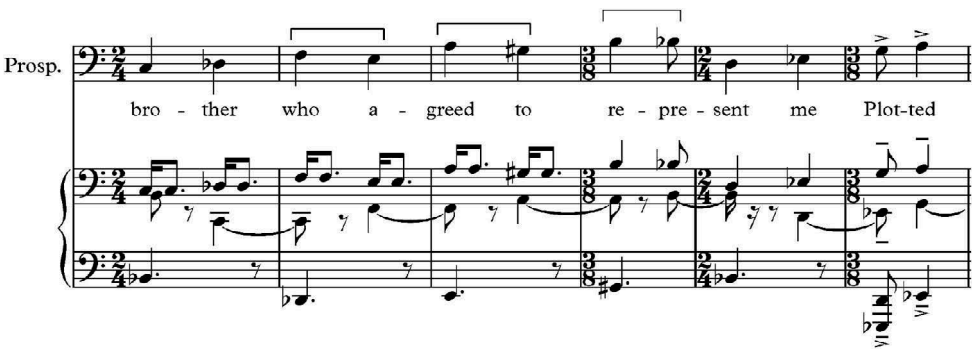
Example 29.1a "Aria of falling body" from John Adams's *The Death of Klinghoffer*



Example 29.1b Ocean chorus from John Adams's *The Death of Klinghoffer*



Example 29.2a Thomas Adès, *Tempest* Act II, scene 1, rehearsal 22



Example 29.2b Thomas Adès, *Tempest* Act II, scene 1, rehearsal 24

The Tempest. Music by Thomas Adès (© 2007 by Faber Music Ltd); Libretto by Meredith Oakes, after Shakespeare (© 2004 by Meredith Oakes). Printed by permission of the publishers. All rights reserved

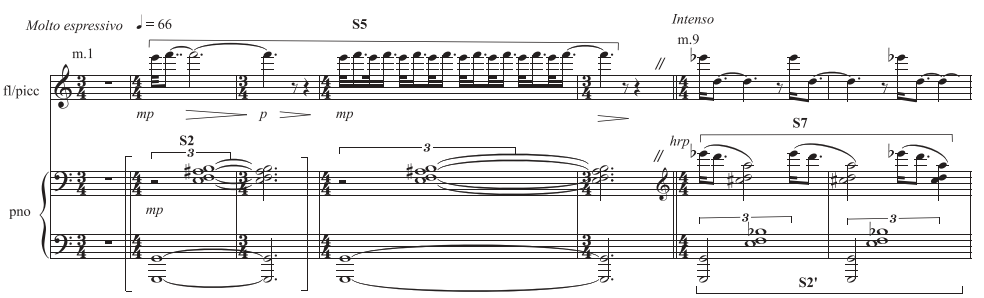
My final example is from the opera *Adriana Mater* (2004) by the Finnish composer, Kaija Saariaho. The mythical opera takes place in an unknown village in a war-torn country where another war is about to begin. One evening, Adriana is raped and impregnated by Tsargo, a soldier from her own community. Much of the psychological drama is focused on the female characters' struggle over the fate of Adriana's son.[15]

In the third scene called the "two hearts," following the scene of rape, Adriana and her sister Refka are in dialogue over the identity of the unborn child. To Refka's question, "how do you

know it will not end up being a killer like its father?" Adriana answers that the child will be just like her. The semitone descent (slower and more languorous than before) hovers over the lopsided "lullaby" rhythm as they wonder about the fate of the child: would it be Cain or Abel?[16] In Example 29.3, the coupling of the "Adriana chord" (S2) with the piccolo motif (ascending semitone labeled S5) represents the birth of the child and maternal yearning. This is contrasted by a melancholy lullaby (S7) in a polyrhythmic grouping of 2:3, which embeds the *pianto* into a three-note downward motif that repeats over a static bass, infusing the lullaby with a touch of despair (for further details of this analysis see Everett 2015, Chapter 3).

This is not the first work where Saariaho showcases Type C *pianto*, as the "sigh" motive appears in *L'amour de loin* (2000) and other vocal works she has composed. Since *Adriana Mater*, Saariaho has composed a passion drama and a monodrama featuring iconic female figures from French history. *La Passion de Simone* (2006) is a passion play based on Simone Weil and her spiritual-intellectual quests. In the Third Station, where the soprano sings about "caring for one's suffering," an ostinato figure with repeating dyads D-C♯ pervades the orchestral accompaniment and undergirds the soprano's utterance with Type C *pianto*. Similarly, in her recent opera entitled *Only the Sound Remains* (2017), based on Ezra Pounds and Ernest Fenollosa's adaptation of Japanese Noh plays, Saariaho showcases Type C *pianto* in the chorus's lament. In Part II of the opera called *Feather Mantle*, when the *tennin* (heavenly maiden) loses her mantle to a fisherman, the chorus amplifies her state of desolation through the deployment of *pianto*; as the chorus sings "Sorrow!" in four-part harmony, each voice descends or ascends by a minor second and sustains a grippingly dissonant tetrachord, D-F♯-C♯-F at measure 374.

In each of these late-modernist operas, the *pianto* style type is transformed into a polysemic sign that generates expressive meanings at the iconic, indexical, and symbolic registers. And this is where Monelle's definition of topic rings true: topic is "essentially a symbol, its iconic or indexical features governed by convention and thus by rule" (2000, 17). Each composer's treatment of the *pianto* models a semiotic process described by Thomas Turino as "creative indexing," that is, "the juxtaposition of two or more indices in novel ways that play off of the original meanings of the signs" (1999, 242). Indices can be allusions to past styles or extramusical references. My analysis of Adams's "Aria of the Falling Body" is shown in Figure 29.1: at the level of firstness, a listener responds to its somatic quality that resembles the act of falling (iconic qualisign according to Peirce), at the level of secondness, a *competent* listener may acknowledge stylistic allusions to Bach and Satie (indexical sinsign), and at the level of thirdness, which involves linguistic mediation (Goodman's libretto), a listener may come to understand the aria as a symbol of grief/resignation (symbolic legisign) with reference to the longstanding conflict between the Jews and the Palestinians.



Example 29.3 Kaija Saariaho, *Adriana Mater* (scene 3: "deux coeurs" [Everett 2015, 104])

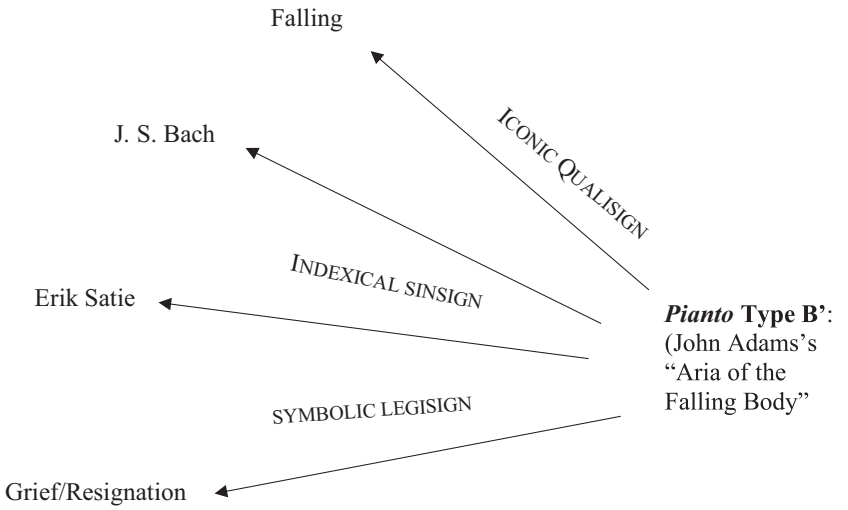


Figure 29.1 Creative indexing of *pianto* in Adams's "Aria of Falling Body"

Saariaho's adoption of Type C *pianto* presents yet a different polysemic sign. Here the *pianto*, in conjunction with the static harmonies, embodies circularity and stasis. The vocal utterances of the falling minor seconds index the voices of haunted soldiers (conveyed by the chorus placed off stage—an acousmatic source) and at other times maternal anguish (see Figure 29.2). At a broader narrative level, I argue that the *pianto* figure appears in various guises as a symbol of repetition compulsion associated with trauma victims (see Everett 2015, Chapter 3). In stark contrast to what is enunciated via the sung text, the isolated Type C *pianto* hovers above the vocal line as if to give voice to the interior trauma that the protagonists are unable to confront directly. The fragmentation of Type A *pianto* in Adès's *The Tempest* presents a similar case, whereby the protagonist's despair is echoed and refracted

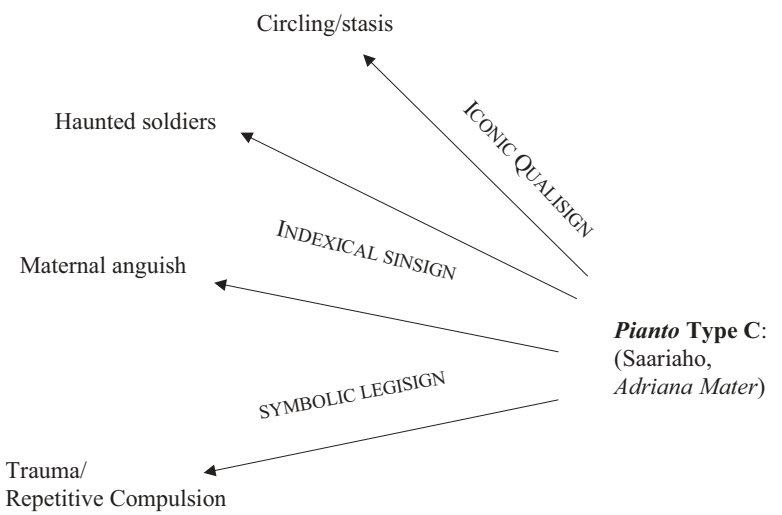


Figure 29.2 Creative indexing in Saariaho's *Adriana Mater*

in the instrumental lines. In each instance, late-modernist composers expand the *pianto*'s schematic context through fragmentation and other means, while transforming it into a polysemic sign rife with expressive meaning.

Conclusion and further considerations

By way of concluding, I summarize my approach to defining the *pianto* figure's topicality. First, the historical surveys provided by Monelle and Karbusický led me to distinguish its schematic contexts into three style types labeled A, B, and C; however, a more comprehensive corpus study may change or expand this classification. My preliminary corpus study of late-modernist works indicates that Type A based on lament topic predominates in both instrumental and dramatic categories. Type B, as illustrated in Adams's *The Death of Klinghoffer* or Eben's *Job*, often involves fusion with other dance topics, be it sarabande or waltz. Type C remains an ideolectic expressive device, comprised of the stripped-down version of the *pianto* figure, unaccompanied or with a static chordal accompaniment.

Second, my survey of late-modernist music indicates that the composer's aesthetic strategy motivates the *trope* (per Klein 2005, 41]) that transforms the *pianto*'s topical inflection and intertextual scope in a wide variety of ways. Some composers, such as Adès and Ligeti, consistently adopt Type A *pianto* and expand the range of expression and schematic contexts with a self-conscious nod to convention. Adams, in comparison, plays with different style types of *pianto* within the context of a single opera. Finally, Turino's creative indexing provides an interpretive model of the *pianto*'s range of signification at the iconic, indexical, and symbolic registers in ways that enrich one's hermeneutical reading of the operatic narrative. Most importantly, the *pianto* maintains its somatic, embodied expression of grief, while it simultaneously generates a host of other associations at the indexical and symbolic registers. To delve into *pianto*'*s* pervasive usage in popular music and film scores lies beyond the scope of this essay, but it is hoped that this study demonstrates that the signifying potential of the *pianto* has hardly diminished over time, as its cultural range of meaning continues to expand and diversify in the operatic canon in relation to past musical conventions.

Notes

1 Klein's comment about "idealized" is important because not every musical topic has an actual prototype that embodies all of the features that are essential in defining its identity.

2 For example, McClelland introduces the *ombra* and *tempest* topics in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century operatic canon (2014, 279–300, see also Frymoyer in this volume). Building on McKee's hymn topic, Sánchez-Kisielewska (2016) introduces the "sacred Romanesca" as a fusion of a *galant* schema and hymn topic, evidenced by a comprehensive corpus study of operas, sacred music, and instrumental music in the late eighteenth century.

3 Rumph argues that the stomping rhythm of the Bourrée is offset by the suspension that suggests the "churchly" *stile antico*, held together by non-signifying sixteenth-note Alberti bass figuration (2014, 494).

4 Caplin notes that the *initiating* function of fanfare allows for this kind of topical troping "appropriate for a formal beginning" (2005, 117). For a more comprehensive study of the waltz topic, see Frymoyer, 2017.

5 This is the point of contention between Mirka and Monelle. Mirka dismisses any kind of topics that are primarily iconic in origin, such as Monelle's invocation of the "noble horse" (2000, 45–65, 2006, 64–70). For her, iconic topics such as the "noble horse" belong to "natural sounds"

or pictorialism, and *Seufzer* or *pianto* topics—to "passionate utterances" (2014, 33–35). See also the discussion in Curry in this volume.

6 Contrary to Mirka, Monelle argues for the *pianto*'s function as an expressive symbol; for him, all topics are "essentially a symbol, its iconic or indexical features governed by convention and thus by rule" (2000, 17).

7 Bernhard's designation of *passus duriusculus* and the musical example he gives refer to a rising or falling chromatic bass within a span of a fourth; "*Passus duriusculus*, einer Stimmen gegen sich selbst, ist, wenn eine Stimme ein Semitonium minus steiget, oder fället" ([ca.1657] 2004, 85). Bach also deploys the lament topic with a *passus duriusculus* bass in other cantatas, notably, the chorus from *Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen*, BWV12.

8 Riemann attributes the falling second in the works by the Mannheim masters (Stamitz, Richter, Holzbauer, Filtz) as the "Mannheim" sigh motive (Karbusický, 1986, 67).

9 Head notes that *Empfindsamkeit* has long served as a period designation for c. 1760–1790 in German literary and musical history and explains how Sensibility identified a capacity to respond with pleasure or pain, with feeling, and with self-awareness to the impressions made on the body and mind by the senses (2014, 264).

10 What I find problematic in Mirka's reading is that the scale degree contour of the Pastorella schema ($\hat{3} - \hat{4} - \hat{2} - \hat{3}$) is hidden in the upper melody of the opening phrase due to the displaced register of scale degrees $\hat{3}$ (B♭5) and $\hat{2}$ (A5) brought on by the leap of a sixth.

11 The *pianto* figuration sounds as the raven circles over Hagen in this scene; I believe it has a symbolic meaning that outweighs the onomatopoeic effect.

12 Karbusický comments on the indexical quality of the sigh motive as follows: "Die rein musikalische Verständlichkeit (auch ohne Text) wird durch die indexikale Qualität des kummervollen Seufzens bewirkt; diese Element wird aber in systembegundenen Ausprägungen umgestaltet. Es erscheint nicht mehr *in natura*" (1986, 67) (The pure musical understanding (also without text) happens through the indexical quality of the suffering sighs; This element is embedded in the system as a pattern. It shows no more *in natura*).

13 Bauer (2011) presents arguably the most comprehensive study of a single composer's oeuvre from a culture-specific perspective of what Lament embodies.

14 I interpret the uncanny deconstruction of Bachian counterpoint and mistuned instruments as a Foucauldian critique of prisons and mental institutions that mask the voices of the afflicted. See *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (1975) for Foucault's explanation of the tactics of power used to increase the docility and utility of all elements of the system in prisons and mental institutions.

15 In my interview with her in 2009, Saariaho commented on how this figure (she does not necessarily confine its meaning to a *pianto*) permeates this opera as a symbol of *Mater Dolorosa*, the suffering maternal figure.

16 The biblical reference to Cain and Abel in Genesis is an important one because the brothers metonymically represent evil vs. good or sinner vs. martyr.

30

MUSICAL EKPHRASIS

The evolution of the concept and the breadth of its application

Siglind Bruhn

In the early third century CE, a Greek sophist of the Roman imperial period, Philostratus of Lemnos, wrote a set of poems called *Eikones* (*Images* or *Imagines*) in which he described 65 pictures exhibited, as he tells in his introduction, in a Neapolitan villa (Fairbanks 1931, 5–6). The poems were acknowledged by contemporaries as giving vivid, evocative descriptions of the form and essence of the paintings. They were perceived as examples of what Dionysius of Halicarnassus, a teacher of rhetoric who flourished nearly 300 years earlier, had described as a literary method of emulating, adapting, reworking, and enriching an existing work of art, poetry, or literature. Because the Latin term *imitatio* had long been in use to classify the evocative description of nature, experiences, and persons, contemporaries of Philostratus labeled his poetry on paintings "ekphrasis" ("description" in Greek; Webb 2009, 39).

Looking back, rhetoricians found that the earliest cases of famous ekphrases dated from the eighth and first centuries BCE: for instance, in Book 18 of the *Iliad*, Homer describes the Shield of Achilles, and Virgil in his *Aeneid* tells what Aeneas sees engraved on the doors of Carthage's temple of Juno. Many examples of ekphrastic poetry were written in antiquity and again after the middle ages, in all countries and almost all languages of the world. In the nineteenth century, Keats's "Ode on a Grecian Urn"—a description of a piece of pottery that the narrator finds immensely evocative—was instrumental in re-focusing attention on the genre. It was followed by the excitement created by Rainer Maria Rilke's "Archaïscher Torso Apollos" ("Archaic Torso of Apollo" [1908]). Since the objects described by Homer, Virgil, Keats, and Rilke were sculpted and not painted pictures, modern scholars in the second half of the twentieth century who took up "ekphrasis" as a field of serious literary studies expanded the definition of the object rendered in poetry to include all visual art objects: sculptures, drawings, etchings, woodcuts, stained-glass windows (see Hagstrum 1958; Krieger 1992; Lund 1992; Heffernan 1993; Mitchell 1994; Yacobi 1995; Hollander 1995; Wagner 1996; Clüver 1997; Robillard and Jongeneel 1998).

But not all literary renderings of pictures were poems: for example, two prose narratives on paintings by Pieter Bruegel (c. 1525–1569) caused a stir; Maurice Maeterlinck's 1886 short story on Bruegel's painting *The Massacre of the Innocents*, and Gert Hofmann's 1985 novel *Der Blindensturz* on Bruegel's *The Parable of the Blind*. Consequently, the nature of

ekphrasis was expanded to encompass prose as well as possibly other literary forms. In his seminal study, James Heffernan defined ekphrasis as "the verbal representation of visual representation" (1993, 3).

Claus Clüver reported that Jorge de Sena, a Portuguese poet whose work dates primarily from the middle of the twentieth century, had published a volume with 32 poems on musical compositions, among them poetic reflections on works by Händel, Mozart, Brahms, Sibelius, and other composers. As a result, he argued that the concept of ekphrasis had to be expanded to include any ekphrastic object, and he offered as a definition: "the verbal representation of a text created in another medium" (Clüver 1997, 26).

Once this expansion of the ekphrastic *object* had been recognized, scholars became more aware of the way other arts offered vivid representations of works created in another medium. There were, some argued, paintings on poetry and paintings on music: for example, Giovanni Paolo Pannini (1691–1765) painted the Roman scenes described in Hawthorne's novel, *The Marble Faun* (1860), and Charles Demuth's painting, *I Saw the Figure 5 in Gold* (1928) transposes William Carlos Williams's poem "The Great Figure" (1921), whose third and fourth lines provide its title. These paintings can be regarded as visual ekphrases on verbal texts. Furthermore, the German artist Philipp Otto Runge (1777–1810) described his *Tageszeiten* (Times of Day), a series of four paintings, as "a fantastic musical poem with choruses" and wanted it to be viewed to the accompaniment of music and poetry. The number of visual artworks relating to music increased with time. In the early 1870s, James McNeill Whistler (1834–1903) named and even re-named many of his paintings with "musical" titles, among them the three paintings titled *Symphony in White no. 1*, *no. 2* and *no. 3*, respectively (1861–67) and the *Nocturne in Blue and Silver* (1871). Paul Klee (1879–1940) famously drew inspiration from music, musical forms, and even notation for his paintings. While these examples do not refer to specific compositions, they open the gate for a new kind of ekphrasis, in which music stimulates responses in visual art.

Ekphrasis also worked in an opposite direction: many musical compositions referring to works of visual art or works of literature equally give vivid, evocative representations of the form and essence of their artistic object. The online database *Musik nach Bildern* ("music on pictures"), managed by Monika Fink at the Austrian University of Innsbruck, lists more than 1000 composers from around the globe and just as many in its counterpart, *Klingende Texte* (sounding texts). Thus, in what seemed to be the final step in the development of a definition, I suggested expanding the notion of ekphrasis in accordance with the diversification of the ekphrastic *subject* to "the representation in one medium of a text created in another medium" (Bruhn 2000, 8). I also propose that the verb describing the ekphrastic act should be specific to this task: "to transmedialize." The eminent Israeli ekphrasis scholar Tamar Yacobi, who has since published on related cases of this expanded concept of ekphrasis, speaks about "intermedial quotation or re-presentation" (Yacobi 2013, 1) and about "interart transfer" (2). As examples of such processes, I will discuss one ekphrasis from poetry to music and two ekphrases from paintings to music.

Poetry transmedialized into music

Among the earliest "transmedializations" of poems into music are Arnold Schoenberg's *Verklärte Nacht*, 1895 (on Richard Dehmel's eponymous poem), Maurice Ravel's *Gaspard de la Nuit*, 1908 (on three of the poems in Aloysius Bertrand's collection of the same name), and Claude Debussy's *Préludes I,* nos. IV and VIII, 1909–10 (on Charles Baudelaire's

"Harmonie du soir" and Charles Leconte de l'Isle's "La Fille aux cheveux de lin," respectively). In what follows, I discuss Ravel's "Ondine."

Ravel's *Gaspard de la nuit: 3 poèmes pour piano d'après Aloysius Bertrand* consists of three piano pieces: "Ondine," "Le Gibet," and "Scarbo." All three compositions relate to eponymous poems in Bertrand's *Gaspard de la Nuit—Fantaisies à la manière de Rembrandt et de Callot*, a collection of 65 poems first published posthumously in 1842. It contains the 52 prose poems Bertrand had assembled at the time of his death, from which Ravel chose "Ondine," as well as 13 related poems found among the poet's manuscripts, among which are "Le Gibet" and the version of "Scarbo" quoted in Ravel's score. In a 20-page preface Bertrand (1807–1841) claims that he was not the author; instead the poems had been handed over to him by a man who identified himself, on the first page of the notebook, as one "Gaspard de la nuit" and who, Bertrand later discovered, was none other than an incarnation of Satan. This introductory story may explain the subtitle of the poetry collection, "*fantaisies*" alluding to Rembrandt and Callot that combine both earnest and eerie representations of real and fictitious characters from various social strata.

Ravel composed the three piano pieces—whose technique rivals that of a Liszt composition—in a single frenzy. "Ç'a été le diable à venir, Gaspard, ce qui est logique puisqu'il est l'auteur des poèmes" (Gaspard has been the very devil to finish, which is not surprising since he is the author of the poems) he wrote in a letter dated 17 July 1908 to Ida Godebska (Léon 1964, 58; Nichols 2011, 104). Ravel also placed this composition squarely within the field of musical ekphrasis (albeit without using the term) when he said: "My ambition is to say with notes what a poet expresses with words."

The story

Female water-spirits are well known from folk-tales that go back in history to the medieval Mélusine, and even further back to mythological tales that seem to exist in all cultures. The special story of Undine (or Ondine), however, the water-spirit who fell in love with a human, seems to be the creation of a romance written in 1811 by Friedrich de la Motte Fouqué (1777–1843). It gained immediate popularity and inspired many works in literature, poetry, visual arts, and music, from E.T.A. Hoffmann's eponymous opera (1814), to which de la Motte Fouqué himself contributed the libretto, to Laura Marling's song "Undine" in her 2013 album *Once I was an Eagle*. The story is about two young women: one a human, the other a daughter of the waves. Both are in love with the same man. The tale as it was perceived by romantic audiences is of the paradise in the depths of the waters, which the water spirit leaves with high hopes in search of the man whose love for her, alone, can render her a soul. She will then enjoy a much shorter life than other water-spirits, but that seems a small price to pay for that unfathomable asset called "soul." Unfortunately, the man's incomprehension of her nature and his ultimate rejection cause her to return to the waters without a return to blissful innocence and joy.

The poem

Like all the prose poems in Bertrand's *Gaspard*, "Ondine" is prefaced by an epigram, quoted from a different source. Here the quote is from a poem by Charles Brugnot, speaking about elusive sounds that somebody hears, whether in reality or in sleep. Bertrand will pick up this idea in an interesting way. His focus differs from Fouqué's narrative, presenting the story not from Ondine's perspective, but from the knight's point of view. Indeed, his

ONDINE:

… Je croyais entendre
Une vague harmonie enchanter mon sommeil
Et près de moi s'épandre un murmure pareil
Aux chants entrecoupés d'une voix triste et tendre.

Ch. Brugnot,
Les deux Génies

—« Ecoute !—Ecoute !—C'est moi, c'est Ondine qui frôle de ces gouttes d'eau les losanges sonores de ta fenêtre illuminée par les mornes rayons de la lune; et voici, en robe de moire, la dame châtelaine qui contemple à son balcon la belle nuit étoilée et le beau lac endormi.

« Chaque flot est un ondin qui nage dans le courant, chaque courant est un sentier qui serpente vers mon palais, et mon palais est bâti fluide, au fond du lac, dans le triangle du feu, de la terre et de l'air.

« Ecoute !—Ecoute !—Mon père bat l'eau coassante d'une branche d'aulne verte, et mes sœurs caressent de leurs bras d'écume les fraîches îles d'herbes, de nénuphars et de glaïeuls, ou se moquent du saule caduc et barbu qui pêche à la ligne. »

*

Sa chanson murmurée, elle me supplia de recevoir son anneau à mon doigt, pour être l'époux d'une Ondine, et de visiter avec elle son palais, pour être le roi des lacs.

Et comme je lui répondais que j'aimais une mortelle, boudeuse et dépitée, elle pleura quelques larmes, poussa un éclat de rire, et s'évanouit en giboulées qui ruisselèrent blanches le long de mes vitraux bleus.

Aloysius Bertrand

ONDINE:

… I thought I heard
an elusive harmony bewitching my sleep
and near me extends a murmur similar
to songs interspersed by a sad and tender voice.

Ch. Brugnot,
Les Deux Génies

—'Listen!—Listen!—It is I, it is Ondine who sweeps with these water drops the ringing diamonds of your window, illuminated by the mournful rays of the moon: and here, in her shimmering silken robe, the lady of the manor contemplates from her balcony the lovely starbright night and the beautiful sleeping lake.

Each wave is an ondine who swims in the current, each current is a path that winds its way toward my palace, and my palace stands fluid, in the bottom of the lake, in the triangle of fire, earth and air.

—"Listen!—Listen!—My father is beating the growling water with a branch of green alder, and my sisters caress with their foam arms the cool islands of grass, of waterlilies and of gladioli, or tease the old bearded weeping willow that angles in the water."

*

Her song murmured, she begged me to receive her ring on my finger, so that I would be the husband of an Ondine, and with her visit her palace, so that I would the king of the lakes.

And since I replied that I loved a mortal woman, sullen and upset, she shed some tears, burst into laughter and vanished into a drizzle that gushed white over my blue windows.

Ondine is "murmuring a song" and begs to be married; but when she learns, in answer to her plea, that the knight is in love with a mortal woman, she overcomes her dejection quickly and returns to her playfulness. Thus, she appears as a childlike creature whom we do not need to pity. Instead, we are invited to smile indulgently.

The poem begins with Ondine inviting us to listen. The five stanzas consist of an initial group of three followed after an asterisk by another two. The initial three stanzas deal with

Ondine, while the remaining two focus on the knight whom Ondine hopes to marry. The bipartite structure corresponds directly to the two main characters. We can see this "pair" as a hope or as a mere object of reflection. Ondine seems to hope for a "pair"; her three stanzas contain several further instances of pairs, while the knight's stanzas do not: see the twofold "Listen! Listen" in the first and third stanzas, the juxtaposition of Ondine with the "lady of the manor" in the first stanza, the mention of father and sisters in the third stanza, and the "each … each …" in the second stanza.

Focusing on the content of Ondine's words, we find that she associates herself with gloomy moonlight—and thus with mystery, unpredictability, emotionality—while the lady is presented with the much more rational and conventional perceptions of the "lovely star-bright night and the beautiful sleeping lake." Ondine's rival is distinguished by conventional attributes like noble attire (silken robe), noble demeanor (contemplation), and a noble place (the balcony of a manor), while she who is one of the "children of the waves" comes from a home that is in its entirety a manifestation of the water spirits.

How complete and perfect her realm should be imagined is expressed by means of the four elements and the perfect geometrical symbol: her "palace of water" is located in the "triangle of fire, earth, and air." In the third stanza, metaphoric and non-metaphoric images merge into a real fantasy. Her father beats the water (which actually constitutes his children, the *ondins*); the sisters' arms (of foam–since each sister is a ripple) caress the islands, and in doing so foster flowers and plants. Their anthropomorphizing mockery of the pitiful weeping willow at the lake shore and of the father's use of an alder branch depicts the water spirits as integrated in a larger natural environment.

In terms of structure, the conspicuously repeated "Listen! Listen!" at the beginning of the first and third stanzas creates the impression of a ternary form. At the same time, and although the three stanzas do not tell a sequence of events, there is a sense of continuity. The contemplation of the "sleeping lake" at the end of the first stanza leads to a further description of that lake in the second stanza, and the mention of Ondine's home at the close of the second stanza prompts more details about her family in the third stanza.

Language and attitude in Ondine's stanzas are different from those in the knight's two stanzas: immediacy gives way to reasoning ("so that …", "so that …") and narrative logic ("and since …, she …"). The fourth stanza gives an account of what Ondine hoped for with regard to the knight, and why. The reasons as perceived by the knight, "so that I would be the husband of an Ondine" and "so that I would be king of the lakes," sound very different from those familiar from the fairy tale. The fifth stanza briefs us about the knight's reply and Ondine's reaction: that of a child who sulks for a moment and forgets immediately as she continues to play.

The fact that the first three stanzas are presented in quotation marks seems to suggest that we are dealing with direct versus indirect speech. A closer look at the fourth and fifth stanzas, however, reveals that they, too, are in the first-person singular. The two speech patterns are thus the knight's voice as narrator, beginning with a verbatim quotation of what he heard (or thought he heard) the water spirit say.

Considering the setting that, according to both the knight's own and Ondine's account, provides the backdrop for the encounter, one wonders even more who is speaking and whether anybody at all is actually articulating the lines. The twofold mention of the rain on the window makes it clear that Ondine is "out there" and the knight "in here." Furthermore, at the end of the poem Ondine seems to vanish into the raindrops, the same raindrops that first brought her into the picture. Is she, then, not just a hallucination of a man about to be married (to a mortal woman), a fantasy inspired by the play of raindrops, in which the narrator pits the playful, child-like creature against the noble, well-dressed and poised woman who will be his

wife? The "reasons" why he should marry her seem to confirm this interpretation: they focus entirely on what he would be; no mention of Ondine's longing for a soul and her need for his love to obtain it. This is clearly a man's fantasy, in which a luring water spirit sings a "murmured song," evoking options the man's waking, reasonable mind would resist. His dream of becoming the king in a realm of perfection, beauty, and irresponsible playfulness is a delightful backdrop for the more serious obligations in real life, like marrying the lady of the manor, and the water spirit thus rejected is not hurt but remains in her element.

The music

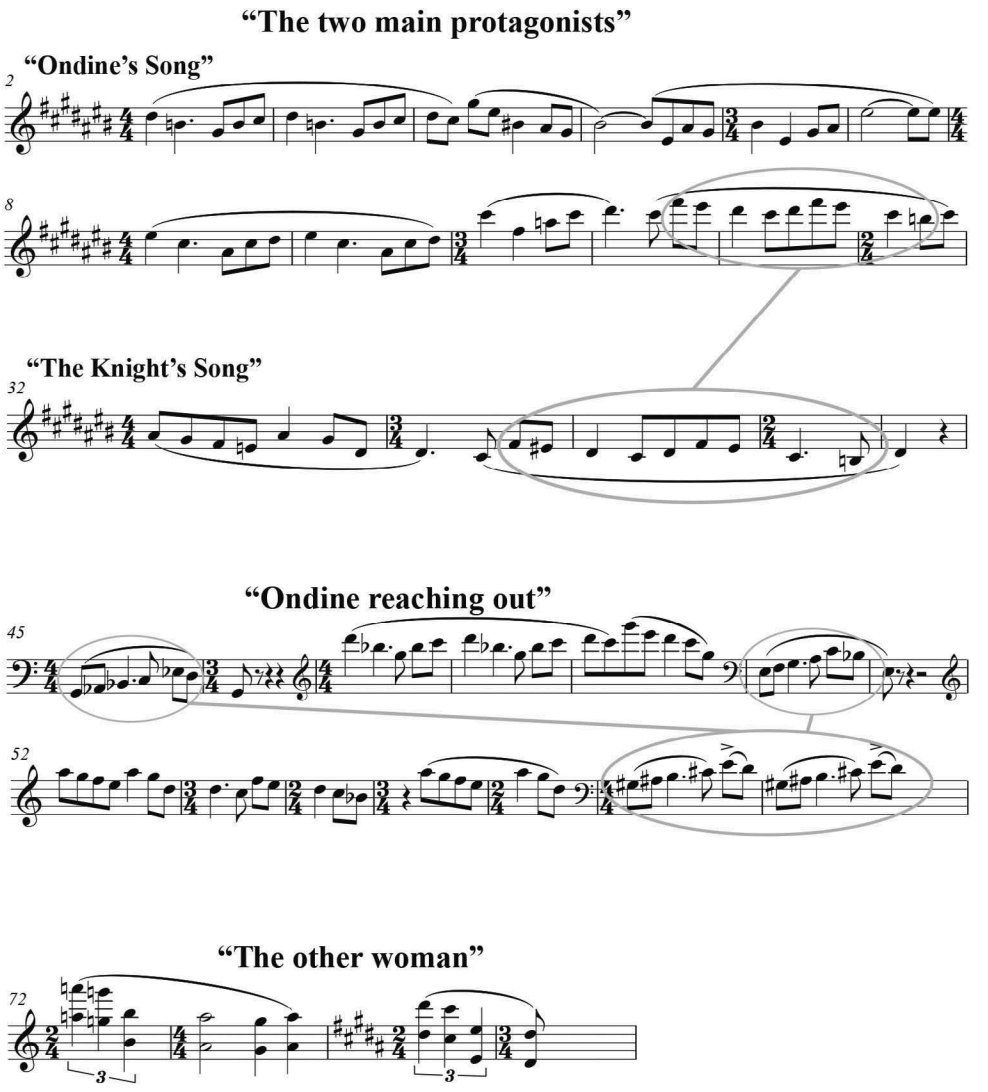
Ravel's music integrates all significant aspects of the poem. The "elusive harmony" mentioned in the epigram is embodied in a bitonal juxtaposition of the tonic chord, C♯ major with added sixth, and a melody that centers on G♯ minor, creating an unreal atmosphere.

The shimmering of the water is created by a complex pattern, in the right hand, that alternates the tonic triad with an added lowered sixth (A♮) in rhythmic ostinato of 3+3+2 thirty-second notes. After almost five measures of this shimmering effect, both the triad's root, the added sixth, and then other chord members move gradually, almost imperceptibly, by half-steps, changing the harmonic color. Later in the composition, the pattern alternates with arpeggios and is even briefly juxtaposed to arpeggios. Below and later above these musical ripples, Ravel fashions a melody to be played sweetly and with expression—clearly "a song." The texture allows two components to be distinguished: vertically, a homophonic texture in varying patterns; horizontally, a clearly phrased melody (Ondine, mm. 2–7, 8–13, 14–21; the lady of the manor, mm. 22–29; the knight, mm. 30–36, 37–40; Ondine, mm. 42–46, 47–51; the knight, mm. 52–54, 55–58, and 66–71; the lady of the manor: mm. 72–79; Ondine, mm. 80–89). In three instances, the start of the melodic line is preceded by one or two measures of introduction (mm. 1, 41, 75–76), before the song is rounded off by what in a vocal composition would be considered an instrumental coda (mm. 90–93). Here are a few observations.

Both Ondine's and the knight's themes consist of a melodic core. The characteristic features of these "cores" relate the musical themes to the two main protagonists: Ondine is represented by a somewhat languishing, wave-like, repeated outline. The knight's theme is less accommodating, beginning with a descending tetrachord in the "objective" whole-tone scale. It is the "man's" character who quotes Ondine's words and narrates the event, first being drawn into her magic but finally returning to reason.

Ravel translates Bertrand's indirect suggestion that Ondine may be a product of a man's fantasy by letting the two share two thematic complements. The first (Example 30.1a), established in mm. 12–13 by Ondine, is echoed in mm. 33–35 (the knight's theme), repeated time and again, until Ondine's "soliloquy" (*Très lent*, mm. 84–87), when it is recalled for the last time. The second (Example 30.1b) is introduced in the bass-register at the point where Ondine is actively reaching into the man's sphere (m. 45) and taken up in m. 57 as part of the knight's theme's development.

There is one segment in Ondine's theme that the knight never echoes: a three-note figure falling through a smaller and then a larger interval. Introduced in m. 4 (G♯–E♯–B♯), the figure is taken up six times in Ondine's lines (mm. 16, 18, 20, 21, 45–46 and 50–51). It is echoed, with a significant rhythmic adjustment, twice in "the other woman's" line 4 (mm. 22 and 27), as well as twice in her later line (shown in Example 30.1c, "Encore plus lent," mm. 72 and 74). Sounding in a "noble style" triplet pattern, the echoing figure could be interpreted as the rival putting Ondine in her place. This is also where the basic shimmering accompaniment pattern is interrupted for the first time by large scalar and



Example 30.1 Ravel, Ondine, Melodic Lines

seventh-chord waves, including a glissando over the whole piano range (mm. 72–73). These rather conservative sounds appear for the first time with the theme of "the other woman," soon thereafter connected with the knight's theme in a version twice as long, without any hint of the bitonality pervading everything that is under Ondine's spell. "The other woman" is a "conservative" bride, and the knight persuades himself to honor his promise and not succumb to the lure of a water spirit.

The key signatures, too, trace the narrative. Ondine's "song" starts under the "magic spell" of seven sharps. When her theme delves into the bass register—Ondine reaching for the knight—all sharps are canceled (m. 45), transferring us gradually into the harshly lit white-key mode (m. 49). Ondine's seven sharps are briefly reintroduced in the line in which the beginning of the knight's theme returns to its whole-tone objectivity. "The other woman" begins in the knight's white-

key mode but then establishes her own tonality with five sharps. When Ondine hears her rejection (mm. 84–85), her theme is marked by a dramatic tempo, texture, and key change: "*Très lent*," a single line in the mid-range, in a D-dorian with a raised 7th. Nevertheless, the coda re-empowers Ondine: returning to the original C♯-major torrential arpeggios, where the water spirit once again plays in her own element.

Musical ekphrases of paintings

Famous precursors of musical ekphrases on paintings in the second half of the nineteenth century include Franz Liszt's symphonic poem *The Battle of the Huns* (1857, on Wilhelm von Kaulbach's fresco *Die Hunnenschlacht*) and Mussorgsky's *Pictures from an Exhibition–in Memory of Viktor Hartmann* (1874). Among the earliest compositions fully complying with the definition of ekphrasis as "the representation in one medium of a text created in another medium" are Anton Webern's *Streichquartett* (1905, on Giovanni Segantini's *Alpine Triptych*), Claude Debussy's "Poissons d'or" (*Images* II/3, 1907, on a Japanese lacquer tablet), and Sergei Rachmaninoff's *Isle of the Dead* (1908, on Arnold Boecklin). Much later, the Polish composer and percussionist Marta Ptaszyńska (b. 1943) conceived her *Concerto for Marimba and Orchestra* (1985) as an ekphrastic triptych, responding in each of the three movements to a particular surrealist painting. The trajectory of the movements themselves is traditional: the first movement is a sonata allegro form with slow introduction; the second is an Adagio; and the third is a theme with seven variations.

All three surrealist paintings, respectively by the French Yves Tanguy (1900–1955), the German Max Ernst (1891–1976), and the English Graham Sutherland (1903–1980), can be seen online. They show strange landscapes: eerie plains, aggressive spikes, and strangely dripping substances seem to question the human expectation of a benign environment. Despite the composer's adherence to a conventional concerto layout, her music responds in fascinating ways to the paintings, which evoke different shades of fear in each of the three movements of which this analysis focuses on the last two.

Ptaszyńska's concerto for marimba and orchestra: second movement

Titled "The Eye of Silence," the second movement of this concerto is a musical reflection on a painting of the same name by Max Ernst. The canvas, painted in Ptaszyńska's birth year of 1943, hangs in the Kemper Art Museum of Washington University in Saint Louis, Missouri. *The Eye of Silence*, which Ernst created in North America, where he had sought refuge during World War II, shows an apparently calm lake with a mirroring surface, surrounded by light green and brown shapes: a psychedelic mixture of leaves, ruins, and stone formations. The facing stone wall in the center features some fantastic animal bodies and even parts of human faces, all appearing to be made of stalactites and stalagmites. In the foreground on the right, barely visible, a solitary female figure is crouched, the posture of her arms recalling a sphinx. The sky above the uncanny landscape looks dense, with yellowish clouds foreboding thunderstorm.

The stony figure and the rocky landscape, frozen under a tumultuous sky, create a sensation of paralysis characteristic of nightmares and trance states. Ernst believed that seemingly unrelated phenomena shared secret connections accessible only through psychological and alchemistic procedures. Thus convinced, he developed aleatory techniques for achieving random outcomes, which he regarded as non-coincidental. These included frottage (rubbing the canvas), grattage (scratching paint off the canvas), oscillation (dripping

paint from a pendulum-like moving container), and, as in the case of *The Eye of Silence*, décalcomanie. In this technique, a first creative layer is produced by pressing a glass plate briefly onto a canvas covered with paint. When the glass is quickly lifted, it leaves behind all manner of striations and flow marks that the artist then integrates into his or her composition. With the aid of these techniques, Ernst believed to transfer some fundamental features of his paintings to his unconscious, thereby hoping to understand his own suppressed fears, longings, and alienation experiences.

While Ptaszyńska's concerto as a whole is scored for a large orchestra, including harp and a 20-part percussion section, in the central Adagio the composer uses the orchestral percussion only sparingly and softly, with just a few strokes of the crotales and the triangle (see Example 30.2). Similarly restrained is the number of pitches employed. During the first half minute, we hear nothing but an E in the middle register, played by the muted violins in varying degrees between invariable *non vibrato* and animated tremolos and trills. Finally, the oscillating E is taken over by the flute and the vibraphone.

At this point a C♯ is added (m. 8). For another 30 seconds the violins, now enhanced by muted cellos and double basses as well as the solo marimba, play a mysteriously oscillating soundscape made up of the pitches E and C♯. During the opening, which extends over nearly two minutes, three additional pitches appear: B♮ (m. 21), F♯ (m. 28) and G♯ (m. 32). This results in a minor-mode pentatonicism, which Ptaszyńska uses alternately rooted in C♯ (C♯, E, F♯, G♯, B) and G♯ (G♯, B, C♯, E, F♯). The music's time seems to stand still, just as it does in Ernst's painting. Eventually a three-tone motif, C♯–E–B (mm. 19–21), is formed. In an exceedingly slow counterpoint, this motif appears in eight overlapping entries before it is transposed to G♯–B–F♯ in the double bass part (m. 32), where another 12 entries form a static, arcane web, always staying in the same pentatonic soundscape. While the shape of this motif is simple, the increasing density of the orchestral interweaving creates an impression of interspersed rainforest flora. The two "pitch-colors" of the motif and its transposition could be interpreted as a translation of the two different colors of the walls covered by Ernst with mysterious jungle shapes. The 20 entries of the motif that fill the opening of the movement generate a mood of calm contemplation. Meanwhile, this sound cloud texture rises very slowly through three octaves, growing from *piano-pianissimo* to *forte*, before a sudden diminuendo and a general pause (m. 57) conclude the first section. The immeasurably slow intensification creates a kind of ecstatic emotional trance, perhaps related to the visual perception after spending some time in front of "The Eye of Silence" canvas.

The middle section of the movement, marked *poco più mosso*, is short by comparison but subdivided into three segments. The first segment returns to the soft dynamics and thin instrumentation of the beginning. It starts with the solo marimba, in expressive multi-voiced tremolos, engaging in a dialogue with two clarinets. The pentatonic framework is maintained even when other instruments successively join in. The first clarinet quotes each of the two transpositions of the ascending three-note motif. The second segment brings about a sudden tonal shift: four new pitches—D♯, F, G and A—momentarily cast the eerie landscape into a different light (m. 72), four measures later joined by a D♮ that has replaced the D♯ (m. 76). While this change is short-lived, it does create a surprising brightening of the color in which the listeners have now been immersed for so long. It is as if a flash of blinding lightning uncovered an unexpected new dimension of a familiar scene. While the intensity increases, the motion slows down, until the music comes to a halt on a temporary overlay of the original pentatonic scale and the contrasting five pitches. The third segment offers yet another glimpse at the same landscape. Another tangle of polyphonically overlapping, intervallically similar but rhythmically diverse figures open into a field of aleatoric play: each of the participating instruments is invited

II. Oko ciszy / The Eye of Silence

Adagio misterioso e molto cantabile (♩=60)

Fl 1

Vbf

c. sord.

Vni I div.

Vni II div.

Mar Solo

Vc div.

Cb

Example 30.2 Ptaszyńska, *Concerto for Marimba and Orchestra*, II: 1–16

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to improvise on a phrase provided by the composer. This passage uses a new pentatonic field: D, E, F♯, A and B (m. 79). Despite the whispering softness that reigns throughout, the music intensifies into the inner ecstasy felt before. Although the metric organization was never in the forefront, the multiple asynchronous layers in the aleatoric insertion seem to suspend time.

In the third section of the movement (m. 80), the music returns to the initial tempo. As if to prevent any impression that this might be a conventional recapitulation, the marimba presents various pentatonic figures that are answered by the other instruments in surprisingly new colors, in dry staccato, and with occasional dissonant inflections. For the first time in this music there is a sense of melancholy. The unity created earlier by the thematic motif is missing, and even the pentatonicism is momentarily abandoned in favor of an indistinct tonal order. This disorientation, however, does not last. Ptaszyńska's meditation on Ernst's psychedelic painting ends as it has begun: shortly before the concluding *molto tranquill*o, all instruments briefly unite to a full scale on E (mm. 95–100). Before the winds and vibraphone vanish, the tonal world reverts to its motionlessness state, finally dying away on a single, very soft E.

Ptaszyńska's concerto for marimba and orchestra: third movement

The final movement, "Thorn Trees," alludes to a painting by Graham Sutherland. During World War II, Sutherland was employed by the War Artists Advisory Committee whose aim was to document war damage. Since he soon got depressed from painting dead bodies, he started depicting the skeletons of burnt-out buildings as metaphors for the destruction inflicted on human lives. In *Thorn Trees* (1945) the British expressionist presents two trees composed of what looks like weapons and other non-organic components as symbols for the tormented and splintered bodies of World War II victims. Like many of Sutherland's paintings from the Forties, *Thorn Trees* juxtaposes fragments symbolizing the oppressive forces of industrialization and brutal death with a ruggedly beautiful countryside symbolizing life. In this bleak world, man and nature seem incompatible.

But there is another, distinctly different perspective in this painting. Shortly before he started *Thorn Trees*, Sutherland had been commissioned by Walter Hussey, at that time canon at St. Matthew's Church in Northampton, to paint an altarpiece. Sutherland chose to focus his attention on the Crucifixion. The Christ figure is reduced to a realistically drawn image of extreme pain in the agony of death: the figure's rigidly deformed hands, elevated rib cage, deformed shins, and inclined head carrying the crown of thorns express the horrific reality of death by crucifixion in a powerful way (further enhanced in its sister painting, now exhibited in London's Tate Gallery). Although painted a year earlier, *Thorn Trees* could be perceived as a variation on the biblical theme: the power of this depiction of Christ's agony is echoed in the landscape. As Jessica Lack so aptly wrote: "The picture transforms the trees into deadly weapons; the thorns become daggers and their razor-sharp edges glint like steel" (2009).

Ptaszyńska has composed the third movement as a stark contrast to the preceding two. The timbres used have a distinctly aggressive quality, and rhythm dominates, mostly in unrelenting motion. The layout is that of a theme with seven variations. The theme, presented by the marimba, is characterized by a pervasive note repetition in sixteenth-notes on B♮ interrupted by spiky intervals, major-seventh leaps up to B♭ and down to C (see Example 30.3).

Yet there is more, for the marimba is not alone in this theme. In every other measure, the soloist's repeated B♮ is underscored by a repeated seven-note chord played by the woodwinds, timpani, rototoms and strings. In the background of these motoric repetitions, the brass instruments with the same chord play a crescendo, enhanced in its power in that it begins dampened with mutes which are taken out at the climax of each increase. This

III. Drzewa cierniste / Thorn Trees

Tema con 7 variazioni

TEMA

Allegretto, molto leggiero e staccatissimo (♪=160)

Pc

Fl

Ob

Cl

Fg

Cfg

Tr

Cr

Tn

Tb

Tmp

2 Roto-toms (B-B)

Mar Solo

Allegretto, molto leggiero e staccatissimo (♪=160)

Vni I

Vni II

Vle

Vc

Cb

Example 30.3 Ptaszyńska, *Concerto for Marimba and Orchestra*, III: 1–16

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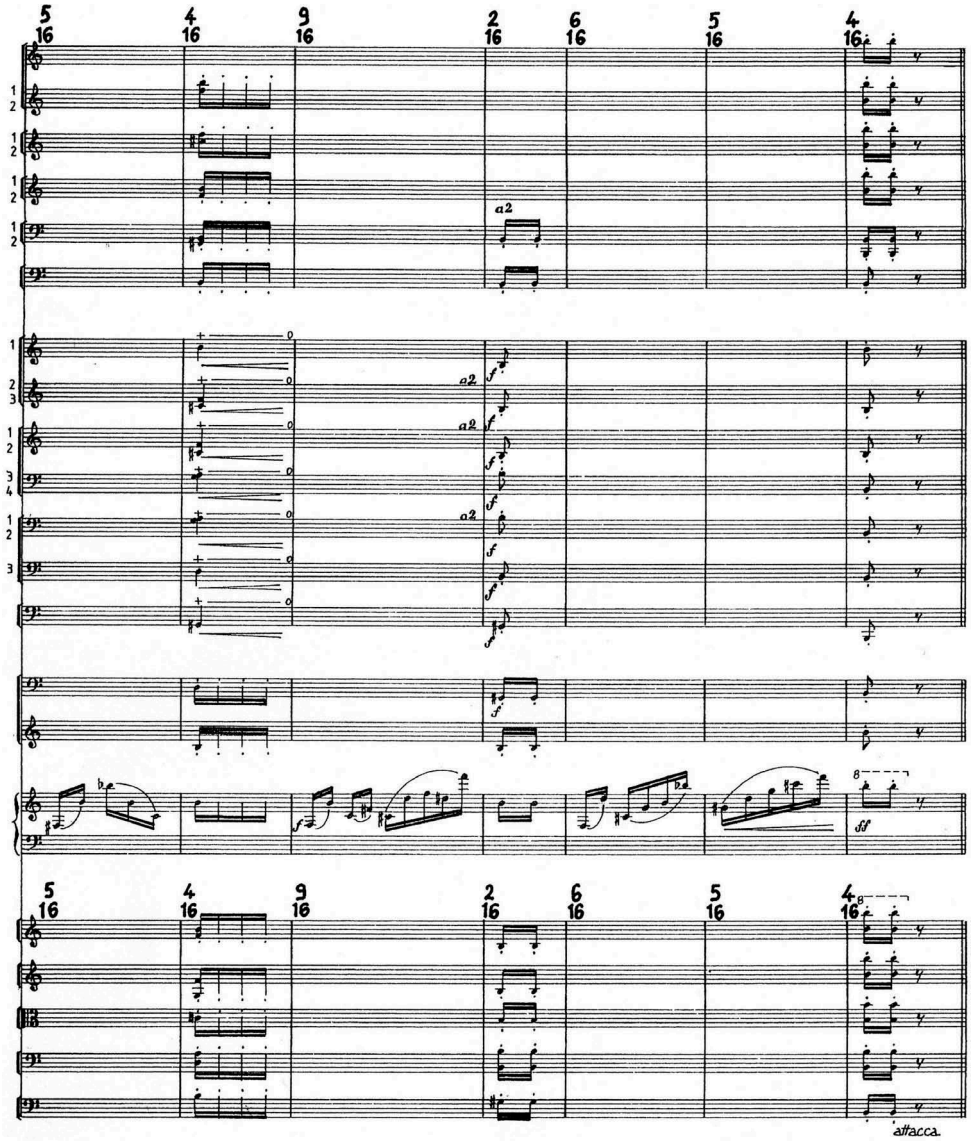

Example 30.3 (continued)

domineering chord stresses the marimba's B♮ in all its octaves. Ignoring octave duplications, the collection contains seven pitches, in ascending order: G♯, D, G, A, C♯, F, and B. Its interval structure underscores the angular nature of the music: the chord encompasses three tritones (G♯ to D, G to C♯, and F to B) as well as two vertical major sevenths (G♯ to G♮ and D to C♯), which complement the two horizontal major sevenths played repeatedly by the soloist (B♮ to B♭, and B♮ to C).

The number seven plays a significant role in this movement: the theme is followed by seven variations, it is embedded in a seven-pitch chord, and there are conspicuous major-seventh intervals in both the soloist's horizontal line and in the orchestra's vertical design. Given the context in which Sutherland painted his *Thorn Trees* and the image of the Christ's agony on the cross, the emphasis on the number seven may allude to the "Seven Words of Jesus Christ on the Cross," which has been set to music by Schütz, Haydn, Franck, Gubaidulina, and many others. I propose that the seven sections of music following the theme just described represent Ptaszyńska's musical responses both to Sutherland's *Thorn Trees* and to his *Crucifixion* as it shines through the painting of the thorn trees. Given that some of these variations are only loosely related to the musical theme and also divert from it in terms of tempo and mood, they may point back to the spiritual and liturgical tradition of the Passion of the Christ, relived in the suffering of humankind through the many horrors of the twentieth century.

Conclusion

One way of pondering the ability of music to transmedialize works of poetry and painting is to arrange the devices a composer chooses in a single work of ekphrastic response on an imagined scale between the mimetic or concrete and the referential or abstract. The distinction touches upon the question whether a musical device presents, in the given context or even in general, inherent or acquired signification.

This applies equally to the two main branches of musical ekphrasis: sonic interpretations of art works and of literary texts. In the case studies sketched above, the repeated waves in the main theme of Ravel's "Ondine," evoking the watery realm that defines her, come close to onomatopoeia, as does the contrast between her bitonal elusiveness and the conventional harmony underlying the thoughts of marriage entertained by the lady and her betrothed. The same accessibility of musical signification is given in the eerie stillness Ptaszyńska creates with exceedingly few notes at the beginning of her concerto's central movement to depict Max Ernst's frozen scene amidst a rocky landscape, and again in the spiky contour of the theme in movement III, employed to imitate the thorns in Sutherland's painting(s). At the other end of the spectrum between depiction and reference, Ravel's play with key signatures confirms to readers of the score the characterization of the three persons involved in the erotic triangle, but it is necessarily lost on listeners not gifted with perfect pitch. By the same token, the numeric device pervading movement III of Ptaszyńska's marimba concerto—conspicuous major-seventh leaps in the soloist's theme, seven-pitch chords in the accompaniment, and seven variations to follows the theme—create a multi-tiered learned reference: appreciation presupposes not only the ability to identify intervals and chord characters, but also to connect the figure 7 to biblical imagery, and perhaps even to be informed about the existence, nature, and Gospel context of the precursor painting to Sutherland's "Thorn Trees." These and all intermittent cases are integral parts of musical signification, distinguished from non-ekphrastic examples only by means of their known extramusical stimulus.

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